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LAtitudes: An Angeleno's Atlas

Patricia Wakida, Foreword by Luis Alfaro

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A transformative look at Los Angeles

This literary and cartographic exploration of Los Angeles reorients our understanding of the city in highly imaginative ways. Illuminated by boldly conceived and artfully rendered maps and infographics, nineteen essays by LA's most exciting writers reveal complex histories and perspectives of a place notorious for superficiality. This chorus of voices explores wildly different subjects: Cindi Alvitre unveils the indigenous Tongva presence of the Los Angeles Basin; Michael Jaime-Becerra takes us into the smoky, spicy kitchens of a family taquero business in El Monte; Steve Graves traces the cowboy-and-spacemen-themed landscapes of the San Fernando Valley. Overlooked sites and phenomena become apparent: LGBT churches and synagogues, a fabled "Cycleway," mustachioed golden carp, urban forests, lost buildings, ugly buildings. What has been ignored, such as environmental and social injustice, is addressed with powerful anger and elegiac sadness, and what has been maligned is reexamined with a sense of pride: the city's freeways, for example, take the shape of a dove when viewed from midair and pulsate with wailing blues, surf rock, and brassy banda. Inspired by other texts that combine literature and landscape, including Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City*, this book's juxtapositions make surprising connections and stir up undercurrents of truth. To all those who inhabit, love, or seek to understand Los Angeles, *LAtitudes* gives meaning and reward.

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