



## A Small Story about the Sky

*Alberto Ríos*

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"Ríos evokes the mysterious and unexpected forces that dwell inside the familiar."—*The Washington Post*

"Ríos delivers another stunning book of poems, rich in impeccable metaphors, that revel in the ordinariness of morning coffee and the crackle of thunderous desert storms. In one sonnet, Ríos addresses injustice in the borderlands, capturing with mathematical precision the everyday struggles that many migrants face—"The border is an equation in search of an equals sign." A series of sonnets about desert flora abounds with fantastic, magical imagery—"Bougainvilleas do not bloom—they bleed" and 'Apricots are eggs laid in trees by invisible golden hens.' Likewise, Ríos's bestiary sonnets overflow with inimitable similes, worthy of a book unto themselves—"Minnows are where a river's leg has fallen asleep" and 'Gnats are sneezes still flying around.' This robust volume is the perfect place to start for readers new to Ríos and a prize for seasoned fans."—*Booklist*

In his thirteenth book, Alberto Ríos casts an intense desert light on the rich stories unfolding along the Mexico-US border. Peppered with Spanish and touches of magical realism, ordinary life and its simple props—morning showers, spilled birdseed, winter lemons—becomes an exploration of mortality and humanity, and the many possibilities of how lives might yet be lived.

## Mad Honey

*Made from magnificent rhododendron, poisonous rhododendron,  
Very difficult-to-pronounce rhododendron—whatever*

*Rhododendron even is—I would have to look it up myself,  
This word sounding puffed up, peacocky with its*

*Indianapolis-long spelling, all those letters moving in and out.  
But the plant itself, the plant and the bees that find it:*

*The bees see in its purple flower, first, a purple flower.  
They do not spell it. They do not live in fear of quizzes,*

*Purple offering what it has to offer, unapologetic, without further  
Definition, purple irresistible to the artist's and to the bee's eye—*

*Who can blame either one this first-grade impulse toward love?  
Purple, always wearing something low-cut . . .*

**Alberto Ríos** is the Poet Laureate of Arizona and host of the PBS program *Books & Co.* He was a finalist for the National Book Award for his poetry volume *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body*. He teaches at Arizona State University and lives in Chandler, Arizona.

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