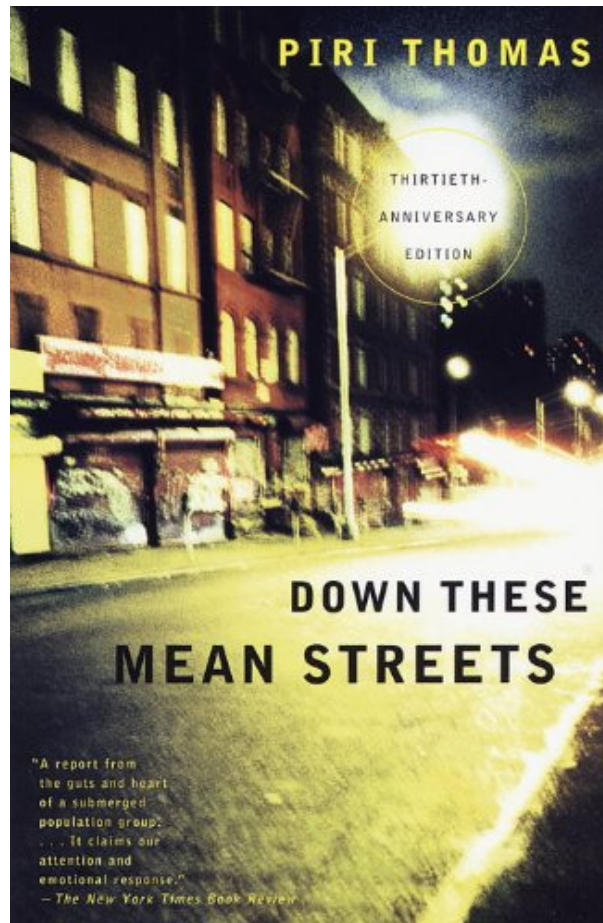
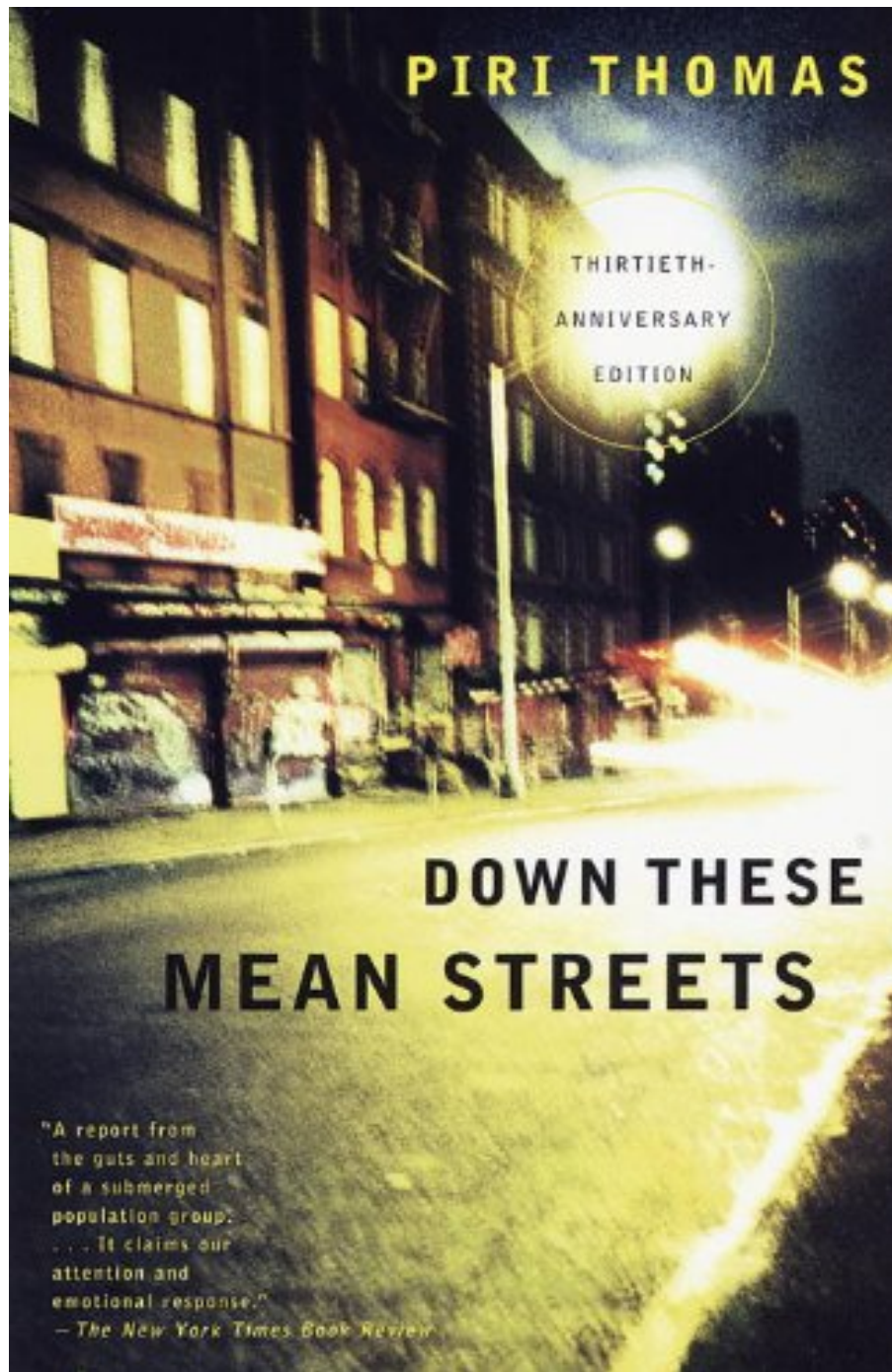


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Amazon.com Review

The 30th anniversary edition of this classic memoir about growing up in Spanish Harlem includes an afterword reminding us that its streets are even meaner now, thanks to crack cocaine and the dismantling of government poverty programs. As a dark-skinned Puerto Rican, born in 1928, Piri Thomas faced with painful immediacy the absurd contradictions of America's racial attitudes (among people of all colors) in a time of wrenching social change. Three decades have not dimmed the luster of his jazzy prose, rich in Hispanic rhythms and beat-generation slang.

Review

"Piri Thomas describes the passionate, painful search to validate his manhood...He has done it all in Harlem's mean streets and gone on from machismo to manhood, acquiring during the journey an understanding of man."--The Nation

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DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS BY PIRI THOMAS PDF

Thirty years ago Piri Thomas made literary history with this lacerating, lyrical memoir of his coming of age on the streets of Spanish Harlem. Here was the testament of a born outsider: a Puerto Rican in English-speaking America; a dark-skinned morenito in a family that refused to acknowledge its African blood. Here was an unsparing document of Thomas's plunge into the deadly consolations of drugs, street fighting, and armed robbery--a descent that ended when the twenty-two-year-old Piri was sent to prison for shooting a cop.

As he recounts the journey that took him from adolescence in El Barrio to a lock-up in Sing Sing to the freedom that comes of self-acceptance, faith, and inner confidence, Piri Thomas gives us a book that is as exultant as it is harrowing and whose every page bears the irrepressible rhythm of its author's voice. Thirty years after its first appearance, this classic of manhood, marginalization, survival, and transcendence is available in an anniversary edition with a new Introduction by the author.

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- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .76" w x 5.15" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

Amazon.com Review

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An essential Puerto Rican classic

By Michael J. Mazza

"Down These Mean Streets," by Piri Thomas, tells a story of growing up as a dark-skinned Puerto Rican in New York City. First published in 1967, the book has been re-issued in a 30th anniversary edition with an afterword by the author.

The book opens in 1941, with 12-year old Piri living in New York with his family. The narrative recounts his growth into manhood; we accompany Piri as he gets into fights, uses illegal drugs, becomes a violent criminal, spends time in prison, and experiences conflict within his own family.

This is a raw, powerful book. Thomas has a vigorous, muscular prose style that incorporates many Spanish terms (readers may find the glossary at the end of the book useful). The book raises many questions about racial and ethnic identity as Piri has relationships with many different people of various colors and cultures. Thomas also explores the interconnections of race and religion, and vividly portrays the subculture of prison life.

This is an essential book for anyone interested in the Puerto Rican experience on the U.S. mainland. The book has a lot in common with "The Autobiography of Malcolm X." Also recommended as a companion text: Miguel Pinero's play "Short Eyes."

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Like a Play!

By Corey

Deeply riveting with great style, language and texture. Piri's story was so descriptive and insightful that it felt like I was watching it in theater. Race, identity, coming of age, it is a true story of manhood and triumph; and a must read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A good read

By Abby

I had read this when I was a teenager,so I'm re-reading it, because I found it to be a good read.

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