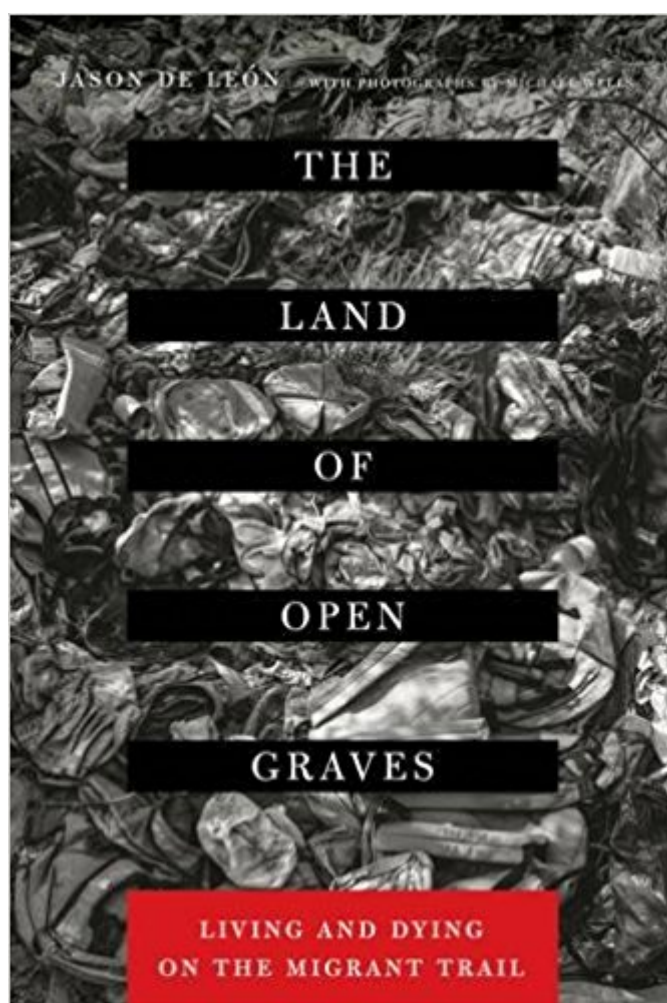


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# The Land Of Open Graves: Living And Dying On The Migrant Trail (California Series In Public Anthropology)



## Synopsis

In his gripping and provocative debut, anthropologist Jason De León sheds light on one of the most pressing political issues of our time—the human consequences of US immigration policy. *The Land of Open Graves* reveals the suffering and deaths that occur daily in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona as thousands of undocumented migrants attempt to cross the border from Mexico into the United States. Drawing on the four major fields of anthropology, De León uses an innovative combination of ethnography, archaeology, linguistics, and forensic science to produce a scathing critique of “Prevention through Deterrence,” the federal border enforcement policy that encourages migrants to cross in areas characterized by extreme environmental conditions and high risk of death. For two decades, this policy has failed to deter border crossers while successfully turning the rugged terrain of southern Arizona into a killing field. In harrowing detail, De León chronicles the journeys of people who have made dozens of attempts to cross the border and uncovers the stories of the objects and bodies left behind in the desert. *The Land of Open Graves* will spark debate and controversy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*The Land of Open Graves* is an invaluable book, one full of rich ethnographic accounts of migrants, sharp analysis, and beautiful photographs by Michael Wells (as well as some by the migrants De León encounters). It is a strong indictment of the violence migrants face, particularly of

a structural sort, and it calls us to "better understand how our worlds are intertwined and the ethical responsibility we have to one another as human beings." It deserves a broad audience."--NACLA Report on the Americas "The Land of Open Graves" is hard to put down. Its violent and vivid content draws you into a reality that we should all know about, and the author's interpretation provides a political and theoretical perspective that challenges conventional beliefs about undocumented migration." (TLS 2016-01-22) "A powerful book . . . The Land of Open Graves is very appropriately published in the California Series in Public Anthropology and represents just what public or engaged anthropology can and should be. . . . This is a book that all parties should read." (Anthropology Review Database 2016-02-20) "Important and gut-wrenching . . . [De León's] engagement with illegal immigration through photography, archeology, forensic science, linguistics, and ethnography is revitalizing in its full encapsulation and acknowledgement of its complexity. . . . I wholly recommend this book." (Border Criminologies) "Everyone should read this book... De León introduces readers to a world that they likely either do not know or wish they could forget." (Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books 2017-01-01)

"De León confronts us with a vivid indictment of the killing fields on the US-Mexico border and reveals the brutality of global inequality in all its goriness and intimate suffering. A self-described refugee from archaeology, De León is revitalizing the field of anthropology by blowing apart the traditional subdisciplinary boundaries. With no holds barred, he offers new paths for theory, methods, and public anthropology." --Philippe Bourgois, author of *Righteous Dopefiend* and *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* "Jason De León has written a remarkable book. I know of no other ethnography of life and death on the borderlands that is more moving, theoretically ambitious, or powerful than this eagerly awaited work." --María Elena García, author of *Making Indigenous Citizens: Identities, Education, and Multicultural Development in Peru* "This book sears itself into your memory. You literally can't put it down." --Stanley Brandes, Robert H. Lowie Professor of Anthropology, UC Berkeley "An impressive piece of scholarship, *The Land of Open Graves* is a brilliant and important book that humanizes the realities of life and death on the migrant trail in southern Arizona." --Randall H. McGuire, author of *Archaeology as Political Action* "Jason De León has written that rare and precious book--a masterful deployment of tools from across the broad spectrum of anthropology." --Danny Hoffman, author of *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia* "The Land of Open Graves is a politically, theoretically, and morally important book that mobilizes the four fields of anthropology to demonstrate beyond a doubt how current US border defense policy results in deliberate death." Beautifully written and

engaging, it is a must-read for the general public and students across the social sciences." --Lynn Stephen, author of *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* and *We Are the Face of Oaxaca: Testimony and Social Movements*

Jason is a former professor of mine, and I was really excited to see that his book had come out. I was not disappointed. It links border policy with its incredibly important humanistic implications. It uses theoretic analysis of bureaucracy alongside some innovative fieldwork to illustrate a truth for people who don't know what's really going on on the border, and in our federal governmental structure. I recommend it to anyone interested in immigration, border issues, or just the general study/intrigue about how seemingly benign power structures perpetuate violence and injustice. Not a happy read, but well well worth it.

This 4-field anthropological approach to border studies is compelling. After reading it I have ended up recommending it to a range of academics as well as my mom's book club and anyone interested in border policy that should hear the difficult and true story of how U.S. Border policy impacts people, bodies, and families.

Loved the book. Written in a style that grabs the reader and carries her/him through a seemingly endless tragedy. Tremendous past and current information on a dark international immigration web. Sometimes even funny. I highly recommend it.

If you have any interest in the stories of people from Mexico, Central American or South America who form our wave of migrants from the south, this is a **MUST READ** book. Fascinating first person stories and great archaeological context. Highly recommended.

I think this book gives great insight on what migrants have to go through when crossing their border to get to America. Even though I do not agree with what the author said about some things, this book was written very well and drew me in from the moment I started reading this book. I would definitely recommend people to read this book to learn a bit about migration and immigration policies.

Jason De Leon is amazing. And this work is one of great breadth of understanding and very intimate knowledge of its subject. A modern classic of anthropology, in my humble opinion.

Powerful award winning book. Well worth reading

Definitely a must-read for anyone living in the United States - or really, anyone who claims to have a heart.

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