

## Reading List: Mexico

### **El Narco – Inside Mexico’s Criminal Insurgency**

*Ioan Grillo (Bloomsbury, £8.99)*

Among the many books about Mexico’s drug cartels, this is a fast-paced page-turner that manages to be comprehensive on the causes of the problem, chilling on its effects and compelling on the larger-than-life personalities involved.

### **Nothing, Nobody, the Voices of the Mexico City Earthquake**

*Elena Poniatowska (Temple University Press, £22.99)*

A gripping collage of first-hand accounts of the ‘Big One’ – the 1985 Mexico City earthquake. The harrowing descriptions of devastation, the government’s slow reaction, and the collective rescue efforts are as graphic as the book’s black-and-white photos of collapsed buildings, twisted metal and grief.

### **The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail**

*Oscar Martínez (Verso, £14.99)*

How desperate do you have to be before clinging to the roof of a freight train and defying drug gangs, robbery, rape and death look a better option than staying in Central America or Mexico? Salvadoran journalist Oscar Martínez’s courageous and empathetic descriptions from his eight trips riding *The Beast* through Mexico with undocumented migrants are an eye-opening and urgent read.

### **Signs Preceding the End of the World**

*Yuri Herrera (And Other Stories, £8.99)*  
The US border looms large in Mexico and its shadow, and the experience of crossing it, is skilfully

explored in this tale of a woman’s search for her brother. Herrera, hailed as one of Mexico’s greats of the genre, mines rich metaphors to construct this multi-layered odyssey.

### **Prayers for the Stolen**

*Jennifer Clement (Hogarth, £12.99)*

Clement portrays the fate of being a female in Guerrero, a wild west badland state in the headlines for the abduction of 43 students last year. Women hide to escape drug lords or risk being stolen in a novel rooted firmly in very uncomfortable fact.

### **The Labyrinth of Solitude**

*Octavio Paz (Penguin Classics, £14.99)*

The classic exploration of the essence of Mexicanness by one of the country’s most revered intellectuals; his descriptions of the national psyche are as sharp as they were when the collection of essays was first published in 1950.

### **Mongrels, Bastards, Orphans and Vagabonds: Mexican Immigration and the Future of Race in America**

*Gregory Rodríguez (Vintage, \$11)*  
Mexican-American race relations viewed through the prism of Mexico’s own colonial melting pot. The book contains an engaging and well-documented history of how the Spanish conquest created and defined a new racial identity and is thought-provoking on how that legacy is playing out in the United States today.

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