



## Shades within Us: Tales of Migrations and Fractured Borders

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Borders both real and imagined, dystopian futures caused by catastrophic climate change, and devastating alterations of the past vivify the twenty-one stories of *Shades Within Us*. In the tradition of speculative and science fiction, the collection explores some of the most divisive issues of the present through the guise of different times, dimensions, and characters. The stories range from epistolary to lyrical to traditional narratives, with content that is often unexpected, frequently harrowing, and always thought-provoking.

The volume begins powerfully, imagining a U.S.-Mexico border that morphs into a metaphorical, multidimensional space. Other stories call forth equally engaging situations: A disapproving father reunites with a son who has been modified with gills to live underwater. An alien from a defeated planet sneaks his language into his new world by etching it onto his body. Temporal engineers from the future create tunnels that return them to the past as refugees from an unknown future. A farm family endures a resettlement from the green place to the gray, but the power to find the green still grows within them. Nazi Germany is evoked to create a space for speculation or supernatural interference.

With each story, the authors expand their settings and reality into a universe of broader potential to make sense of the tensions that plague the twenty-first century. Even as they represent foreign existences, the problems remain the same—family, love, belonging, identity, survival. Immigrants still work to make new homes, and government still debates their care, entrance, and control.

A few of the stories revisit well-worn tropes, but most take a fresh approach to their subjects and conjure terrifying futures brought on by climate change, greed, and corruption of power. Political and daring, this collection adds to the future imagined by Philip K. Dick, George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, and Aldous Huxley.

CAMILLE-YVETTE WELSCH (July/August 2018)

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