



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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