The House of Forgetting: A Novel by Benjamin Alire Saenz

From the author of the highly acclaimed literary novel Carry Me Like Water comes a stunning, dramatic psychological thriller that delivers on every level and reaffirms Luis Arreaga's claim that Benjamin Saenz is a writer with greatness in him. In The House of Forgetting, seven-year-old Gloria Santos is taken by Thomas Blacker from the barrio of El Paso, Texas, to Chicago. There, in the home of the respected writer and academic, Gloria is raised to be refined, educated young woman with an appreciation of literature, music, and fine cooking. For more than twenty years she is confined to Blacker's house and only occasionally allowed in the garden he so meticulously keeps. She becomes, it seems, like his flowers lovingly tended, but utterly at his mercy. As she reaches adulthood, Gloria grows more and more aware that her situation is in unacceptable, and she finds herself confronting her future and the man who has shaped her past. She struggles to distinguish between love and obsession, between gratitude and obligation, and, ultimately, between betrayal and self-preservation. Naive, frightened, and caught between a world she hates and one she does not know, Gloria must summon all her courage and moral strength or risk losing the life she longs for. In the lyrical prose for which he is known, Benjamin Saenz offers a haunting psychological drama that examines one woman's search for her identity and explores what it means to have freedom. The House of Forgetting is a riveting tale of abduction, lost innocence, and revenge—a page-turner in the truest sense, a novel that longs in memory, and one that establishes Benjamin Saenz as one of the most versatile, insightful writers working today.

My Personal Review:
Most of those reading this review will remember English classes in high school. Drowsed through most of the books, didn't you? But there was one you liked, one that actually deserved the hype it got. In many ways, "The House of Forgetting" is the modern version of that book, at once curiously lyrical and utterly devastating. I would like to add that this is not a "thrilling" book, as a certain 3-star review commented—but that's not the point. This
isn't a thriller, it's art, in a way many writers can only dream of and many more don't even try for.

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