



## Carry Me Like Water

By Benjamin Alire Saenz

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This immensely moving novel confronts divisions of race, gender, and class, fusing together the stories of people who come to recognize one another from former lives they didn't know existed -- or that they tried to forget. Diego, a deaf-mute, is barely surviving on the border in El Paso, Texas. Diego's sister, Helen, who lives with her husband in the posh suburbs of San Francisco, long ago abandoned both her brother and her El Paso roots. Helen's best friend, Lizzie, a nurse in an AIDS ward, begins to uncover her own buried past after a mystical encounter with a patient.

With *Carry Me Like Water*, Benjamin Alire Sáenz unfolds a beautiful story about hope and forgiveness, unexpected reunions, an expanded definition of family, and, ultimately, what happens when the disparate worlds of pain and privilege collide.

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## **Carry Me Like Water** By Benjamin Alire Saenz Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The river metaphor courses everywhere through this first novel by the author of the American Book Award-winning poetry collection *Calendar of Dust*. It's evident in the spate of words that gushes from every character, including deaf-mute Chicano Diego, who muses in dolorous torrents as he writes his life work, a suicide letter. There are characters, themes and plot elements enough for three books, let alone one, and the resultant cascade comes perilously close to overflowing the banks of potboilerdom. In El Paso, Diego misses his long-lost sister Maria Elena (aka Helen), who can't believe she deserves to be living the good life in Palo Alto, married to Eddie, a secret millionaire who misses his long-lost big brother, Jacob. Helen's nurse friend Lizzie inherits her long-lost twin brother's gift of astral travel and second sight, discovers her Mexican roots and feels mysteriously drawn to Jacob (who misses Eddie) while nursing his dying Chicano lover, who comes from El Paso. Although there are flashes of lyricism, the flood of repetitive verbiage quickly palls. Only after almost half of the characters die do the survivors reunite in El Paso. Readers who enjoy a long, involved narrative with ethnic detail may find this a good summer read. Major ad/promo; author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Poet Saenz's first novel blends ingenuousness into an ensemble cast of betrayed, alienated, abused individuals-to mixed results. In El Paso, Diego works for less than minimum wage in a bar-restaurant, writes a never-ending suicide note, and befriends the odd and crazy. In California, his sister, Maria Helena, doffs her Mexican-American identity to pass for Helen La Greca, an Italian. Her Anglo husband Eddie's father sexually abused him, later his mother killed his father and then herself, and Eddie has rejected his first name for his middle one. Lizzie is adopted by Anglos but is, in fact, Mexican American. The characters find that, though family and national origin can make a mess of one's life, facing one's past can assuage a myriad of personal trauma. Through snappy dialog, Saenz makes this culture of interior monolog seem sunny and normal. Recommended for larger literary collections.

*Harold Augenbraum, Mercantile Lib., New York*

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From [Booklist](#)

A very accomplished first novel defines the term *riveting*. Diego, unable to hear, works as cook, janitor, and waiter in a diner in El Paso, Texas; his is a poor life that brings him little happiness. His sister, Helen, clings to what she believes is a good life in California, denying her Hispanic heritage. Brother and sister have not communicated in years. Helen's best friend is an AIDS nurse, and at about the same time that she befriends a gay couple afflicted with the disease, she discovers her ability to let her mind flee her body and soar above the mundane world. One of the young gay men turns out to be the brother of her friend Helen's husband, and eventually all these characters--Diego included--are brought together into a community of hopefulness. This is a novel about individuals who are not blessed with ease and comfort but are trying to work out some sort of livable life, and it's also about the most important aspect of life, particularly in the face of losing it: the need for connectedness with family, friends, and loved ones. Despite the primacy of character over plot, the novel moves fluidly--and beautifully. *Brad Hooper*

## Users Review

From reader reviews:

**Joe Bell:**

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students since they're still students or the item for all people in the world, exactly what the best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that query above. Every person has various personality and hobby per other. Don't to be obligated someone or something that they don't want do that. You must know how great along with important the book Carry Me Like Water. All type of book would you see on many resources. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

**Tonya Sewell:**

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**Edward Donnelly:**

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**Eric Hodges:**

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