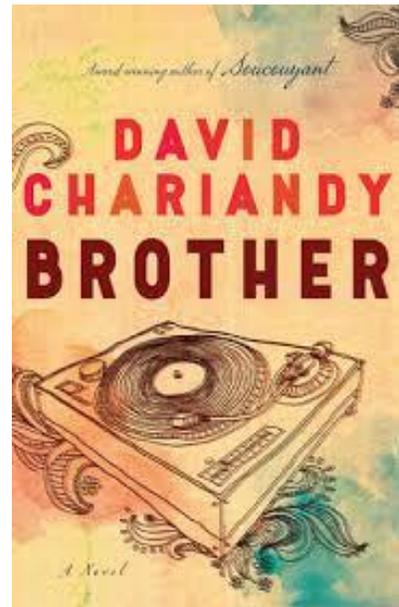


Spotlight

Friday, January 26th

David Chariandy's *Brother* is a searing portrait of injustice, hope, and desperate love. The story follows the lives of brothers Francis and Michael growing up in a poor and increasingly violent neighborhood called "The Park". The sons of Trinidadian immigrants and raised by a single mother run ragged by hard, long hours of work Michael and Francis begin to learn the harsh realities of life as they come face to face with increasing police aggression, gang mentality, and the endless micro aggressions of a systematically racist society. When Francis' life is cut short in a police shooting, Micheal and his mother turn inwards isolating themselves from friends and the neighborhood. As they slowly cocoon themselves in their clean but rundown apartment their days are lost in a pattern of grief and regret. The arrival of a childhood friend and love, Aisha, forces both Michael to confront their complicated grief and come to terms with the loss of Francis.



The power of the story is greatly enhanced by the ability of Chariandy to write such harsh realities so gently. He draws a portrait of a family up against systems beyond their control that inflict daily humiliations and discouragements while also holding close the moments of tenderness and love between the characters. Couched within the short but powerful novel are also three love stories: the love of a mother for her children, of Michael and Aisha, and of Francis and Jelly. On the romance between Francis and Jelly, Chariandy writes, "There is a thing that sometimes happens between certain neighborhood boys. It shows itself, this thing, in touched hands, in certain glances and embraces, its truth deep, undeniable, but rarely spoken or explained." This is a powerful, beautiful and heartbreaking story but one that ultimately comes to terms with itself and discovers not just a complicated grief but also a complicated hope.

Megan Clark
Public Services Librarian