

Novel

# COMPLEX

Santiago Vizcaíno



Translated by  
Kimrey Anna Batts

  
GRADO CERO  
EDITORES

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Santiago Vizcaíno Armijos  
COMPLEX



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# I

and all I wanted was to see the ocean in Malaga. I had the pilgrim's notion that you could see Africa from its shores. *qué huevón*. I've been in Madrid for two days, and I am scared. scared of the thousands of eyes appraising me from above like some rare breed. if there weren't so much fucking *ecuatorianito* here, I think it'd be different. I might even pass for a piece of folk art. but no. in Madrid, it starts to get cold, *te cagas*, and here I am in this shitty suit jacket like a cultured thief. better put, like a Chinese-suit-jacketed thief. because in Ecuador, everything they sell to you as "american" or italian or french is Chinese. even what you get in the *shoppings*, the worst really: do not wash in washing machine; do not expose to direct sunlight; do not iron at high temperatures. how the hell do you pay a hundred and fifty for a suit jacket if the mere act of donning it causes damage? to the jacket and to you. and so on.

in Madrid, you feel like a strange bird. scratch that: like a brown piece of shit on the royal palace's sidewalk. and the cold isn't the "*achachay*" of quito. no. here, it burns your eyes and pierces your lungs. but the cold passes. the elegance of these *huevones* is so unbearable that you understand how moctezuma must have felt when confronted by cortez's lead. the worst is that it all sticks to you, and in two hours, you're already saying *macho* and *joder* and *que te den por el culo*. saying, "fuck you up the ass," like it's nothing. but in Madrid, you're still the Chinese-suit-jacketed weirdo. Like a dead rat in Caracas, there in *el callejón de la puñalada*. What's perhaps surprising is that an andean latino who ought to be cleaning tables is dressed like this: a sort of neo-baroque dandy. a unique specimen who sits down to eat twenty-euro pork shoulder and potatoes. the fucking potatoes they never would have eaten if they hadn't raped my great-grandmother. everything I think is, of course, subnormal: sub-developed, sub-terranean, sub-urban. but the words escape my throat, and I say them to a Chilean immigrant who gives me a look like I've offended her.