



Asphalt: A Novel

Carl Hancock Rux

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Already a celebrated performance artist, vocalist, poet, playwright, and visionary, Carl Hancock Rux now presents a brilliant debut novel—a profound and lyrical portrait of urban life that will take its place among the classics of American literature. Racine is a reserved young man, but his passion for music lights him up inside. He's just returned from Paris where he'd been invited by a friend to produce music, make recordings, and earn a living. The plan didn't quite pan out, and now he's back in New York, where fate, providence, or just plain chance leads him to a once-glorious brownstone turned into a squat by a few eccentric loners. There's Manny, who wears sarongs and glitter but has no trouble attracting beautiful women, and Couchette, a gorgeous second-generation dancer whose mother has gone to Bali to live and bear a child with a man who built her a house in the midst of a rice paddy. What binds the characters is a deep sense of loss. Each is like the city they live in—wounded and seeking healing and connection with and through the other housemates. Rux's poetic fiction blurs the lines between characters' dreams, memory, and reality. Asphalt—the name representing the essence of the city and the hard, layered, yet vulnerable sensibility of its inhabitants—is part post-modern parable, part urban mythology, and altogether relevant to contemporary reality. Asphalt is daring and unforgettable, marking the arrival of an original and astounding new voice in American literature.

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