



## Elegy for Desire (Camino del Sol)

*Luis Omar Salinas*

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*The most difficult poems to write*

*Are those of love and those of death.*

*I'm half in love and half dead.*

*It stands to reason that I've come upon a difficult task.*

Despite his disclaimer, it seems no difficult task at all. One of the pioneers of Chicano poetry and a highly esteemed artist in the Mexican American community, Luis Omar Salinas is a poet with Tex-Mex bordertown roots whose work is studied at the Sorbonne. Beginning with his legendary first book, *Crazy Gypsy*, he has been a major figure not only in Chicano literature but in all of American poetry—both a poet of the people and a voice for other poets.

In *Elegy for Desire*, Salinas has crafted visionary poems about growing older and looking back on a rich life of poetry. In this quiet yet hallucinatory volume, Salinas offers us a prismatic collection of odes, elegies, and cantos of desire—complex poems about our place in the world. Poems to be savored in solitude, or better still with an intimate companion. Few poets, Latino or otherwise, are as daring with love poetry that is so honestly fierce. Salinas gives us a meditation on gently aging while continuing to celebrate personal experience that draws upon the world. One need only sample these rich, elegant stanzas to recognize the wealth of wisdom found in their words.

*Elegy for Desire* is a testament to a singular talent that has survived for decades . . . and will continue to inspire long beyond his lifetime.

*The dead can't complain, and lovers always do.*

*Well, I'm here, and that is important.*

*And if life can be as exciting as this,*

*I must be doing something right.*

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