



June 2025

Dear friends,

We welcome you into *Solitaria*, and invite you to explore the novel's many rooms, its many worlds. You'll soon find that every phrase, every bend in the floorplan, holds the past and the future; speaks across generations and social stratifications; pulls into cohesion the sprawling spaces of luxury apartment complex, each with its own latent history and set of contradictions; and brings to light the singular and devastating magnitude that lives between mother and daughter. There are worlds of injustice and worlds of possibility, worlds of profound melancholy and wondrous levity.

*Solitaria* is the story of two Black women, Eunice and Mabel, a mother and a daughter working as criminally underpaid live-in maids to a wealthy family in a large, contemporary Brazilian city. They take turns recounting their lives through the prisms of the hidden rooms they inhabit, from which a portrait of a shocking crime emerges, raising questions of loyalty, care, and the possibility of liberation in colonialism's long shadow.

We remain entirely blown away by everything that *Solitaria* achieves—its innovative use of architecture as a narrative structure, its polyphonic anatomy, its supple, kinaesthetic prose, and its rigorous internationalist portrait of race, class, gender, and the care economy. Its formal ambition and acuity is unlike anything else we've encountered in fiction. We believe that *Solitaria* is destined to be a modern classic; it's a literary masterpiece and a globally, perennially resonant social critique.

We're humbled to be publishing *Solitaria* with the words of renowned Canadian poet Dionne Brand and acclaimed public intellectual Saidiya Hartman on its back. Brand notes the novel's "rare alchemy", while Hartman calls the novel "a gem". Eliana Alves Cruz has a massive public following in Brazil, where she has countless beloved fans, and we are incredibly honored to be finally bringing her work to an American readership.

There are crucial pairs at work in *Solitaria*. There is Eliana's tremendous narrative feat and Benjamin Brooks' lucid, propulsive translation, and there is mother and daughter—each with their deep wellsprings of wisdom, their mighty convictions, their tender and robust hearts. So when we first encountered the novel, falling in love with it simultaneously, we felt it fitting to take it on as an editorial pair, to send it into the world jointly as our first publication at Astra.

Thank you so much for reading—we hope that you enjoy.

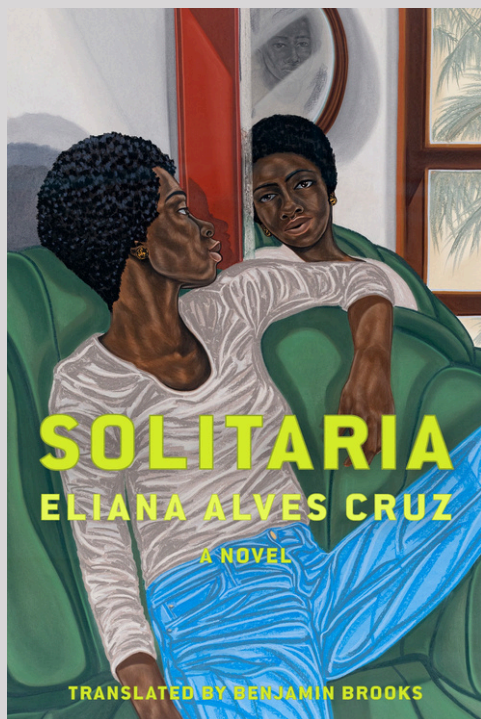
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# SOLITARIA

BY ELIANA ALVES CRUZ

TRANSLATED BY BENJAMIN BROOKS

An *Our Culture* most-anticipated  
book of the summer!

## PUBLICITY INTEREST

Requests from *Harper's*, *Elle*, *NPR*, *Southwest Review*, *Vox*,  
*Allure Magazine*, *Sojourners*, *The Paris Review*, *BOMB*, *The  
Washington Post*

**"Solitaria is a gem."**

—Saidiya Hartman, author of *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*

**"*Solitaria* is a sharp, incisive book; one charged by precise and faithful insights about class, caste, and race, all beautifully woven within a coming-of-age tale that does not hide behind artifice or sentimentality. A work of deep quality."**

—Carvell Wallace, author of *Another Word for Love*

**"The rare alchemy in *Solitaria* is not only that the characters speak, but so too the walls, the rooms, the solitarias, that witness the lives within."**

—Dionne Brand, author of *Salvage* and *A Map to the Door of No Return*

**"Enthralling and deftly narrated, *Solitaria* reveals the perils and unseen captivity of lives lived inside the lives of others. [...] An essential novel about class and filiation."**

—Catherine Leroux, author of *The Future*

Born in Rio de Janeiro, **Eliana Alves Cruz** is a writer and journalist. Her debut novel, *Água de Barrela*, won the Oliveira Silveira award, from Fundação Palmares, in 2015. She is also the author of *A vestida: contos* (2022), which won the Jabuti Award for Best Short Story.

**Benjamin Brooks** is a writer, an editor, and a translator of Brazilian literature. He is a Fulbright Scholar and a 2024 Periplus Fellow. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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