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Rosa Lee: A Generational Tale Of Poverty And Survival In Urban America

Leon Dash

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Based on a heart-rending and much discussed series in the *Washington Post*, this is the story of one woman and her family living in the projects in Washington, D.C. A transcendent piece of writing, it won the Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.For four years Leon Dash of the *Washington Post* followed the lives of Rosa Lee Cunningham, her children, and five of her grandchildren, in an effort to understand the persistence of poverty and pathology within America's black underclass. Rosa Lee's life story spans a half century of hardship in the slums and housing projects of Southeast Washington, a stone's throw from the marble halls and civic monuments of the world's most prosperous nation. Yet for all of America's efforts, Rosa Lee and millions like her remain trapped in a cycle of poverty characterized by illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, drugs, and violent crime.Dash brings us into her life and the lives of her family members offering a human drama that statistics can only refer to. He also shows how some people—including two of Rosa Lee's children—have made it out of the ghetto, breaking the cycle to lead stable middle-class lives in the mainstream of American society.

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