



Children and the Border

Children's and Young Adult Literature (selected from the Américas Award commended and submission lists)

ENRIQUE'S JOURNEY by Sonia Nazario. Delacorte, 2013. 288 pgs. ISBN 978-0385743273.

At its heart, Enrique's Journey is a "true story of a boy determined to reunite with his mother." Factually, 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. The outcome is Enrique's Journey—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. She originally published the research in 2002 with the Los Angeles Times (for which she won a Pulitzer Prize), and since then has adapted it to various audiences, with the most recent iteration tailored to young people. In its latest form, 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>

JOURNEY OF DREAMS by Marge Pellegrino. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 260 pgs. ISBN 978-1-84780-061-9.

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. ISBN 978-1-59643-154-6

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. ISBN 978-1-4197-0957-9 (bilingual)

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).

Classroom Resources: Still being developed. Share your own on Facebook.com/americasaward.

PANCHO RABBIT AND THE COYOTE: A MIGRANT'S TALE by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams, 2013. ISBN 978-1-497-0583-0.

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. ISBN 978-0-375-85838-3. (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

Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature
Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP)
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