

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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## ★ **Dodgers.**

Beverly, Bill (Author)

Apr 2016. 304 p. Crown, hardcover, \$26. (9781101903735). e-book, (9781101903742).

In this stunning crime-fiction debut, East, a 15-year-old gang member in L.A., loses his job after police raid the drug house where he's standing guard. Offered a chance at redemption, he joins a crew driving cross-country to Wisconsin to kill a witness in a case against his boss. With him are Michael Wilson, a 20-year-old smooth talker; Walter, an overweight 17-year-old problem-solver; and East's own brother, Ty, an unknowable 13-year-old killer. East has never been out of L.A. and the journey is transformative, forcing him to confront problems inside and outside the van while figuring out who he is and why he was ultimately sent along. The premise and execution are terrific, and the prose is remarkable: Beverly does more with a sentence than many writers accomplish in a paragraph. East and his compatriots are old before their time, and yet we never lose the sense that they are still growing up, even if their growing-up is like that of soldiers dropped behind enemy lines in their first war. They are black, and the highway they travel is very white indeed. Highly recommended for fans of Richard Price, this is a searing novel about crime, race, and coming-of-age, with characters who live, breathe, and bleed.

— *Keir Graff*