



## My Wicked Wicked Ways

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Sandra Cisneros, who has been well-decorated for the unique voice first heard in her fiction—THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET and WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK AND OTHER STORIES—reveals in MY WICKED WICKED WAYS that she was working her magic first in poetry. There is little of her signature blend of English and Spanish in this collection, though several pieces tell of growing up Chicana, one rebellious girl among six brothers.

The book's first section captures the guileless sing-song of a schoolgirl. There's a cold baby in a satin box, "like a valentine," in the corner of Lucy's pink living room, and there's sick, sad Abuelito, "who used to laugh like the letter k."

By the second section, the girl has become a lover, "thenotorious/ one/ leg wrapped/ around/ the door." Her girlfriend chugs Pabst in redneck bars, and her father warns her that a Sandra Cisneros in Mexico "was arrested for audacious crimes/ that began by disobeying fathers."

The third section is a handful of postcards from exotic places. She walks alone under stars through a field of poppies in the south of France. She muses to lovers, and to lovers who might have been. She drags furniture out of a burning house on the island of Hydra, and praises that "paradise of symmetry," the derriere of Michelangelo's "David."

The book closes with a series of love poems that are richly sensual and often furious. The affair, with its many good-byes, is angular and adulterous: "you who never admitted a public grace./ Weof the half-dark who were unbrave."

Cisneros has written a prefatory poem that is worth the price of the book, a terrific psychic summary of the years that created these poems. "I chucked the life/ my father'd plucked for me," she explains, ". . . winched the door with poetry and fled."

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