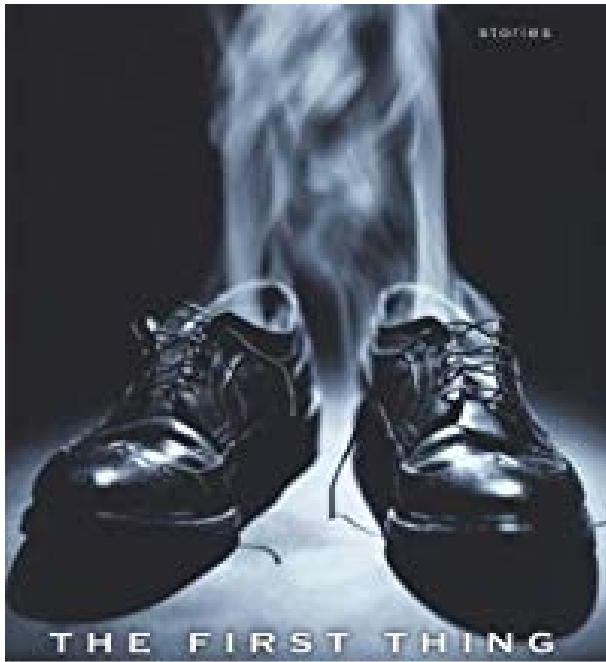


The First Thing Smoking



THE FIRST THING
SMOKING

NELSON EUBANKS

"Part sustained jazz riff, part Hemingway, these narratives in unadorned momentum
spill with almost pleasurable ease. . . . Eubanks writes like a train at full throttle."
—*Book of the Month*

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In dazzling, jazzlike prose that pulses with the rhythm of the street, Nelson Eubanks traces the influences on and evolution of Maceo, from impressionable adolescent to twentysomething man—each interconnected story is a snapshot of memory bursting with emotion. In “Malta Scheffer,” nine-year-old Maceo slips out of a white world of private schools to fade back into his brown world, where stickball and dreams of glory just may provide the ticket out of poverty. “The First Thing Smoking” explores the prejudice and hatred that exist within a family, when skin color varies between darker and lighter shades of black. “Avenida Atlântica” depicts an older Maceo, now in Brazil, as he tries to escape his growing awareness of lust and desire as well as the racial strife and violence of his childhood.