



Immigration

BREAKING THROUGH by Francisco Jiménez. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. 195 pages. A sequel to his award winning novel *The Circuit* (1997), the autobiographical journey of the son in a family of migrant farmworkers continues. Readers come to learn that Panchito, deported to Mexico when it seemed that his hardworking family was finally on the roads to some financial solvency, makes it back to the U.S. with his documentation in order. In the convincing voice of a young adolescent, we hear the details of his life in California in the early sixties. Not only in the fields but also throughout his high school experiences, we see Panchito straddle two worlds. He continues to be the hardworking, dutiful son in an economically struggling immigrant family and also dedicates himself to his role as a conscientious and respected student at Santa Clara High School. The tenacity and resourcefulness of this young man are simply yet powerfully revealed in the ordinary yet extraordinary events he recounts.

CROSSING THE WIRE by Will Hobbs. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. 216 pgs. Hobbs' latest puts a human face on the controversial issue of illegal immigration. No longer able to grow corn profitably in his Mexican village, 15-year-old Victor, who has supported his family since his father's death, resolves to go to El Norte. A well-paced story with information concerning the local geography and customs woven into the plot, readers suffer with Victor as he attempts the dangerous border crossing, jumping trains, fleeing thieves and border officials, and suffering from thirst and hunger. His desperation and fear are completely believable as he faces near-death situations and must decide whom to trust. (6-12)

ENRIQUE'S JOURNEY by Sonia Nazario. Delacorte, 2013. 288 pgs. At its heart, *Enrique's Journey* is a "true story of a boy determined to reunite with his mother." It is a journalist's account of young migrants' traumatic and perilous experiences as they travel unaccompanied from Central America to the United States. Inspired by the family histories of immigrants in her community, Sonia Nazario undertook to thoroughly research and document the experiences of young adults' journey northward. *Enrique's Journey* is a text which addresses both the nuances of the migrants' personal lives as well as the structural forces which influence their decision and affect their journey. It is a gripping narrative. *Enrique's Journey* offers young readers not only an accessible means of deepening their understanding about the issues surrounding immigration, but, more importantly, ample reason to empathize with those who undergo its travails. (Grades 9--12)

Classroom Resources: <http://enriquesjourney.com/educators.html>

From North to South / Del norte al Sur by René Colato Laínez. Illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Children's Book Press, 2010.

Immigration and deportation are foreshadowed in a striking way in the end pages of this bilingual picture book, presenting a detailed map of the major freeways between San Diego and Tijuana. Illustrations with gentle, loving images stand juxtaposed to the depth of pain experienced by young José at the recent deportation of his mother to Mexico. José misses his

mother's bedtime stories and their time spent gardening together, and can hardly wait to see her as Papá's car creeps slowly through border traffic to visit her in Tijuana. (Grades K-3)

JOURNEY OF DREAMS by Marge Pellegrino. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 260 pgs.

In this modern Underground Railroad adventure, Tomasa flees the scorched earth of her Mayan village for safe refuge in the United States. The journey with her father and two brothers takes us over mountains, through rivers and across deserts, and finally into the safety of Arizona's Sanctuary Movement, where her family reunites and begins anew as Guatemalan refugees. Tomasa's narrative woven with Mayan folktales is an important, relevant, and heart-felt history lesson that should be shared so this Central American tragedy is not forgotten. (Grades 6-8)

Classroom Resources:

http://teachinglatinamericathroughliterature.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/vamosaleer_journey-of-dreams_3-29-13.pdf

LA LÍNEA by Ann Jaramillo. Roaring Brook, 2006. 129 pgs.

The hope of reuniting with his parents starts Miguel on his quest to cross the border. Just barely fifteen, Miguel gets a note from his father to seek out help to cross to California. Torn between leaving his grandmother and sister and heading toward a promise for something better, Miguel makes preparations to leave his home. The dangers of being an illegal immigrant forced to use coyotes are compounded when Elena, Miguel's younger sister decides to follow him. This contemporary realistic novel addresses some of the dangers, challenges, and emotions immigrants crossing the border face. (Grades 7- 12) Classroom Resources:

<http://www.lesliepreddy.com/yhba/08-09/Middle/LaLinea-Hult.pdf>

MIGRANT/MIGRANTE by José Manuel Mateo. Illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro. Abrams, 2014.

A Mexican boy tells of his journey to the U.S. with his family. They must face many dangers to cross the border, only to experience the uncertainty felt by all illegal immigrants. The narrative is accompanied by one long, beautifully vivid illustration reminiscent of pre-Hispanic codices, packaged as an accordion-style foldout frieze (all ages).

PANCHO RABBIT AND THE COYOTE: A MIGRANT'S TALE by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams, 2013.

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote opens with festive scenes of the Rabbit family preparing for Papá Rabbit's homecoming. Musicians, family and friends gather to welcome home Papá who had traveled north to work in the carrot and lettuce fields, years before. Plates of mole, rice and beans are prepared in anticipation of his arrival and the house is strung with papel picado. When Papá Rabbit doesn't arrive, his son Pancho decides to sneak away in the dark of the night to find him. The reader follows the young rabbit as he travels north with the aid of a sneaky coyote by train, by river, by tunnel, and by desert. Tonatiuh bravely presents the controversial issue of illegal immigration through the lens of a children's fable. Inspired by 14th century Mixtec codices and traditional folklore, the author / illustrator presents the sometimes startling realities of many modern day immigrants in a form which can be appreciated by both young and old alike. (Grades K-4)

Classroom Resources: <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=36215&a=1>

RETURN TO SENDER by Julia Alvarez. Knopf, 2009. 318 pgs. (Also available in a Spanish

edition: *Devolver al Remitente*)

Return to Sender is as much a book about politics as it is a book about a friendship, and the transformative power it can have to sustain and nurture entire communities even in the midst of chaos. Miraculously the relationship between two young people: one, a VT farm kid who fears his family might not be able to keep their farm in tough economic times, and another, a young Mexican girl who wants only the chance for her family to live safely together, working and supporting themselves with dignity, elucidate some of the major social, political and economic concerns of the day. Alvarez's cast of characters includes people of all ages and political perspectives, and readers cannot help but conclude that getting to really know and understand our neighbors is the only way to improve life for all who live in the United States. (Grades 5---9)

Classroom Resources:

http://laili.unm.edu/outreach/common/educators---guides/2012---02_Return---to---Sender.pdf

http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375858383.pdf

THE CIRCUIT: STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF A MIGRANT CHILD by Francisco Jiménez.
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. 134 pgs. (6-8)

The dream of this family from rural Jalisco, Mexico is to go north, cross la frontera and leave poverty behind. Papá, mamá and two young boys make the long journey and cross the barbed wire barricade without being spotted by la migra. In California, they join “the circuit” of migrant workers following the crops to be picked: strawberries, cotton, carrots. The author poignantly weaves the family’s customs, beliefs and hopes with the cruel reality of never ending migrant labor camps from which escape is nearly impossible. The family’s culture, rich in stories, love, and endurance nurtures its growth to ten members in the new environment where the dream is nearly lost. The independently told stories lend themselves to being read out loud to a wide range of audiences.

Two White Rabbits written by Jairo Buitrago and illustrated by Rafael Yockteng.
Groundwood Books, 2015.

This picture book tells the story of a young girl who is migrating with her father, presumably through Central America or Mexico to the U.S., as she learns to count. Specifics of place and time are questions left to be answered; this story is an invitation to see the world through the girl’s eyes, a place of certain truths and ponderings for which there is no response. Home is not a constant; she has her father and “her” clouds, which offer a vivid world of their own. The realities of border militarization and poverty exist alongside the child’s imagination, keen observation, and an instinct to learn and share. Along the way, she meets and plays with a boy while her father works. Rich and detailed illustrations reveal joys and anxieties of a child’s life lived in motion and the father who cares for her along the way. (Grades K-2)

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