## **Teeth Never Sleep**

Poems

Drawing on folklore and fantasy, childhood memory and hallucination, and marked by a tone of piercing divulgence, Teeth Never Sleep nimbly negotiates the split consciousness a culture of dominance requires of men (especially men of color), highlighting the fissures in selfhood created by the pressure to seek submission over intimacy while still wanting desperately to be loved, and tracing the contorted route by which emotional pain finds expression in violence. "The night my girlfriend tells my mother I beat her, / I feel betrayed. This was a secret we kept between us. / That night, I was no longer my mother's loving son," the speaker in one poem confesses, and later "I never wanted to be this kind of animal." And yet, through the lens of Ángel García's sharp imagining, men frequently appear as beasts (sometimes literally)—as hybrid beings both tender and brutal—that he steadfastly refuses to let off the hook as he obsessively catalogs the origins of toxic masculinity (the first time I made my mother cry, the first time I pitied my father, the first time I saw a girl bleed) and its quiet, lasting effects: "Still a part of me believes a / man shouldn't cry in front of a woman, even in the dark." In a culture of weaponized masculinity, the poems in Teeth Never Sleep make a doorway of a wound, inviting readers to walk through and sit down inside the raw pain they harbor to meditate on two central, urgent questions: what it means to be a man and how, as a man, to love.



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