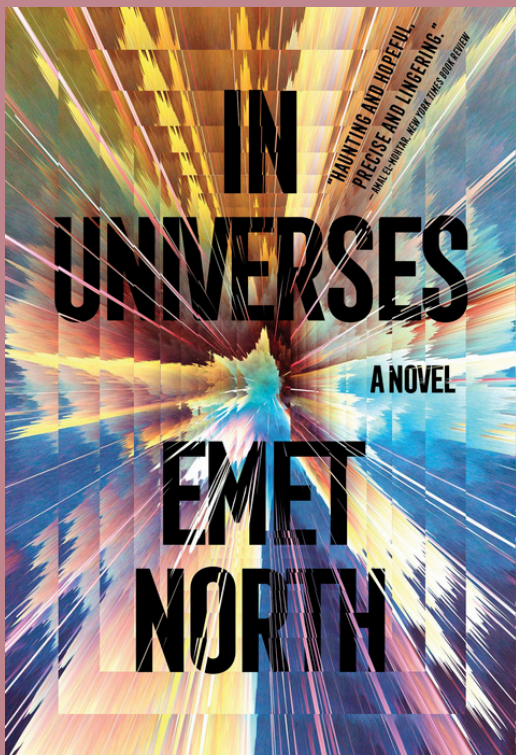


BKLYN BOOK CLUB KIT

IN UNIVERSES

EMET NORTH



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BOOK PRIZE WINNER

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

For fans of Emily St. John Mandel and Kelly Link, a profoundly imaginative debut novel set in numerous universes, which follows a queer physicist's search for belonging across time and space.

Raffi works in an observational cosmology lab, searching for dark matter and trying to hide how little they understand their own research. Every chance they get, they escape to see Britt, a queer sculptor who fascinates them for reasons they also can't—or won't—understand. As Raffi's carefully constructed life begins to collapse, they become increasingly fixated on the multiverse and the idea that somewhere, there may be a universe where they mean as much to Britt as Britt does to them . . . and just like that, Raffi and Britt are 13 years old, on the cusp of friendship, and maybe something more.

A meditation on self-destruction and reconstruction, *In Universes* is a mind-bending tour across parallel worlds, each an answer to the question of what Raffi's life would be like if they had made slightly different choices. The universes grow increasingly strange as Raffi flees the ever-present specter of guilt: women fracture into hordes of animals; alien-possessed bears prowl apocalyptic landscapes. But across worlds, Raffi—with their sometimes-friends, sometimes-lovers Britt, Kay, and Graham—reaches for a life that feels authentically their own.

Blending realism with science fiction, *In Universes* explores the thirst for genius, the fluidity of gender and identity, and the pull of despair against the desire to lead a meaningful life, insisting on the transgressive power of hope even in the darkest of times.

AUTHOR BIO: EMET NORTH

Emet North has lived in a dozen states over the past decade and has no fixed residence, though they feel most at home in the mountains. In previous lives, they worked in an observational cosmology lab on a grant from NASA, taught snowboarding in Montana, researched Lie algebras, led wine tastings, waited tables, trained horses, and wrote a thesis on the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. They translate from Spanish to English with a particular focus on queer and trans voices and are always looking for new projects.



Photo by Morgan Thomas



LEARN MORE ABOUT NORTH IN THESE SELECT MEDIA INTERVIEWS:

- **[Publishers Weekly – A Place Where You Want to Be: PW Talks with Emet North](#)**
- **[New York Times – New Speculative Fiction About the Villainous Power of Universes](#)**
- **[BUZZ Magazine – Journeying Into Emet North’s Stunning Sci-Fi Debut, ‘In Universes’](#)**
- **[The Masters Review – In Conversation: Six Debut Authors Discuss How Their Day Jobs Inform Their Writing](#)**

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WARNING: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS INCLUDE SPOILERS!

- 1** In the opening chapter, Raffi's professor says that there are certain things in the universe you can only find by looking away from them. What elements of Raffi's life are they unwilling to look at early in the novel? How does this change by the end?
- 2** How does Raffi's worldview shift as they move from being a scientist to an artist? How do the worlds of art and science intersect?
- 3** Which universe did you most relate to? Which one stuck with you the most?
- 4** How does the novel transition from one universe to the next? How do these shifts relate to the theme of identity exploration and growth? (Bonus question: Can you notice any differences between the way universes transition in Part I versus in Part II?)
- 5** What role do mental health issues play in the novel?
- 6** How does the novel engage the concept of family? What about chosen family?
- 7** How does the book tackle themes of intergenerational trauma? Can you think of ways that your own family history affects your experience of the world?

THESE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WERE CREATED BY THE PUBLISHER HARPER AND ARE NOT AFFILIATED WITH BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- 8** Over the course of the novel, we see Raffi in romantic relationships with Graham, Kay, Alice, and finally Miko. How does Raffi show up differently in these relationships? Do different people in your life bring out different aspects of your personality?
- 9** A key theme of the novel is that our experience of the world is not necessarily reflective of reality. What would change if you believed that time didn't flow? Or that there were infinite parallel versions of yourself?
- 10** In the final chapter, Raffi has the chance to leave the City of Refuge for another universe. What factors convince them to stay?
- 11** What surprised you about the ending? In what ways did it encourage you to rethink the nature of grief and guilt?
- 12** If you could travel to an alternate version of your life, would you go? What would it take for the universe you're currently in to be the one you'd choose above all others?
- 13** If you could ask the author, Emet North, one question about the book, what would it be?

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BONUS CONTENT

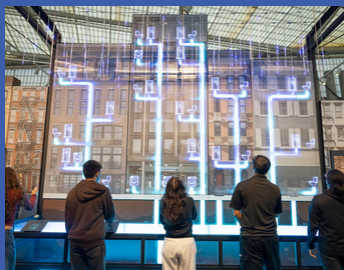
Raffi's journey takes them across time and space. Explore the many science museums New York City has to offer!

BROOKLYN

- [Brooklyn Children's Museum](#) (145 Brooklyn Ave / Brooklyn, NY 11213)
- [New York Aquarium](#) (602 Surf Ave / Brooklyn, NY 11224)
 - Spineless: Weird and wonderful invertebrates may lack backbones, but they're the backbone of our ocean. (*via [nyaquarium.com](#)*)
- [The Bone Museum](#) (255 McKibbin St, Studio 0014 / Brooklyn, NY 11206)



American Museum of Natural History. Photo by [Aditya Vyas](#) on [Unsplash](#).



New York Hall of Science. Photo Credit: Bowery Image Group.

MANHATTAN

- [American Museum of Natural History](#) (200 Central Park West / New York, NY 10024-5100)
 - [Encounters in the Milky Way](#)
 - [Worlds Beyond Earth](#)
- [Intrepid Museum](#) (Pier 86, W 46th St / New York, NY 10036)
 - The [Space Shuttle Pavilion](#) is home to Enterprise, NASA's prototype orbiter that paved the way for the space shuttle program. (*via [intrepidmuseum.org](#)*)

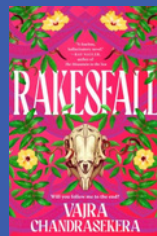
QUEENS

- [New York Hall of Science](#) (47-01 111th St / Corona, NY 11368)

BKLYN BOOKMATCH READALIKES

Did you enjoy *In Universes*? Want to read something similar? Check out these readalike titles below.

- *The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley
- *The Future of Another Timeline* by Annalee Newitz
- *Time's Agent* by Brenda Peynado
- *The Fallen Fruit* by Shawntelle Madison
- *Rakesfall* by Vajra Chandrasekera



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