

The Poet X

Elizabeth Acevedo

4.39

121,312 ratings 20,562 reviews

Goodreads Choice Award

Nominee for Best Poetry (2018)

Fans of Jacqueline Woodson, Meg Medina, and Jason Reynolds will fall hard for this astonishing *New York Times*-bestselling novel-in-verse by an award-winning slam poet, about an Afro-Latina heroine who tells her story with blazing words and powerful truth.

Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking.

But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about.

With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school's slam poetry club, she doesn't know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can't stop thinking about performing her poems.

Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.

Genres **Poetry** **Young Adult** **Contemporary Fiction** **Audiobook** **Realistic**

Fiction **Romance**

...more

368 pages, Kindle Edition

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THE POET X

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Poignant and real, beautiful and intense, this story of a girl struggling to define herself is as powerful as Xiomara's...

Poetry helps first-generation Dominican-American teen Xiomara Batista come into her own.

Fifteen-year old Xiomara ("See-oh-MAH-ruh," as she constantly instructs teachers on the first day of school) is used to standing out: she's tall with "a little too much body for a young girl." Street harassed by both boys and grown men and just plain harassed by girls, she copes with her fists. In this novel in verse, Acevedo examines the toxicity of the "strong black woman" trope, highlighting the ways Xiomara's seeming unbreakability doesn't allow space for her humanity. The only place Xiomara feels like herself and heard is in her poetry—and later with her love interest, Aman (a Trinidadian immigrant who, refreshingly, is a couple inches shorter than her). At church and at home, she's stifled by her intensely Catholic mother's rules and fear of sexuality. Her present-but-absent father and even her brother, Twin (yes, her actual twin), are both emotionally unavailable. Though she finds support in a dedicated teacher, in Aman, and in a poetry club and spoken-word competition, it's Xiomara herself who finally gathers the resources she needs to solve her problems. The happy ending is not a neat one, making it both realistic and satisfying. Themes as diverse as growing up first-generation American, Latinx culture, sizeism, music, burgeoning sexuality, and the power of the written and spoken word are all explored with nuance.

Poignant and real, beautiful and intense, this story of a girl struggling to define herself is as powerful as Xiomara's name: "one who is ready for war." (Verse fiction. 14-18)

Categories:

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