

# Américas

BOOK

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

AWARD

## PANCHO RABBIT AND THE COYOTE

• *A Migrant's Tale* •



DUNCAN TONATUXX

PRODUCED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY KATRINA DILLON



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This educator's guide was written to support using *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Produced by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) on behalf of the Américas Award, it was written in 2015 by Katrina Dillon, a project assistant at the University of New Mexico. Editorial support was also provided by UNM graduate assistants Lorraine Archibald and Jacob Sandler.

CLASP founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a commended list of titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the [CLASP website](#).



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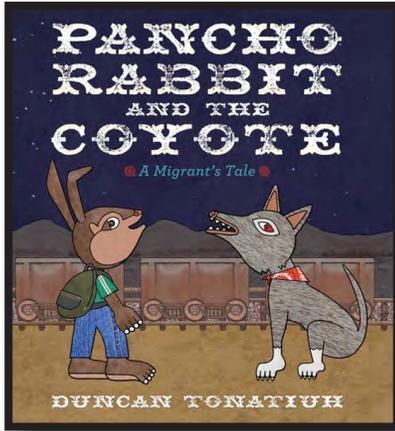


An Educator's Guide to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*

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## OVERVIEW



*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*

Written and Illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

Published 2014 by Abrams Books for Young Readers

ISBN 978-1-4197-0583-0

## THEMES

Family, Community, Survival, Labor, Migration, Immigration, Injustice, Power and Corruption, Hispanic/Latino Culture, US-Mexico History, Spanish Language

## SYNOPSIS

A young rabbit named Pancho eagerly awaits his Papá's return. Papá Rabbit left two years ago to travel far away north to find work in the great carrot and lettuce fields to earn money for his family. When Papá does not return home on the designated day, Pancho sets out to find him. He packs Papá's favorite meal—mole, rice and beans, a heap of still-warm tortillas, and a jug full of fresh aguamile—and heads north. He soon meets a coyote, who offers to help Pancho in exchange for some of Papá's favorite foods. They travel together until the food is gone and the coyote decides he is still hungry. . .for Pancho! Award-winning author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh brings to light the hardship and struggles facing families who seek to make better lives for themselves and their children by illegally crossing the border.

## READING LEVEL

Grades 1-4 / Ages 6-9

## STARRED REVIEWS

“Tonatiuh's great strength is in the text. No word is wasted, as each emotion is clearly and poignantly expressed. The rabbits' future is unknown, but their love and faith in each other sustains them through it all. Accessible for young readers, who may be drawn to it as they would a classic fable; perfect for mature readers and the classroom, where its layers of truth and meaning can be peeled back to be examined and



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discussed. An incandescent, humane and terribly necessary addition to the immigrant-story shelf.”  
—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

“In both prose and art, Tonatiuh expertly balances folkloric elements with stark, modern realities; Pancho Rabbit’s trip has the feel of a classic fable or fairy tale, with the untrustworthy coyote demanding more and more of him.”  
—Publishers Weekly, starred review

“The book shows the fragility of making a living, the desperation that many migrants experience, and the deep family ties that bind the characters. Classrooms studying the migrant experience will find plenty to discuss here.”  
—School Library Journal

“This will spark strong responses and needed discussion.”  
—Booklist

“Tonatiuh is so careful in weaving his allegory that his empathetic contemporary tale feels like age-old folklore, with simple but compelling text and a step-by-step escalation of the story through gripping, kid-understandable challenges.”  
—The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books

## AWARDS

Américas Award Honorable Mention 2014

Pura Belpré Author and Illustrator Honor Book 2014

New York Public Library’s Annual Children’s Books List: 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing 2013

Kirkus Best Books of 2013

Best Multicultural Children’s Books 2013 (Center for the Study of Multicultural Children’s Literature)

Notable Children’s Books from ALSC 2014

Notable Books for a Global Society Book Award 2014



## APPLICABLE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

### K-12 READING

#### Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### K-12 WRITING

#### Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

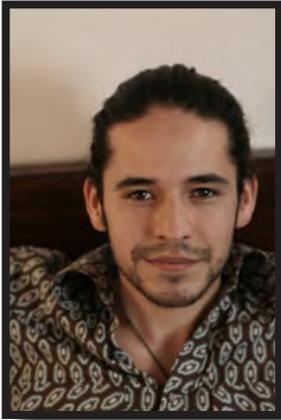
#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



## DUNCAN TONATIUH: AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATION

### ABOUT TONATIUH



Duncan Tonatiuh (toh-nah-tyou) is an award-winning author and illustrator. Tonatiuh was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Miguel de Allende. He graduated from Parsons The New School for Design and from Eugene Lang College in New York City in 2008. His work is inspired by ancient Mexican art, particularly that of the Mixtec codex. His aim is to create images that honor the past, but that address contemporary issues that affect people of Mexican origin on both sides of the border.

In addition to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*, Tonatiuh has published two other children's books, both to notable acclaim. *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* won the 2012 Pura Belpré illustration award and the 2012

Tomás Rivera Mexican-American Children's Book Award. His first book, *Dear Primo; A Letter to My Cousin*, received an honorable mention from the Pura Belpré Award in 2011 and was named an Américas Award Commended Title and a Notable Book for a Global Society List. His most recent book, *Separate is Never Equal*, published in May 2014, tells the frequently overlooked but seminal story of Sylvia Mendez, whose early education experiences in the 1940s resulted in the desegregation of California schools.

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* was published in May 2013 by Abrams Books for Young Readers. I am its author and illustrator. The book can be read on two levels. On the surface it is a story that reads like a fable, a bit like the Little Red Riding Hood or the Gingerbread Man. But the book is also an allegory of the terrible journey that undocumented immigrants go through in order to reach the U.S.

The book begins when a drought forces Papá Rabbit to leave and go North to find work so that he can provide for his family. After some years Papá Rabbit is finally returning. His family prepares a big fiesta for him and they cook his favorite meal: mole, rice and beans, a heap of warm tortillas and a jugful of fresh aguamiel.

Everyone is excited to see him, but it gets late and Papá Rabbit does not come home.

In the middle of the night Pancho Rabbit, the eldest son, packs Papá his favorite meal and decides to look for him. Along the way he meets a sneaky coyote who offers to help him. They travel together on top of a train, they cross a river, they use a tunnel guarded by snakes and they cross the desert. Every time the coyote helps Pancho he asks him for some of Papá's food until the food runs out and the coyote decides he's still hungry ...for Pancho!



## An Educator's Guide to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*

In Spanish the word *coyote* has two meanings: it is the name of an animal, but it is also slang for a person who smuggles people between the U.S. and Mexico border. Immigrants pay coyotes exorbitant fees for their help. They put their lives in the coyote's hands and they have no guarantees that they will reach their destination. According to a 2010 Pew Research Center report, 11.2 million undocumented immigrants live in the U.S. An average of 150,000 unauthorized immigrants enter the U.S. each year. Most of them are from Mexico and Central America. They leave their home countries due to poverty, violence and lack of opportunities.

Central American migrants travel around five thousand miles on top of trains to cross Mexico. It is extremely dangerous. Because of their undocumented status they are vulnerable and they are often the victims of gangs that steal from them and abuse them.

Some migrants never reach their destination. According to the American Civil Liberty's Union and Mexico's National Human Right's Commission, between 350 and 500 migrants die every year. That number is most likely a lot higher because many migrants that die while trying to reach the U.S. are never found or claimed. Some drown while trying to cross the river that separates Mexico and the U.S. Many more die of dehydration while crossing the desert.

It is not only young men that go on this journey. Women and children also go on this journey. There are an estimated 1.5 million undocumented children in the U.S.

Immigration comes in and out of the news cycle. But when it is discussed, it is usually in abstract terms. Instead of focusing on the experience of actual people, politicians discuss immigrants as a statistic in the economy. Or worse, when we hear of immigrants in the media, it is with negative and sensational tones. Undocumented immigrants are often equated with terrorists and drug traffickers, when in reality almost all immigrants are hard working people trying to provide for their families. In 2008, 94% of undocumented immigrant men of working age were employed compared to 83% of U.S. born men.

*Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote* has been well received by teachers, librarians, professors and parents. Some people have called the book liberal propaganda though. My book does not advocate for open borders or for a giant border fence protected by drones. Instead, it tries to focus on the terrible journey that migrants go through and the separation that families experience.

According to a 2011 Pew Hispanic Research Center report, in 2008 there were 5.5 million children of undocumented immigrants in U.S. schools. I think it is important to make books that resonate with them, with their parents and that generate empathy and understanding from their classmates.



## CLASSROOM RELEVANCE AND APPLICATIONS

Duncan Tonatiuh's *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* is one of those rare books that has value in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. As was mentioned in Tonatiuh's author's note, the book can be read on two levels, both as a fable and as an allegory. As a fable, it's accessible to young readers, while as an allegory, it's appropriate for older readers who can analyze and discuss the multiple layers and the sociopolitical message of the tale.

With animals as the main characters, the fable-like nature of the tale allows students to engage with the migrant story both intellectually and emotionally, while at the same time separating it from its often emotionally charged and politically biased presentation in the media. Interestingly, taking the human face away from the story actually allows the reader to engage more fully with the reality of immigration. It takes the conversation away from the abstract, and focuses instead on the real experience of the migrant. Through simple and clear language and illustrations, Tonatiuh conveys a great deal of emotion without becoming melodramatic.

Immigration is a complex issue, as Tonatiuh discusses in his author's note. Yet media portrayal often is overly-simplified and at times one-sided. Immigrants are dehumanized, described as illegals and aliens. Broad stroke generalizations suggest that the majority are violent criminals, drug dealers or terrorists. It is here that Tonatiuh's story can be quite powerful, offering a counter narrative to this depiction. This reading can be the bridge that allows students to delve into the complexity of the issue, really looking at all the factors that contribute to the need for people to leave their homes and travel to a new country, no matter the risk. As Tonatiuh writes:

In order to reach long-lasting solutions both the U.S. and the Mexican and Central American governments and societies need to be involved. On the one hand the immigrant's home countries have to improve living conditions and create better opportunities for their citizens so they are not forced to leave. On the other hand the U.S. needs to admit its dependency on undocumented workers to do much of its manual and domestic labor and to provide legal and safe working opportunities for those seeking employment. Undocumented immigrants are a huge and important part of the U.S. workforce. According to a Pew Research Center study in 2005, 7.2 million undocumented workers were working in low skilled and often grueling jobs, like farming and construction. Only 31% of U.S.-born workers hold those occupations (Author's Note).

The book easily lends itself to content specific connections through interdisciplinary activities. A number of geography, social studies and literacy standards can be addressed through the resources and suggested activities on immigration provided in the following pages. For example, older students can research the multiple push-pull factors that continue to encourage wide-spread migration throughout the Americas, and then prepare for a class debate in which they discuss the complexity of the issue.

Tonatiuh's beautiful illustrations provide another way to make important connections across content areas.



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In Tonatiuh's TEDTalk he explains how his own experience with immigrants of Mixtec heritage provided the inspiration for adapting the ancient codices in his modern illustrations. These illustrations create the opportunity to discuss both Mixtec history and art as a medium for social justice.

In the last year, there has been huge growth through social media in the push to provide more diverse literature for our students. If this is the first you're hearing about this, definitely check out [We Need Diverse Books](#). This movement comes from the belief that (1) all children deserve to see themselves reflected in empowering ways in literature, and (2) all students should be culturally competent with an understanding of the diverse cultures, experiences and realities that make up our world. *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* accomplishes both of these things. As Tonatiuh observes above, in 2008 there were 5.5 million children of undocumented immigrants in U.S. schools. With this in mind it's quite clear why we need a book that depicts the reality of immigration. Those 5 students deserve books that tell their story, and their classmates need books to help them understand that story.



## LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the book with students, you may want to introduce some of the important themes, activate any prior knowledge, and generate interest and anticipation through the following activities and/or discussion questions:

#### ACTIVITY 1: OBSERVATION CHARTS

As the title suggests, migration and immigration are important themes in the story. Observation charts are one way to introduce these themes and begin a classroom discussion.

##### Preparation:

Find images through an internet search engine, magazines, or newspapers that represent migration and/or immigration that will be thought-provoking and interesting to students. You only need one copy of each image. Glue each image to the top of a large piece of butcher paper or poster board to create the observation charts. Write the following questions where they can be viewed by all students: “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?”

##### Process:

1. Explain to the students that they are going to be working in small groups. Each group will rotate around the room to view and discuss each image. One person will be the secretary at each table. When looking at an image, students will spend at least one minute silently reflecting on what they see and the questions “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?” Then, students will discuss their thoughts in the small group. The secretary will record their reflections and answers to the questions on the observation chart. Sticky notes can also be used to record the group's thoughts. Explain to students that they will have a set amount of time at each image. When time is up, the teacher will give a signal and each group will move to the next image.
2. Divide students into small groups. Place an image and marker at various tables or stations in the classroom. Direct each group to the table or station where they will begin. Begin the activity. Continue rotating groups through the images until each group has seen each image.
3. Hang up all of the observation charts with comments. As a whole group, discuss each image, giving students time to share and respond to what they posted. Keep the charts posted throughout the reading and discussion of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*. Allow students to revisit them, and discuss them as they think more about what the images represent.

This activity can also be used as an alternative version of a picture walk by using images from *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* for the observation charts. For images from the book, see the appendix.

**Note:** To reuse the observation charts in different classes or subsequent years, laminate each chart and use



sticky notes for students to record their thoughts and reflections.

## ACTIVITY 2: PICTURE WALK

### Process:

1. Pique students' interest, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the book through a picture walk.
2. Show students the front and back cover of the book. Ask them to predict what they think the story will be about. Then, slowly flip through the pages of the book without reading any of the words. Ask students questions about each picture they see, guiding them to make inferences based upon what they see. Focus on who, what, when, where, why and how questions such as: "What is happening here?" "What will happen next?" "Who do you think this is?" "How does this character feel?" "How does this picture make you feel?" "Where does the story take place?" "How do you think the story will end?"
3. Once students have read the book, return to their thoughts and predictions, comparing them to the actual events of the story.

## ACTIVITY 3: GENRE STUDY THROUGH FABLE

### Process:

1. Preview or review the definition of a fable with students and prepare them to look for elements of a fable in *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* using the following questions:
  - What is a fable? (Fable: A short story, typically with animals as characters, that conveys a moral.)
  - Is a fable fiction or non-fiction? How can we know?
  - Can you think of any other stories that you've read that are fables or allegories? Have we read any other fables in class? What lessons did we learn from those stories?
  - As we read *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*, be thinking about how this fable compares to others. How is it like other fables we've read? How is it different?

## ACTIVITY 4: THINK, PAIR, SHARE: MIGRANTS, IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION

### Process:

1. Access prior knowledge and engage students in a discussion of relevant themes of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*.
2. Write the words "immigrant," "migrant," and "immigration" on three separate large pieces of butcher paper. Hang the papers where they can be seen by the whole class.
3. Read each word out loud to the class. Ask students to think about the words.
  - What do they think of when they hear the three words?
  - What pictures come to mind?
  - What feelings?



## An Educator's Guide to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*

- What do they associate with these words?
4. Ask students to write down their thoughts about these questions.
  5. Once students have written their thoughts down, have them share at least one of their thoughts with a partner.
  6. Ask for volunteers to share at least one of their thoughts with the class. As they share, write down their response on the appropriate butcher paper poster.
  7. Once the class has read *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*, return to the posters. Ask students if they would add anything new to the posters now that they've read the fable. How did their thoughts compare to what was presented in the story?

### GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

1. Why do the animals leave to go north? What do they hope they will be able to do?
  - Make a personal connection: Have you ever known anyone who had to leave their home, city, or country to find work?
2. Where do you think the story is set? Use details from the story and illustrations to explain your answer.
3. What does the Spanish word *fiesta* mean? Encourage students to use context clues in surrounding sentences and illustrations to determine the meaning if they are unfamiliar with Spanish.
4. How does Papá Rabbit's family prepare to celebrate his return from El Norte? What kinds of food, decorations and music do they prepare?
  - Make a personal connection: What kinds of things do your family and friends do to celebrate an important occasion?
  - Make a prediction: What do you think could have kept Señor Rabbit from arriving home?
  - Make a personal connection: How would you have felt if you were Pancho Rabbit? Would you have been worried?
5. What does Pancho Rabbit pack for his trip to find his father? Use context clues to determine the meaning of *mochila*.
6. Do you think it's a good idea for Pancho Rabbit to leave on his own? Why or why not? What could happen to Pancho Rabbit while he's travelling alone?
7. Who agrees to help Pancho Rabbit get to El Norte to find his father? Make an inference: Do you think the coyote is trustworthy? Why or why not?
  - Make a prediction: What does Pancho Rabbit have to give the coyote in exchange for his help? Why does he decide to give this to the coyote? Do you think this is the only thing the coyote will ask for?
8. What must Pancho Rabbit and the coyote do on the first part of the trip? Is this safe?
9. What do Pancho Rabbit and the coyote have to do once they jump off the train?
10. What does Pancho Rabbit have to trade in order to get through the tunnel?
  - Make a personal connection: Imagine you are crawling through the tunnel with Pancho Rabbit. What is it like? How do you feel?
11. What is it like crossing the desert? How does the temperature of the desert change at night?



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12. What happens when the coyote realizes that Pancho Rabbit has no more food to give him?
13. Who saves Pancho Rabbit? How did they know that Pancho Rabbit was in trouble?
14. What kept Papá Rabbit, Señor Rooster and Señor Ram from returning home? What was taken from them?
15. Think about what happened both to Pancho Rabbit and Papá Rabbit. Is it easy or safe to cross the desert to El Norte? What is the return trip like? What are the risks of these trips?



## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

### REFLECTION ON THE MEANING OF FABLE

#### Process:

1. What elements of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* make it a fable?
  - In what ways do the animals act like people?
  - What is the main problem in the story?
2. All fables have a moral or lesson to be learned. What do you think is the moral of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*? Explain your answer using details from the story.
3. Compare and contrast the story with other fables you've read. Choose one fable you remember. Create a Venn Diagram to chart your information. What does the other fable have in common with *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*? How are the two fables different? Using your Venn Diagram, write a short essay comparing and contrasting the two fables.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON THE MEANING OF ALLEGORY

#### Process:

1. While *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* is a fable, it is also an allegory. Review the definition of an allegory with students (Allegory: a story, poem or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically the characters and events are symbols that stand for ideas about human life or for a political or historical situation). Reread the story looking for the elements of allegory. Discuss the following questions: What political and/or historical situation is represented in the story?
  - What groups are represented by the different characters in the story? Why choose a coyote as the character to guide Pancho Rabbit to El Norte? Are coyotes generally good or bad characters in stories and cartoons? What is the double meaning of coyote? Who do you think the snakes represent? Look at their caps. What do these remind you of? Why choose snakes as the guards of the border? Are snakes generally trustworthy characters in stories and cartoons?
  - Who do Papá Rabbit, Señor Rooster and Señor Ram represent? Pancho Rabbit? Use details from the story and illustrations to support and explain your answers.
2. What is the hidden meaning or the moral of the allegory? What larger statement or message do you think Tonatiuh is trying to make through the allegory?



## PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED RESPONSE

### Process:

1. Retell the sequence of events: Describe the different parts of Pancho Rabbit's trip to find his father. What different things must he do in order to get to El Norte? Is this a dangerous trip to take?
2. If Pancho's family does have to move to the U.S., what advice would you give him that would help him adapt to life in the U.S.? Imagine Pancho joins your class. How would you help him adjust? What things may be difficult for him to adapt to? What could you do to make the transition easier? What do you think Pancho would be feeling during his first week as a member of your class, in a new school, in a new country?
3. Think about what you've read or seen in the media or heard friends or family say about immigrants. In what ways are immigrants presented in the media? In what ways does the story counter what is often presented in the media about immigration and migrants? What are the reasons given for why people immigrate to the United States?

## COMPLEMENTARY RESOURCES/ACTIVITIES

In addition to the exercises we have provided here for pre-and post-reading, we invite you to view another resource focused on using *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote* as an anchor text. Caroline Sweet, a teacher in Austin, Texas, has created an excellent website which provides lesson plans for Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. You can find her resources here: <https://sites.google.com/site/panchorabbit/home>



## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS: MESOAMERICA OVERVIEW

Here we've provided background information on the Mesoamerican connections to Duncan Tonatiuh's *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*. We draw this connection to Mesoamerica for multiple reasons. Although Tonatiuh's writing and illustrations are deeply informed by current events surrounding immigration between Latin America and the U.S., his work is also artistically inspired by the ancient cultures of Mexico and Central America. As we introduce his work to students, it behooves us to mention how his writing and illustrations draw on these ancient cultures through multiple means.

The information that we provide here can be used either to inform the educator with background knowledge; integrated where appropriate into the lesson plans for the book; or used as an in-class reading depending upon the age and reading level of the students. We focus first on providing an overview of Mesoamerica and exploring its connection to the text.

### What is Mesoamerica?

Mesoamerica represents a particular geographic area during a particular period of time. Geographically, Mesoamerica includes the land between central Mexico in the north and Costa Rica in the south. The term roughly pertains to the time period 10,000 BC up to and through the Early Colonial period - a not insignificant time totaling approximately 3,000 years. Researchers have determined that many of the societies of the time shared similarities among their religions, art, city planning, and technology. These ancient cultures have developed over time into the societies which we know and recognize as belonging to the countries of Central America (Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico).

Within Mesoamerica's long era, the region's many cultures underwent significant social and technological advances which we characterize in part by using anthropological time periods. 10,000 BC, for instance, marks the beginning of the Paleo-Indian period, which is defined by a rise in agricultural techniques and permanent, sedentary settlements. This time period also coincides with the rise in agricultural societies in other parts of the world, including in north Africa, the Middle East and the Far East. The next period is the Archaic (3500 BC – 2000 BC), during which time agriculture, tool-making and inter-regional commerce were further developed, including a rise in pottery and textile production. Next, we enter the Pre-Classic period (2000 BC – 200 BC), sometimes referred to as the "Formative" period. During this time, the styles of artisan products, languages and cosmologies begin to become distinct from one another, forming Mesoamerica's earliest cultures, including the Olmec, the Zapotec and the Maya. The Classic period (200 CE – 1000 CE) is defined by the rise of city-states, including the construction of many metropolises we have now come to know as "ruins". These city-states flourished, trade increased, artisan production and cosmology became politicized, and the Zapotec even began to develop a system of writing. The Post-Classic period (1000 CE – 1697 CE) begins with the depopulation of Mesoamerican city-states, and a vast social and political reorganization of power in the region. Exactly why the city-states collapsed is still an ongoing debate amongst researchers, however, during the centuries that followed, technological advancement continued,



and eventually new groups of people came to power, including the Mixtec, the Toltec and the Aztec. Some argue that 1697 marks the end of the Post-classic period and, in turn, the end of Mesoamerican chronology because it was in this year that the last independent group of Maya ceded to colonial power.

Below is a map of Mesoamerica juxtaposed with contemporary country boundaries, and on the following page is a timeline illustrating how the pertinent anthropological periods coincide with the development of Mesoamerican cultures, including the Olmec, Zapotec, Maya, Mixtec, and Aztec.



Map of Mesoamerica geography overlaid with contemporary country boundaries. Reprinted from Look Into Mexico. Originally derived from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico, 2007, elaborado por Magdalena Juárez.

# Timeline of Mesoamerican Societies and Anthropological Periods

**MAYA**  
1000 BC - CE 1521



**OLMEC**  
1200 - 400 BC



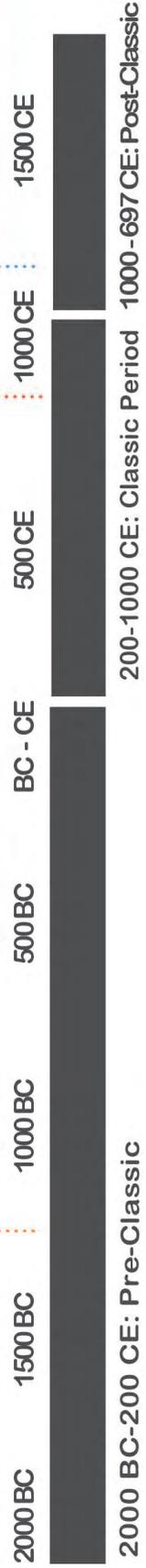
**ZAPOTEC**  
500 BC - CE 1000



**MIXTEC**  
CE 900 - 1521



**AZTEC**  
CE 1200 - 1521





## Who are the People of Mesoamerica?

Given the limited scope of this guide, we cannot elaborate on all of the peoples of Mesoamerica, who most recognizably consisted of the Olmec, Zapotec, Maya, Mixtec, and Aztec. Instead, we turn our attention to the specific culture which arguably has the greatest connection to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*: The Mixtec. Although all of the Mesoamerican cultures contributed to modern-day Mexico and the United States, and hence may be connected to Tonatiuh's work, we explicitly want to draw attention to the Mixtec culture for their use of fables, including trickster tales, and their codices. We also highlight the Zapotec culture as a means of distinguishing Mixtec practices as unique within the region.

The Mixtecs, along with their rival neighbors, the Zapotecs, were one indistinct group of people until the second century BC, when the Zapotec nation took control of Monte Alban and much of the Valley of Oaxaca. It was not until distinct language dialects, separated by the mountains and valleys, evolved into their own distinct languages that the Mixtec and Zapotec identities diverged into distinct groups (between 100 BC and 300 CE). Along with distinct languages came identity building practices that include more distinct styles of art, pottery, community life, cosmology, religion, war practices, and, of course, styles and forms of storytelling and creation mythology. During the pre-Classic period (2000BC-200 CE), after the Zapotec center at Monte Alban was largely depopulated, a rapid rise in Mixtec militarization coincided with a Mixtec takeover of the Valley of Oaxaca and surrounding regions, and they would remain the most powerful group until the Aztec conquered much of the area during the 14th and 15th centuries.

Due to their history as “sister cultures”, the Mixtec and the Zapotec traditions highlight many distinct differences between them. While Zapotecs like to highlight their claim to Monte Alban, the earliest Mesoamerican writing systems and their rich cultural heritage in the development of the Valley of Oaxaca, the Mixtecs like to highlight their incredible rise to power during the Post-Classic and their retaking of the Valley of Oaxaca. Mixtecs, unlike Zapotec, became skilled goldsmiths and used other precious minerals, such as turquoise, to create products unlike any others in the region. By the time the Aztecs arrived, shortly before the Conquest of Mexico City, the Mixtec and Zapotec shared the Valley and were spread out throughout the region. Today, outside of the Valley, Zapotecs have spread east and south, while the Mixtecs have spread north and west. The largest concentration of Zapotec speakers today is in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, near Chiapas, while the Mixtec are spread through the Sierra Mountains, and into the bordering states of Puebla and Guerrero. For this reason, the Mixtecs have a much stronger historical connection to the valleys of Central Mexico, while the Zapotecs tend to have more of a historical connection with the Maya and other people of the Central American isthmus region.

Photo credits for timeline (previous page): Olmec: “Olmec Head No. 3 from San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan” reprinted CC © Maribel Ponce Ixba; Maya: “Mujer Maya de Jaina” reprinted CC © Thomas Aleto; Zapotec: “Zapotec urn with a seated man, from Oaxaca, Oaxaca, circa 350 A.D.” reprinted CC © Jami Dwyer; Mixtec: “Mixtec Rain God Vessel” reprinted CC © ; Aztec: “Mexico-3748 - Aztec Calendar” reprinted CC © Dennis Jarvis.



## ACTIVITY I: HISTORY: CONTEXTUALIZING THROUGH TIMELINES

1. Create a basic timeline on long chart paper (you might use the timeline including in this section as a beginning guide).
2. As students read the introductory section on Mesoamerica, mark significant dates and periods on the timeline. This is especially helpful to contextualize if students have already studied other historical events during these same time periods. If a timeline of this historical period has already been created for a previous unit, the dates and events specific to Mesoamerica can be added to that timeline to encourage students to make connections to and access prior knowledge of the period.



## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS: MESOAMERICAN FABLES

Here, and in the following section, we turn our attention away from the region overall to focus on particular facets of Mesoamerican culture. For the moment, this entails looking at fables and trickster myths. We address these because Tonatiuh's work is not only an exquisite collection of artistic illustrations, but also a creative retelling of an ancient Mesoamerican trickster myth, adapted to the modern-day issue of immigration across the Mexico-U.S. Border.

### A MIGRANT'S TALE: A CONTEMPORARY RETELLING OF AN ANCIENT MESOAMERICAN FABLE

The rabbits and the coyotes included in Tonatiuh's work may be considered a regional expression of what is a worldwide collection of trickster myths adopted by many cultures, similar perhaps to the spider trickster myths in certain regions of Africa, the fox in Japan, or the turtle in South America. "Trickster tales" are texts which include a mischievous character who, by and large, uses cunning instead of brute strength in order to overcome a challenge. These stories tend to include archetypal narratives that pair characters who are either clever or stupid, weak or strong, deceived or deceiving, and so forth. The animals who feature in the stories are often derived from their surrounding culture, and thus vary from country to country.

Although Tonatiuh's work is not explicitly based on a single definitive trickster tale, or a single version of the rabbit and coyote fable, his story bears resemblances to many Mesoamerican versions of the rabbit and the coyote tale. Consider this striking image from a Zapotec version of the rabbit and coyote myth: The rabbit tricks the coyote into riding on his back in order to cross a river-border; the coyote plans to eat the rabbit on the other side, but the rabbit escapes due to intellect and help from his community. This indigenous version certainly bears a resemblance to Tonatiuh's iteration. In Tonatiuh's story, the coyote again seems to trick brave, albeit naïve, rabbit. Just as in the Zapotec version, Tonatiuh's rabbit character triumphs, this time with the support of his family and overall virtues/

Although the precise origin of the rabbit and coyote stories is uncertain, their variations and retellings contain several recurring characteristics. The rabbit and coyote are always corollary protagonist and antagonist, and the former always outwits the latter. It may be that some of the earliest occurrences of the fables were meant to teach children the power of education and intellect. They illustrated that physical strength and



Rabbit and coyote fable illustration reprinted from "Biui' Di-idxa," Cultural House of Juchitan, Oaxaca, 1993.



## An Educator's Guide to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*

violence were not the best way to overcome obstacles.

And as we discuss the significance of pitting rabbit against coyote, we cannot help but address the contemporary allusions interwoven into Tonatiuh's work. In ancient fables, the term "coyote" referred to the furred animal, a symbolic creature which appears throughout Native American and Mesoamerican lore. In the modern context, however, it refers to the colloquial or slang term for individuals who smuggle humans across the U.S.-Mexico border: smugglers are known as *coyotes*.

Returning to the not-so-coincidental historical/contemporary meaning of "coyote," we can see how Tonatiuh offers a much deeper connection between the two – one that goes beyond mere wordplay. The ancient trickster myth bears remarkable similarities to the current practice of illicit, dangerous border immigration. Immigrants without legal documentation often pay exorbitant fees to human smugglers, known as *coyotes*, in exchange for guided passage between Mexico and the United States. The *coyotes* then enact, in many respects, the same role that the furred animal plays in the ancient fable: guiding the more vulnerable individual, the immigrant (represented in the fable as the rabbit) toward his or her destination. Much as the furred coyote tries to manipulate the rabbit in the fable, so too do human *coyotes* often manipulate the border crossing to their lucrative advantage. *Coyotes* are known to murder, sell, or otherwise "lose" the immigrants whom they have guaranteed safe passage.

The contemporary, human version of events often has a grim outcome. Far too many immigrants fail to cross the border illicitly, perishing in the process. Yet Tonatiuh veers away from this dark outcome. Instead, he stays true to the Mesoamerican roots of the rabbit and coyote folktale, ensuring that the rabbit outwits the coyote. In Tonatiuh's blended world of fable and reality, the nimble rabbit outwits the treacherous coyote; the resourceful immigrant escapes the greedy and inhumane coyotes.



## ACTIVITY 2: LITERATURE THROUGH GENRE: TRICKSTER TALES & FABLES

1. If appropriate for student reading levels, read the background section provided above: “A Migrant’s Tale: A Contemporary Retelling of an Ancient Mesoamerican Fable.”
2. Review a working definition of a trickster tale with students (one is provided below).  
*Trickster Tale: A short story that often uses animals as the main characters. These stories typically explain something about a specific culture, usually connected to how people act or behave and why. Many times they include a moral or lesson.*
3. As a class, brainstorm any other trickster tales students have read, either as a class or individually. If this is the first trickster tale students have read, choose at least one other trickster tale from the list provided in the list of resources at the end of this guide, and read with the class. This could be expanded into a longer genre study unit by reading more of the titles suggested.
4. Using the following questions, have students create a table to evaluate *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote* and another trickster tale of their choosing.
  - Who are the main characters?
  - What is the setting?
  - What is the problem or conflict? What creates the conflict in the story?
  - Who is the trickster?
  - What is the climax of the story?
  - How is the problem resolved?
  - What is the moral or lesson to the story?
5. Using the table they created above, have students create a Venn Diagram comparing the two trickster tales.



## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS: MESOAMERICAN CODICES

At first glance, *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote* may seem like a standard, straightforward children's book. We ruptured that viewpoint when, in the previous section, we discussed that its narrative is actually archetypal and culturally rooted. Now we turn our attention to its visual components and find a similarly complex meaning behind the beautiful, two-dimensional illustrations. In point of fact, Tonatiuh's artwork draws on Mexican history as much as his text does; the visuals are explicitly based on the pictographic style of ancient Mesoamerican historical documents known as codices, or "codex" in the singular. In particular, Tonatiuh drew upon Mixtec codices from the 14th century as inspiration for his illustration style.

### WHAT IS A CODEX?

A codex is a book defined according to its physical composition. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it is a "book made up of a number of sheets of paper, vellum, papyrus, with hand-written content, either stacked or folded concertina-style [accordion-style]". In this light, a codex can also be called a "manuscript." The term "codex" does not imply a geographical origin; it does, however, carry an implied historical time period depending on the region of origin. In the case of Mesoamerica, the few pre-Columbian codices that survived were produced during the post-Classic era (1000 CE – 1520), and many more were produced under colonial rule in the following centuries.

It is unclear exactly how many different cultures produced codices before the arrival of the Europeans due to terrible book burning practices and other forces that effect the preservation of such documents. However, we do know that among the cultures who produced pre-Columbian codices were the Mixtec, the Aztec and the Maya. Different from colonial-era codices, these manuscripts were often folded in an accordion style and utilized a highly developed system of pictographic writing. Contemporary research is beginning to reveal that these systems of writing were even more than simply pictographic, but that each symbol could carry a meaning that transcended the glyph itself, a type of deferred referentiality previously thought only to pertain to Old World phonetic alphabets.

Mesoamerican codices contain narratives that are told pictographically, using complex systems of symbols and calendric dates. The manuscripts are folded "accordion style" and the pictographic text is painted on long strips of deer hide, cloth or bark paper. Depending on how the codex was intended to be presented (hung against a wall or held up by hand), the text may have been painted on either one side or both. Across all of the codices of this region and era, the pictographs are similarly illustrated with recurring characteristics.

Among the codices that have survived until the present day, by far one of the most colorful, exquisite and most studied, is the Mixtec Codex Zouche-Nuttall. This document was produced in the 14th century by the Mixtec. Not unlike other Mesoamerican codices, it provided a collective historical account of the authors' society. The codex provides a list of past rulers, their genealogies, names and dates of important battles and



conquests as well as names of various cities throughout their region in the mountain-highlands of present-day Oaxaca, which during those centuries was one of the most highly contested areas in Mesoamerica (*Divergent Histories*, Marcus and Flannery). To illustrate these descriptions, we provide examples from the Mixtec Codex Zouche-Nuttall below.



Illustration from the Codex Zouche-Nuttall, folio 20. Reprinted from the public domain courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

## WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY CODICES?

Artist and author Lila Quintero Weaver, writing on behalf of the blog *Latinos in Kid Lit*, has broken codex illustrations down into the following components: strong outlines of external and internal shapes, flat colors within those shapes, faces of humans and animals represented in profile, and a stylized perspective (rugs, tables, and other flat surfaces do not recede in space, but appear vertically situated). Weaver has also distinguished how Tonatiuh's work adapts and shifts codex characteristics: modern settings, elements of collage, textured surfaces (something with photographic fidelity), and facial expressions that raise emotional content. In a recent TedEx presentation titled "[Life on the other side / La vida en el otro lado](#)," Tonatiuh discusses how he was inspired by the artwork in Mixtec codices and how he drew upon it for his own illustrations.



### ACTIVITY 3: ART: A STUDY OF ANCIENT AND MODERN CODICES

1. To introduce your students to codices, as a class view Duncan Tonatiuh's TEDx Talk "[Life on the other side/ La vida en el otro lado](#)." In this video, Tonatiuh employs both modern images and ancient iconographies to tell the untold story of loss that Mexicans feel for their family members who make the dangerous journey to America as undocumented workers. He also explains the inspiration for using the style of Mixtec art in his illustrations.
2. Display the provided images of codices for students (see following pages).
3. Using the background information provided previously, define codex/codices with students. Definition from the Oxford English Dictionary: A codex is a book made up of a number of sheets of paper, vellum, papyrus, with hand-written content, either stacked or folded concertina-style [accordion style]. Return to the images, pointing out the different aspects of the definition in the images.
4. In her review of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*, Lila Quintero Weaver provides the following list as a means to identify the main characteristics of Mixtec art. Review her list with students, then return to the images to point out these characteristics.
  - Strong outlines of external and internal shapes
  - Flat colors within those shapes
  - Faces of humans and animals represented in profile
  - Stylized perspective—rugs, tables, other flat surfaces do not recede in space, but appear vertically placed
5. Weaver also provides a list of the ways in which Tonatiuh adapts the Mixtec style in his illustrations. Review the following with students, returning to Tonatiuh's illustrations to point out these characteristics of his work.
  - Modern settings
  - Elements of collage
  - Textured surfaces, sometimes with photographic fidelity
  - Facial expressions that raise emotional content

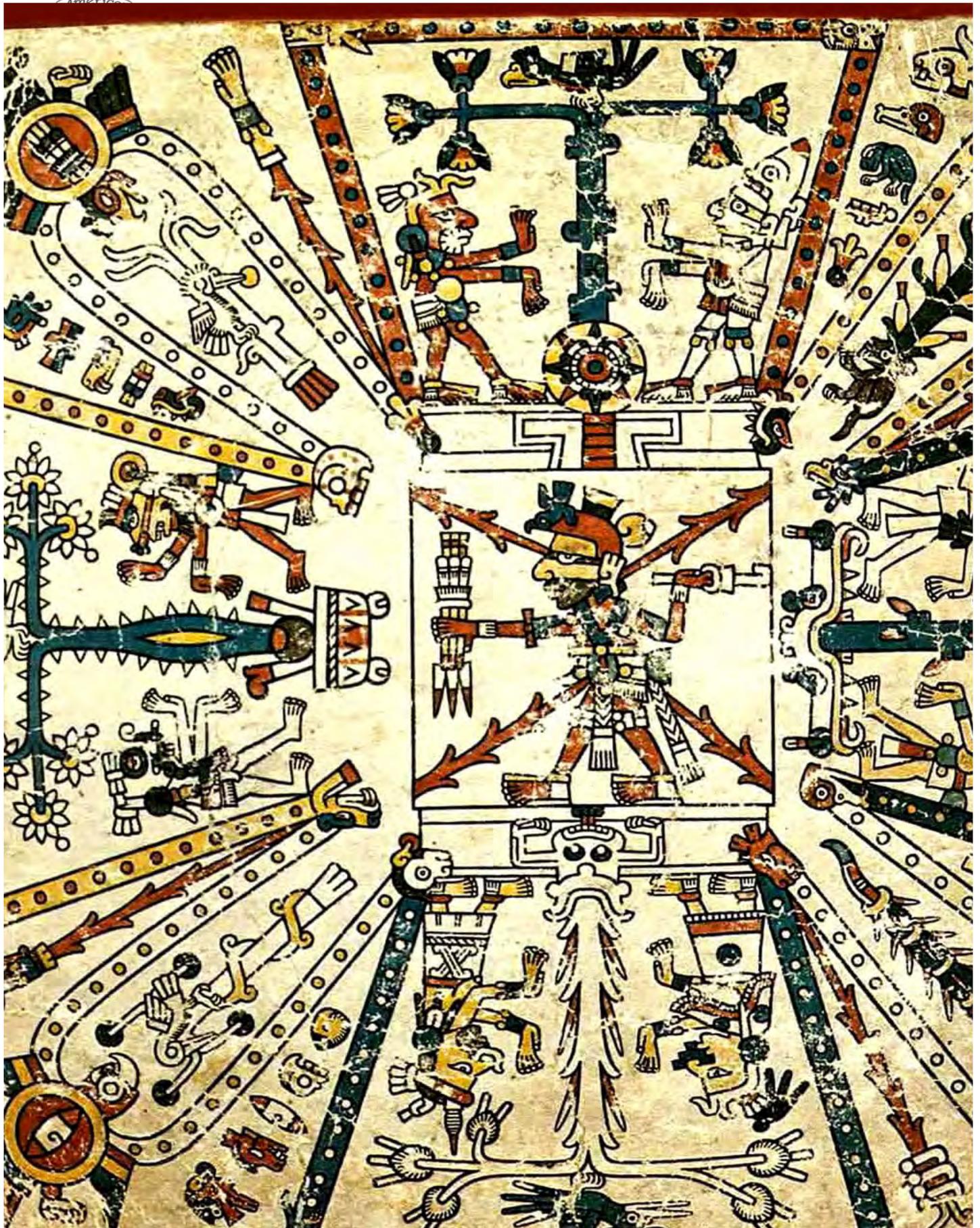
### ACTIVITY 4: ART: ILLUSTRATING IMMIGRATION WITH CONTEMPORARY CODICES

1. As a class, conduct research to create a list of influential people (historical or contemporary) who immigrated to the U.S.
2. Have each student choose one person from the list to research in more depth.
3. Once the research is completed, each student will write a short essay on his or her chosen person, including where the person is originally from, why he or she immigrated to the U.S., what it was like adjusting to life in the U.S., and why the student consider this person to be influential.
4. Once the essay is completed, the students will choose an important event or experience from this person's life to illustrate. Create the illustration in the style of a modern codex, keeping in mind the characteristics of the codices discussed above -- both the traditional format as well as Tonatiuh's innovations.





A reproduction from the Codex Zouche-Nuttall. Reprinted from public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



First page of the Codex Fejérváry-Mayer. Reprinted from public domain via Wikimedia Commons.



Detail of Codex Borgia. Drawing by Lacambalam. [www.flickr.com/photos/lacambalam](http://www.flickr.com/photos/lacambalam). Reprinted from the illustrator via Wikimedia Commons.



## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS: IMMIGRATION

Immigration is a complex subject, and teaching about it can be equally complicated. There are so many different ways one can approach a unit on immigration. The context in which one is teaching is of paramount importance. Not only do we need to consider the age/grade level of the students, but also students' own personal backgrounds and family histories. For some students this is an incredibly personal topic that brings up feelings of fear and anxiety. Others may appreciate the space to talk about their families' experiences. As with any lesson, it's important to consider the needs of your students and plan accordingly. With this in mind, we've provided a variety of lesson plans and resources below that can be used in conjunction with *Pancho Rabbit and Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*.

### APPROACH 1: LITERACY CONNECTIONS:

To expand the literacy connections made when using *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*, consider including the readings discussed below in a unit on immigration.

#### First Crossing: A Short Story

In "First Crossing" Pam Muñoz Ryan tells the story of a young boy who crosses the U.S. Mexico along with his father using the help of a coyote. The short story was first published in the book *First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants* (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2004). It is also available in the Rethinking Schools publication *The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration* (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2006)

#### Process:

1. Read "First Crossing" either individually, in pairs, or as a whole-class read aloud.
2. Compare Marcos' experience with that of Pancho Rabbit. Have students discuss any similarities and differences in the two stories.
3. Ask students to imagine that they are Marcos. Then, have students write a journal entry about what it was like to cross the border. They should include all of the things that they observed, thought and felt during the experience.
4. As an alternative, use this selection as a read aloud. Before beginning, provide each student with a piece of white paper. Ask them to fold it in half and then in half again, so that they have four squares on each side. Explain that you are going to read a story out loud to them. At different points during the reading you are going to stop. When you stop, the students are going to draw a picture of an image they've imagined based on what you've read in one of the squares. Before beginning the activity, choose up to eight stopping points. This can be a useful way to help students really engage with the story, thinking about what it would feel like to be in Marcos' position.



### **“Inside Out”: A Chapter from The Circuit**

In *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), Francisco Jiménez tells the story of his own childhood as his family left Mexico to work in California as migrant farm workers. In the chapter “Inside Out,” Jiménez describes his experiences as a student his first year in the U.S. This chapter is a great way to move students beyond the end of *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*, and to think about what Pancho Rabbit’s experience would be like if he did move to the U.S.

#### **Process:**

1. Read the chapter “Inside Out” with students.
2. After reading, have students describe what Francisco’s experience in school was like. Ask them to compare and contrast it with their own.
3. If not already used as an extended response question, ask students to discuss the following and then write their own individual response:
  - If Pancho’s family does have to move to the U.S., what advice would you give him that would help him adapt to life in the U.S.?
  - Imagine Pancho joins your class. How would you help him adjust? What things may be difficult for him to adapt to? What could you do to make the transition easier?
  - What do you think Pancho would be feeling during his first week as a member of your class, in a new school, in a new country?

### **“NAU English Professor Monica Brown Weighs In On The Power Of Dehumanizing Language”: An Article from KNAU Arizona Public Radio**

In this article, English professor and author Monica Brown discusses the use of language, specifically the word ‘deportable’ to describe human beings. The article is available at: <http://knau.org/post/nau-english-professor-monica-brown-weighs-power-dehumanizing-language>

#### **Process:**

1. Read or listen to the article as a class.
2. Discuss Brown’s argument on the word “deportable.” Ask students if they have heard this used before in discussions around immigration. As a class brainstorm other problematic words used to describe people who immigrate to the U.S.
3. Individually, in small groups, or as a class write a persuasive essay explaining why language such as ‘deportable,’ ‘illegal,’ or ‘alien’ shouldn’t be used in discussions on immigration.



## APPROACH 2: RETHINKING THE BORDER

### The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 2006)

Published by Rethinking Schools, *The Line Between Us* explores the history of U.S.-Mexican relations and the roots of Mexican immigration, all in the context of the global economy. And it shows how teachers can help students understand the immigrant experience and the drama of border life. But *The Line Between Us* is about more than Mexican immigration and border issues. It's about imaginative and creative teaching that gets students to care about the world. Using role plays, stories, poetry, improvisations, simulations and video, veteran teacher Bill Bigelow demonstrates how to combine lively teaching with critical analysis. *The Line Between Us* is a book for teachers, adult educators, community organizers and anyone who hopes to teach, and learn, about these important issues.

Many of the lesson plans and resources included in this publication provide excellent ways in which to expand the immigration discussions that can begin with *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*. Section 1: "Teaching about 'Them' and 'Us,'" Section 4: "First Crossing," and Section 5: "Life on the Border" may be of particular interest for integrating in a unit on *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*.

### Borders, Boundaries, and Ballads

This activity is inspired by and based on the National Geographic Boundaries XPeditions Activity "[Boundary Ballads](#)". The following shares the premise of the activity:

"It all probably happened in the guy's head, but an editor here at National Geographic claims that late one night the boundaries of the world started singing. It began, he says, when he pulled a geography book off the shelf and read its [definition of boundary](#). "The term 'boundary' most commonly refers to an imaginary line separating one country from another..."

"Imaginary?!" yelled furious voices that seemed to be trapped between pages of the National Geographic Atlas of the World. "You try keeping two superpowers apart and see just how 'imaginary' you feel!" Then came...songs. Weird songs. From the Rio Grande to the Red Sea, from the Pyrenees to the 49th parallel—various geographic features crooned about what it means to be a boundary. The startled guy managed to write a few of them down. Can you help identify the singers of these [boundary ballads](#)?"

1. Share the premise from above with students. Then, read some of the examples of the provided boundary ballads and see if students can identify the correct [boundary/border](#).
2. As a class, do an internet search for images of the U.S.-Mexico border. Take notes on the geographical characteristics and any other parts of the images that stand out. Next, have students imagine that they are attempting to cross the border. Make a list of the characteristics of the border that they notice. Have



students think back to the descriptions provided in *Pancho Rabbit and Coyote*. Last, have students imagine that they are a member of border patrol. Make a list of the characteristics that a patroller would notice.

3. As a class, in small groups or individually have students write a boundary ballad for the U.S.-Mexico border. They can choose to do this from the point of view of the geographical land of the area (as many of the examples do), a migrant, or a border patrol.
4. The premise of the National Geographic lesson suggests the idea that borders and boundaries are just imaginary. Discuss this idea with students. Then, divide students into two groups. Tell them that they are going to debate the question “Should we eliminate all borders?” Assign a position to each group and provide time for them to prepare their argument. Once each group is ready, conduct the debate.

### **APPROACH 3: INTERROGATING THE MYTHS AND REALITIES OF IMMIGRATION**

#### **Teaching Tolerance: Immigration Myths**

In this [lesson created by Teaching Tolerance](#) students will think through 6 of the more common myths about immigration that continue to be perpetuated.

The following from the lesson plan's description explains the objective of the lesson: “A vast debate swirls around the topic of immigration to the United States. Unfortunately, the frustration many have with our immigration system has also caused some people to stereotype all immigrant populations. This lesson helps break stereotypes by getting to the source of the prejudices. But where do stereotypes come from? This is the question students will explore in the following activities. The focus here is on facing some common misconceptions about immigrants as a group. By connecting stereotypes to myths and then dispelling those myths, students will confront the lies that are the foundation of bigotry toward immigrants.”

Students work in small groups rotating through six different workstations. This lesson provides a great follow-up to *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*, as it encourages students to continue to think critically about many of the common stereotypes about immigrants and immigration.

#### **PBS/Independent Lens: Immigration Myths and Realities**

As part of [The New Americans Series](#), Independent Lens has created a quiz to draw attention to many of the common misperceptions around immigration and its effects on American society. The quiz is available online for free through the PBS/Independent Lens website.

1. Have students take the quiz either individually or as a class.
2. Discuss the questions and answers and how these draw attention to many misperceptions. What new information was learned from taking the quiz? Were any of the answers a surprise?



## The Undocumented

“[The Undocumented](#)” is a PBS documentary with an accompanying free video game (see following entry). Marcos Hernandez lives and works in Chicago. He came to the United States from Mexico, after a life-threatening border crossing through the Sonora Desert in southern Arizona. Each month, he sends money to his mother in Mexico City to buy medicine for his brother, Gustavo, who needs a kidney transplant. *The Undocumented*, by acclaimed filmmaker Marco Williams, is Marcos's story—as well as the story of countless other migrants. Chronicling Arizona's deadliest summer months, award-winning documentary and fiction film director Marco Williams (Banished, Two Towns of Jasper, In Search of Our Fathers) weaves Marcos's search with the efforts of humanitarians and Border Patrol agents who are fighting to prevent migrant deaths, the medical investigators and Mexican Consulate workers who are trying to identify dead border crossers, and Mexican families who are struggling to accept the loss of a loved one. In true cinéma vérité style, *The Undocumented* by Marco Williams reveals the ongoing impact of immigration laws and economic policies on the very people who continue to be affected by them. By going beyond politics, the film also tells a story that is deeply personal.

## The Migrant Trail

[The Migrant Trail](#) is a video game that introduces players to the hardships and perils of crossing the Sonora Desert. Players have the chance to play as both migrants crossing the desert from Mexico to the United States and as U.S. Border Patrol agents patrolling the desert. As migrants, players are introduced to the stories of the people willing to risk their lives crossing the unforgiving Sonoran desert to reach America. By playing as Border Patrol agents, players see that the job goes beyond simply capturing migrants to helping save lives and providing closure for families who lost loved ones in the desert. Through the use of real-time resource management and by integrating characters, stories, and visuals from the film, *The Undocumented*, with intense gameplay choices, *The Migrant Trail* gives players another way to experience and understand the human toll of our border policies.

## Understanding Migration

Created by The University of Texas at Austin's international outreach consortium, Hemispheres, [Understanding Migration](#) was conceived in response to numerous requests from educators and curriculum specialists concerning the presentation and discussion of issues related to human migration in the social studies classroom. What are the reasons that large groups of people have found themselves moving from place to place? What effects does this movement have? And most importantly, how can such a fluid and nebulous concept be presented in a classroom in an easy-to-follow manner with clear lesson objectives and outcomes? Regional case studies were chosen to address these, and other, essential questions. Where possible, primary source documents were used to present the information in each case study.



## COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE AND FILM

### TRICKSTER TALES & FABLES

#### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

*Titles marked with \* are Americas Award selections.*

*A Ring of Tricksters* written by Virginia Hamilton and illustrated by Barry Moser. Blue Sky Press, 1997.

Meet America's Bruh Fox, the West Indies' Anansi spider, Africa's Cunnie Rabbit, and many more fantastic animals in witty tales from three rich traditions of storytelling. Following the migration of stories via the slave trade during the Plantation Era, Hamilton presents readers with a fascinating history of the first African Americans and the wonderful stories they brought with them to the West Indies and America. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Anansi and the Talking Melon* written by Eric A. Kimmel and illustrated by Janet Stevens. Holiday House, 1995.

A clever spider tricks Elephant and some other animals into thinking the melon in which he is hiding can talk. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. Harcourt School Publishers, 2009.

Anansi the Spider is one of the great folk heroes of the world. He is a rogue, a mischief maker, and a wise, lovable creature who triumphs over larger foes. In this traditional Ashanti tale, Anansi sets out on a long, difficult journey. Threatened by Fish and Falcon, he is saved from terrible fates by his sons. But which of his sons should Anansi reward? Calling upon Nyame, the God of All Things, Anansi solves his predicament in a touching and highly resourceful fashion. In adapting this popular folktale, Gerald McDermott merges the old with the new, combining bold, rich color with traditional African design motifs and authentic Ashanti language rhythms. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Aunt Nancy and the Bothersome Visitors* written by Phyllis Root and illustrated by David Parkins. Candlewick, 2007.

It would take a real pesky visitor to make himself unwelcome to Aunt Nancy. But just her luck — not one but FOUR bothersome folks come knocking at her door! From Cousin Lazybones to Old Man Trouble, from doleful Old Woeful to sly, slick Mister Death, Aunt Nancy's visitors nearly try her patience. But Aunt Nancy's head isn't there just to keep her ears from fighting, and see if she doesn't get the best of all her guests! (Grades Second and up)

*Big Trouble for Tricky Rabbit* written by Gretchen Will Mayo. Walker and Co, 1994.



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A collection of tales based on Native American folklore features Tricky Rabbit and the mischief he brings with him. (Grades Second and up)

*Chato's Kitchen* written by Gary Soto and illustrated by Susan Guevara. Putnam, 1995.

In this allegory, Chato the cat, asks some mice over for dinner. He expects, of course, to eat them and he and his friend prepare some delicious Mexican food to go with the main course. When the mice arrive, they bring with them their friend, a dog, and the feast turns out to be a meatless one. The fun in this book comes from the sly characterization of the cats, mice and dog as barrio habitues and there is wordplay with many of the Mexican phrases. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Clever Tortoise* written and illustrated by Francesca Martin. Candlewick, 2000

Elephant and Hippo are bullies. Big, strong, and selfish, the two friends boss and frighten all the other animals in the jungle, making life in their formerly harmonious community unbearable. But one day, Clever Tortoise calmly declares that size and strength aren't everything. Soon he proves it, hatching a plan to outwit the two tyrants with the tug-of-war to end all tugs-of-war. Who will be left standing when Tortoise's ingenious contest is over? Francesca Martin's spirited adaptation of a traditional African folk story-complete with a glossary of African words-and her rich illustrations will have kids cheering as wit and quiet wisdom triumph over brute strength. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Coyote in Love with a Star* written by Marty Kreipe de Montano and illustrated by Tom Coffin. Abbeville Kids, 1998.

Created with the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian this book is part of Tales of the People-a series of children's books celebrating Native American culture with illustrations and stories by Indian artists and writers. In addition to the tales themselves, each book also offers four pages filled with information and photographs exploring various aspects of Native culture, including a glossary of words in different Indian languages. (Grades Second and up)

*Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. HMH Books for Young Readers, 1994.

Wherever Coyote goes you can be sure he'll find trouble. Now he wants to sing, dance, and fly like the crows, so he begs them to teach him how. The crows agree but soon tire of Coyote's bragging and boasting. They decide to teach the great trickster a lesson. This time, Coyote has found real trouble! (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Here Comes Tricky Rabbit* written and illustrated by Gretchen Will Mayo. Walker and Co, 1994

Tricky Rabbit must use all his wits, pranks, and clever deceptions to keep himself out of trouble, in a collection of entertaining traditional Native American folktales. (Grades Second and up)

*How Rabbit Tricked Otter: And Other Cherokee Trickster Stories* written by Gayle Ross and illustrated by Murv Jacob. Parabola Books, 2003.

In this collection of Cherokee tales, storyteller Gayle Ross and artist Murv Jacob, with a foreword



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by Chief Wilma Mankiller of the Cherokee Nation, bring together the many sides of Rabbit, the Cherokee trickster-hero. Like all stories in the oral tradition, the Rabbit stories amuse, entertain, and educate. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Iktomi and the Buffalo Skull* written and illustrated by Paul Goble. Scholastic, 1996.

Iktomi, the Plains Indian trickster, interrupts a powwow of the Mouse People and gets his head stuck in a buffalo skull. Asides and questions printed in italics may be addressed by the storyteller to listeners, encouraging them to make their own remarks about the action. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Iktomi and the Berries* written and illustrated by Paul Goble. Orchard Books, 1989.

The silly Iktomi spies buffalo berries in the water and repeatedly dives for them, unaware that they are a reflection. Goble's characteristically authentic and colorful drawings make these pages a visual delight. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Jabutí the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2005.

Of all the animals in the rain forest, Jabutí was the favorite. His shell was smooth and shiny, and the songs he played on his flute were sweet. But his music was a reminder, too, of the mischievous pranks Jabutí sometimes played. His song reminded Tapir of being tricked, Jaguar of being fooled, and time and again it reminded Vulture that he had no song at all. When a concert takes place in heaven, Vulture offers to fly Jabutí there . . . all the while plotting a trick of his own. Jabutí is an unusual tale of a trickster's fall from grace, and of how creation can sometimes come from chaos. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

\* *Just a Minute!: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales. Chronicle Books, 2003.

In this original trickster tale, Senor Calavera arrives unexpectedly at Grandma Beetle's door. He requests that she leave with him right away. "Just a minute," Grandma Beetle tells him. She still has one house to sweep, two pots of tea to boil, three pounds of corn to make into tortillas -- and that's just the start! Using both Spanish and English words to tally the party preparations, Grandma Beetle cleverly delays her trip and spends her birthday with a table full of grandchildren and her surprise guest. This spirited tribute to the rich traditions of Mexican culture is the perfect introduction to counting in both English and Spanish. The vivacious illustrations and universal depiction of a family celebration are sure to be adored by young readers everywhere. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Lapin Plays Possum* written by Sharon Douchet and illustrated by Scott Cook. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2002.

Nobody is as good at being bad as Lapin! As long as there are fools to be fooled, Lapin figures he might as well do the fooling. He can't resist playing tricks on Bouki any more than he can turn down King Cake at Mardi Gras. As for Bouki, he is so tired of being hoodwinked by this do-nothing rascal of a rabbit that he is determined to get the best of the puny trickster once and for all



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(and maybe even get a little rabbit cooked in sauce piquante on the side). As always, however, little triumphs over big and brains bewilder brawn in three new larger-than-life Lapin tales full of sly wit and Cajun spice - perfectly captured in Scott Cook's impish, irreverent pictures. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains* written and illustrated by Barbara Knutson. Carolrhoda Books, 2004.

Cuy, a clever guinea pig, manages to escape three times from a hungry fox. In their final encounter, Cuy, trapped by a sticky doll and tied to a tree by a farmer, talks Tío Antonio into switching places with him. The plot moves along smoothly and is punctuated by humorous dialogue. An author's note includes a simple map of the region, an explanation of a trickster tale, and several sources for the story. A glossary provides a pronunciation guide for the Spanish and Quechua words incorporated into the text. Knutson's boldly outlined, vibrant woodcut-and-watercolor artwork captures the mischievous nature of the guinea pig. Observant children will delight in the visual and cultural details and in the energy of these illustrations. A thoroughly enjoyable tale that deserves a place in most libraries. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Maui & the Sun A Maori Tale* written by Gavin Bishop and illustrated by. North-South Books, 1996.

Tales of Maui have been told by the Maori for thousands of years. Here, Maui and his brothers decide to catch the sun and teach it a lesson. The sun, in its haste to get back to bed, raced across the sky each day, leaving only a few hours of sunlight for fishing. Armed with ropes and his enchanted weapon, he and his brothers travel to the edge of the pit where the sun slept to lay their trap. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Monkey: A Trickster Tale from India* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014.

Monkey is hungry for the delicious mangoes on the island in the river, but he can't swim! How will he get there? Crocodile offers to carry Monkey across the water on his back, so Monkey hops aboard. Trouble is, Crocodile is hungry too—for Monkey! Will clever Monkey come up with a way to get the mangoes and escape Crocodile's sharp teeth? (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*My Lucky Birthday* written and illustrated by Keiko Kasza. Putnam, 2013.

Just as Alligator Al is planning the perfect birthday dinner for himself, there is a knock on his door. It's a delicious-looking piglet—how lucky! But as Al prepares his feast, the piglet makes some suggestions. Shouldn't Al have a big birthday cake? Piglet can tell him how to make one. And wouldn't the celebration be more fun with fancy decorations and party guests? Piglet would be happy to ask some friends to come over. Al is so lucky that Piglet is there to help...or is he? Could Piglet have a clever party trick up his sleeve? Fans of trickster tales, rooting for the underdog, and the proven crowd favorite *My Lucky Day* will be thrilled to see who turns out to have the luckiest birthday of all. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Precious and the Boo Hag* written by Patricia McKissack and Onawumi Jean Moss illustrated by Kyrsten



Brooker. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2005.

When Precious is left home alone with a stomachache, she's got nothing but a warning from Mama -- "Don't let nothing or nobody into this house" -- to keep her company. You see, "nothing or nobody" could turn out to be something awful: the Boo Hag! The Boo Hag's got a voice that rumbles like thunder and hair that shoots out like lightning. And she can disguise herself to look like anything. So when the Boo Hag comes calling, will Precious be clever enough to outwit even the trickiest trickster? (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2001.

Raven, the trickster, wants to give people the gift of light. But can he find out where Sky Chief keeps it? And if he does, will he be able to escape without being discovered? His dream seems impossible, but if anyone can find a way to bring light to the world, wise and clever Raven can! (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*The Adventures of High John the Conqueror* written by Steve Sanfield. August House Pub Inc, 1996.

A collection of sixteen tales about High John the Conqueror, the traditional trickster hero of blacks during and immediately after the time of slavery. (Grades third and up)

*The Great Race* written by Nathan Kumar Scott and Jagdish Chitara. Tara Books, 2012.

"I'm the fastest animal in the forest!" boasts Kanchil the trickster mouse deer. "And I challenge any animal to race me!" Who will step forward to accept this challenge, and can Kanchil be beaten? (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*The Merry Pranks of Till Eulen-Spiegel* written and illustrated by Heinz Janisch and Lisbeth Zwerger. North-South Books, 2000.

Hans Christian Andersen Medalist Lisbeth Zwerger cunningly illustrates 11 folktales about Till Eulenspiegel, the famous sixteenth-century German folk hero, popular in legend as a shrewd trickster. In this handsome reissue, she chronicles Till's pranks from his triple dunking at his baptism, to his funeral, at which he leaves a last trick for his mourners. Zwerger's celebrated wit and insouciant style are the perfect complements to the antics of this notorious merrymaker. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Tops & Bottoms* written Janet Stevens Harcourt Brace, 1995.

Hare solves his family's problems by tricking rich and lazy Bear in this funny, energetic version of an old slave story. With roots in American slave tales, *Tops & Bottoms* celebrates the trickster tradition of using one's wits to overcome hardship. (Grades second and up)

*Zomo the Rabbit* written and illustrated by Gerald McDermott. HMH Books for Young Readers, 1996.

Zomo the rabbit, a trickster from West Africa, wants wisdom. But he must accomplish three apparently impossible tasks before Sky God will give him what he wants. Is he clever enough to do as Sky God asks? (Grades Kindergarten and up)



## IMMIGRATION

### Children's Literature

\**A Movie in My Pillow/ Una película en mi almohada* written by Jorge Argueta and illustrated by Elizabeth Gómez. Lee and Low Books, 2007.

A young boy with two homelands and a delightful sense of wonder comes to life in Jorge Argueta's first collection of poems for children. Young Jorgito lives in San Francisco's Mission District, but he hasn't forgotten his native El Salvador. He recalls the volcanoes, the tasty cornmeal pupusas, and his grandmother's stories. As he changes from timid newcomer to seasoned city dweller, Jorgito's memories and new adventures form a patchwork of dreams -- the movie in his pillow -- that is perfectly suited to his new bicultural identity. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Amelia's Road* written by Linda Jacobs Altman and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee and Low Books, 1995.

Amelia Luisa Martinez hates roads. Los caminos, the roads, take her migrant worker family to fields where they labor all day, to schools where no one knows Amelia's name, and to bleak cabins that are not home. Then one day, Amelia discovers an "accidental road." At its end she finds an amazing old tree reminiscent of the one in her dreams. Its stately sense of permanence inspires her to put her own roots down in a very special way. The richly colored illustrations bring to life the landscape of California's Central Valley farmland. *Amelia's Road* is an inspirational tale about the importance of home. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Classroom Guide for Amelia's Road](#) by Lee & Low Books

*First Day in Grapes* written by L. King Perez and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Lee and Low Books, 2002.

All year long Chico and his family move up and down the state of California picking fruits and vegetables. Every September they pick grapes and Chico starts at a new school again. Often other children pick on him — maybe because he is always new or maybe because he speaks Spanish sometimes. Chico's first day in third grade turns out to be different. When the fourth-grade bullies confront Chico in the lunchroom, he responds wisely with strengths of his own. Readers of all backgrounds will relate to Chico's bravery and the creative way he finds to resolve conflict. This story of personal triumph is a testament to the inner strength in all of us. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Teacher's Guide for First Day in Grapes](#) produced by Lee & Low Books.

\**Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado* written by Gloria E. Anzaldúa and illustrated by Consuelo Mendez. Children's Book Press, 1997.

Having crossed the Rio Grande into Texas with his mother in search of a new life, Joaquin receives help and friendship from Prietita, a brave young Mexican American girl. Though her friends' first reaction on seeing Joaquin is hostility, Prietita warns them off and befriends him,



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planning to take him to the herb woman for treatment for the sores he hides under long sleeves. A visit from the Border Patrol hastens the event; the herb woman hides Joaquin and his mother until the danger is past, then shows Prietita how to help her new friend. An authentic portrayal; an excellent basis for discussion of an important issue. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

\**From North to South/ Del norte al sur* written by René Colato Laínez and illustrated by Joe Cepeda. Lee and Low Books, 2014.

Near the border, the cars began to move very slowly. “Papá, go fast. I want to see Mamá,” I said. José loves helping Mamá in the garden outside their home in California. But when Mamá is sent back to Mexico for not having proper papers, José and his Papá face an uncertain future. What will it be like to visit Mamá in Tijuana? When will Mamá be able to come home? Award-winning children's book author René Colato Laínez tackles the difficult and timely subject of family separation with exquisite tenderness. René is donating a portion of his royalties to El Centro Madre Assunta, a refuge for women and children who are waiting to be reunited with their families up north. Joe Cepeda's bright and engaging illustrations bring this story of hope to vivid life. (Grades 1 and up).

*Home at Last* written by Susan Middleton Elya and illustrated by Felipe Davalos. Lee and Low Books, 2006.

Ana Patino is adjusting well to her new life in the United States, but her mother is having a difficult time because she doesn't speak English. When Ana's baby brother falls ill, Mama tries to get help, but no one can understand her. Now convinced of the need to learn the native language, Mama agrees to take English lessons. As her knowledge of the English language grows, so does her sense of confidence and belonging. Susan Middleton Elya's sympathetic tale of a mother-daughter bond and overcoming adversity is brought to life by the vivid illustrations of Felipe Davalos. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Teacher's Guide for Home at Last](#) produced by Lee & Low Books

*I am Rene, the Boy/Soy René, el niño* written by René Colato Laínez and illustrated by Fabiola Graullera Ramírez. Piñata Books, 2005.

When Rene learns that in the United States his name is also a girl's name, he does some research and relates the name's meaning and letters to his homeland of El Salvador and the things that make him special. Complimented by playful illustrations, this bilingual picture book follows Colato Laínez's own experiences, when he was faced with a challenge to his own name as a child. This witty story about a young boy's odyssey to find out the meaning of his name will challenge readers aged 3 to 7 to chart cross-cultural differences by gaining an understanding about themselves and the people around them. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aqui hasta allá* written by Amada Irma Pérez and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Lee and Low Books, 2009. 32 pages. ISBN 9780892392308

One night, young Amada overhears her parents whisper of moving from Mexico to the other side



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of the border—to Los Angeles, where greater opportunity awaits. As she and her family make their journey north, Amada records her fears, hopes, and dreams for their lives in the United States in her diary. How can she leave her best friend behind? What if she can't learn English? What if her family never returns to Mexico? From Juárez to Mexicali to Tijuana to Los Angeles, Amada learns that with her family's love and her belief in herself, she can make any journey and weather any change—here, there, anywhere. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*The Dream on Blanca's Wall: Poems in English and Spanish/El sueño pegado en la pared de Blanca: poemas en Inglés y Español* written by Jane Medina and illustrated by Robert Casilla. Wordsong, 2004.

Sixth-grader Blanca dreams of being a teacher, but even at such a young age she knows obstacles block her way: Her family is poor, her Mexican-born parents speak little English, and her underachieving brother and friends chide her academic endeavors. Yet the encouragement of her classroom teacher--and a portrait that she drew in second grade of herself standing in front of a blackboard--inspires her to reach higher. Jane Medina's carefully crafted poems, in both English and Spanish, tell the story of Blanca: the barrio she knows, the people she cares for, and the young Latina's struggle for empowerment and self-esteem. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

\**The Storyteller's Candle/ La velita de los cuentos* written by Lucía González and illustrated by Lulu Delacre. Lee and Low Books, 2008.

The winter of 1929 feels especially cold to cousins Hildamar and Santiago—they arrived in New York City from sunny Puerto Rico only months before. Their island home feels very far away indeed, especially with Three Kings' Day rapidly approaching. But then a magical thing happened. A visitor appears in their class, a gifted storyteller and librarian by the name of Pura Belpré. She opens the children's eyes to the public library and its potential to be the living, breathing heart of the community. The library, after all, belongs to everyone—whether you speak Spanish, English, or both. The award-winning team of Lucía González and Lulu Delacre have crafted an homage to Pura Belpré, New York City's first Latina librarian. Through her vision and dedication, the warmth of Puerto Rico came to the island of Manhattan in a most unexpected way. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Classroom Guide for The Storyteller's Candle](#) produced by Lee & Low Books

*The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza* written by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elizabeth Gomez. Lee and Low Books, 2006.

*The Upside Down Boy* is award-winning poet Juan Felipe Herrera's engaging memoir of the year his migrant family settled down so that he could go to school for the first time. Juanito is bewildered by the new school, and he misses the warmth of country life. Everything he does feels upside down. He eats lunch when it's recess; he goes out to play when it's time for lunch; and his tongue feels like a rock when he tries to speak English. But a sensitive teacher and loving family help him to find his voice and make a place for himself in this new world through poetry, art, and music. Juan Felipe Herrera's playful language and the colorful, magical art of Elizabeth Gómez



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capture the universal experience of children entering a new school feeling like strangers in a world that seems upside down-at first. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Waiting for Papa/Esperando a Papa* written by René Colato Laínez and illustrated by Anthony Accardo. Piñata Books, 2004.

In this heartwarming bilingual picture book about a boy's reunion with his father, readers discover a young character whose vision and tenacity allow him to accomplish a feat that once seemed nearly impossible. Through the character's memories of El Salvador and his classroom experiences, the reader also gains insight into the tense political ramifications of war in a country and how that war impacts its survivors. (Grades Kin-dergarten and up)

*When This World Was New* written by D. H. Figueredo and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee and Low Books, 1999.

It was Danilito's first day in America. He and his parents have just made a long, exhausting move from the Caribbean to New York City. The ocean and the palm trees he is familiar with are now replaced by tall buildings and crowded streets. Danilito is scared. He has heard that some Americans are not friendly to foreigners. In addition, he does not speak any English. His parents have worries, too. They will have to find new jobs, a new home, and adjust to the new surroundings. This was going to be their first cold winter. Danilito's worries disappear the next morning when he wakes up and Papá leads him on a magical trip of discovery. D.H. Figueredo, in his picture book debut, brings us a gentle and uplifting story of coming to America, and Enrique O. Sanchez captures the loving images of a boy embracing his new home and finding a special bond with his family. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

\**Xochitl and the Flowers / Xóchitl, la niña de las flores* by Jorge Argueta and illustrated by Carl Angel. Children's Book Press, 2008.

Miles away from their home in El Salvador, Xochitl (SOH-cheel) and her family make a new home in the United States, but nothing is the same. Xochitl mourns a lovely garden and her family's small flower business, all left behind. Selling flowers on the street soon provides more than income for the Flores family: they begin to make friends with local storeowners and neighbors. But it is not until the family decides to start a nursery in its backyard that Xochitl begins to learn the true value of community in their adopted country. Basing his narrative on real-life events, prize-winning poet Jorge Argueta has crafted a tender, poetic, and moving story about a family's determination to set down roots and about their child's blooming among friends and neighbors. Artist Carl Angel's authentic and brilliant artwork splendidly documents this quintessentially American immigration story. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Teacher's Guide to Xochitl and the Flowers](#) produced by Children's Book Press and Lee & Low Books



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*Calling the Doves / El canto de las palomas* by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrated by Elly Simmons. Lee and Low Books 2001.

Calling the Doves is poet Juan Felipe Herrera's story of his migrant farmworker childhood. In delightful and lyrical language, he recreates the joy of eating breakfast under the open sky, listening to Mexican songs in the little trailer house his father built, and celebrating with other families at a fiesta in the mountains. He remembers his mother's songs and poetry, and his father's stories and his calling the doves. For Juan Felipe, the farmworker road was also the beginning of his personal road to becoming a writer. (Grades 1 and up)

*My Shoes and I* written by René Colato Laínez and illustrated by Fabricio Vanden Broeck. Boyds Mills Press, 2010.

A timely and inspiring story. Mario is leaving his home in El Salvador. With his father by his side, he is going north to join his mother, who lives in the United States. She has sent Mario a new pair of shoes. He will need good shoes because the journey north will be long and hard. He and his father will cross the borders of three countries. They will walk for miles, ride buses, climb mountains, and cross a river. Mario has faith in his shoes. He believes they will take him anywhere. On this day, they will take him to the United States, where his family will be reunited. (Grades Kindergarten-4)



## YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

*90 Miles to Havana* by Enrique Flores-Galbis. Squarefish, 2012. 304 pgs.

When Julian's parents make the heartbreaking decision to send him and his two brothers away from Cuba to Miami via the Pedro Pan operation, the boys are thrust into a new world where bullies run rampant and it's not always clear how best to protect themselves. *90 Miles to Havana* is a 2011 Pura Belpré Honor Book for Narrative and a 2011 Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year. (Grades 4-7)

Classroom Resources: [Web-based Thematic Unit for 90 Miles to Havana](#) written by Melissa Babins, April Etzold, and Erica Frischkorn.

\**Before we were Free / Antes de ser libre* by Julia Alvarez. Knopf, 2002. 192 pgs.

Anita de la Torre never questioned her freedom living in the Dominican Republic. But by her 12th birthday in 1960, most of her relatives have emigrated to the United States, her Tío Toni has disappeared without a trace, and the government's secret police terrorize her remaining family because of their suspected opposition of el Trujillo's dictatorship. Using the strength and courage of her family, Anita must overcome her fears and fly to freedom, leaving all that she once knew behind. From renowned author Julia Alvarez comes an unforgettable story about adolescence, perseverance, and one girl's struggle to be free. (Grades 7 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Before we were Free](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute // [Book Notes and Educator's Guide to Before we were Free](#) produced by Random House

*Border Crossing: A Novel* written by Maria Colleen Cruz. Piñata Books, 2003.

In this debut novel, Maria Colleen Cruz creates the vibrant voice of a girl just on the brink of understanding. With her journal at her side, this thoughtful and creative character tackles complicated issues of identity and self-empowerment. The things Ceci Alvarez does not know about her father's family send her riding rails from Los Angeles to Tijuana, Mexico in order to piece together the mysteries behind a set of her Nana's photographs. Tony, a lively young teen Ceci meets on the train, leads her from one country to the next, and challenges her to see Mexico as "green and brown. It's little villages with big farms, and lots of grass, and towns where electricity is something not everyone has. It's spicy chiles, juicy tomatoes, and light tortillas. It's music, and laughter, and pride. (Grades 5 and up)



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\**Breaking Through / Senderos fronterizos* by Francisco Jiménez. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002. 208 pgs.

At the age of fourteen, Francisco Jiménez, together with his older brother Roberto and his mother, are caught by la migra. Forced to leave their home in California, the entire family travels all night for twenty hours by bus, arriving at the U.S. and Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona. In the months and years that follow during the late 1950s-early 1960s, Francisco, his mother and father, and his seven brothers and sister not only struggle to keep their family together, but also face crushing poverty, long hours of labor, and blatant prejudice. How they sustain their hope, their good-heartedness, and tenacity is revealed in this moving, Pura Belpré Honor-winning sequel to *The Circuit*. Without bitterness or sentimentality, Francisco Jiménez finishes telling the story of his youth. (Grades 7 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Study Guide for Breaking Through](#) produced by Santa Clara University

*Call Me Maria: a novel [in letters, poems, and prose]* written by Judith Ortiz Cofer. Orchard Books, 2004. 144 pgs.

Maria is a girl caught between two worlds: Puerto Rico, where she was born, and New York, where she now lives in a basement apartment in the barrio. While her mother remains on the island, Maria lives with her father, the super of their building. As she struggles to lose her island accent, Maria does her best to find her place within the unfamiliar culture of the barrio. Finally, with the Spanglish of the barrio people ringing in her ears, she finds the poet within herself. (Grades 3 and up)

\**Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. Delacorte, 2013. 288 pgs.

Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, this page-turner about the power of family is a popular text in classrooms and a touchstone for communities across the country to engage in meaningful discussions about this essential American subject. *Enrique's Journey* recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers.

Classroom Resources: [Spanish, Middle, and High School Lesson Plans](#) developed by educators around the country and compiled by Sonia Nazario

*How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay* written by Julia Alvarez. Yearling, 2002. 147 pgs.

Moving to Vermont after his parents split, Miguel has plenty to worry about! Tía Lola, his quirky,



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carismática, and maybe magical aunt makes his life even more unpredictable when she arrives from the Dominican Republic to help out his Mami. Like her stories for adults, Julia Alvarez's first middle-grade book sparkles with magic as it illuminates a child's experiences living in two cultures. (Grades 3 and up)

\**Journey of Dreams* by Marge Pellegrino. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 260 pgs.

This is the story of how one family survives the Guatemalan army's "scorched earth" campaign in the 1980s and how, in the midst of tragedy, suspicion and fear, their resilient love and loyalty — and Papa's storytelling — keeps them going. On their harrowing journey as refugees to the United States, the dramatic ebb and flow of events are mirrored in the tapestries of one daughter's dreams.

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Journey of Dreams](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

\**La línea* by Ann Jaramillo. Roaring Brook Press, 2006. 129 pgs.

Miguel has dreamed of joining his parents in California since the day they left him behind in Mexico six years, eleven months, and twelve days ago. On the morning of his fifteenth birthday, Miguel's wait is over. Or so he thinks. The trip north to the border—la línea—is fraught with dangers. Thieves. Border guards. And a grueling, two-day trek across the desert. It would be hard enough to survive alone. But it's almost impossible with his tagalong sister in tow. Their money gone and their hopes nearly dashed, Miguel and his sister have no choice but to hop the infamous mata gente as it races toward the border. As they cling to the roof of the speeding train, they hold onto each other, and to their dreams. But they quickly learn that you can't always count on dreams—even the ones that come true. (Grades 7 and up)

*Leaving Glorytown: One Boy's Struggle Under Castro* by Eduardo F. Calcines. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2009. 240 pgs.

Eduardo F. Calcines was a child of Fidel Castro's Cuba; he was just three years old when Castro came to power in January 1959. After that, everything changed for his family and his country. When he was ten, his family applied for an exit visa to emigrate to America and he was ridiculed by his schoolmates and even his teachers for being a traitor to his country. But even worse, his father was sent to an agricultural reform camp to do hard labor as punishment for daring to want to leave Cuba. In this absorbing memoir, by turns humorous and heartbreaking, Eduardo Calcines recounts his boyhood and chronicles the conditions that led him to wish above all else to leave behind his beloved extended family and his home for a chance at a better future. (Grades 5-10)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Leaving Glorytown](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute



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*Migrant/Migrante* written by José Manuel Mateo and 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.

*Reaching Out / Más allá de mí* by Francisco Jiménez. HMH Books for Young Readers, 2009. 208 pgs.

From the perspective of the young adult he was then, Francisco Jiménez describes the challenges he faced in his efforts to continue his education. During his college years, the very family solidarity that allowed Francisco to survive as a child is tested. Not only must he leave his family behind when he goes to Santa Clara University, but while Francisco is there, his father abandons the family and returns to Mexico. This is the story of how Francisco coped with poverty, with his guilt over leaving his family financially strapped, with his self-doubt about succeeding academically, and with separation. Once again his telling is honest, true, and inspiring. (Grades 7 and up)

*Red Midnight* written by Ben Mikaelson. HarperCollins Publishers, 2002. 224 pgs.

When guerrilla soldiers strike Santiago's village, they destroy everything in their path -- including his home and family. Santiago and his four-year-old sister escape, running for their lives. But the only way they can be truly safe is to leave Guatemala behind forever. So Santiago and Angelina set sail in a sea kayak their Uncle Ramos built while dreaming of his own escape. Sailing through narrow channels guarded by soldiers, shark-infested waters, and days of painful heat and raging storms, Santiago and Angelina face an almost impossible voyage hundreds of miles across the open ocean, heading for the hope of a new life in the United States. (Grades 5 and up)

*Return to Sender / Devolver al remitente* by Julia Alvarez. Knopf, 2009. 318 pgs.

After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family is forced to hire migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure. Tyler isn't sure what to make of these workers. Are they undocumented? And what about the three daughters, particularly Mari, the oldest, who is proud of her Mexican heritage but also increasingly connected her American life. Her family lives in constant fear of being discovered by the authorities and sent back to the poverty they left behind in Mexico. In a novel full of hope, but no easy answers, Julia Alvarez weaves a beautiful and timely story that will stay with readers long after they finish it.

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to Return to Sender](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute //

*Sarita, Be Brave* written by Ruby Tolliver. Eakin Press, 1999. 132 pgs

When political unrest in Honduras forces twelve-year-old Sara to flee with her family and make the dangerous journey north to Texas, she faces the challenges of starting a new school and a new life. (Grades 3 and up)



\**The Circuit / Cajas de cartón* by Francisco Jiménez. Houghton-Mifflin, 1997. 134 pgs.

After dark in a Mexican border town, a father holds open a hole in a wire fence as his wife and two small boys crawl through. So begins life in the United States for many people every day. And so begins this collection of twelve autobiographical stories by Santa Clara University professor Francisco Jiménez, who at the age of four illegally crossed the border with his family in 1947. “The Circuit,” the story of young Panchito and his trumpet, is one of the most widely anthologized stories in Chicano literature. At long last, Jiménez offers more about the wise, sensitive little boy who has grown into a role model for subsequent generations of immigrants. These independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots—and back again—over a number of years. As it moves from one labor camp to the next, the little family of four grows into ten. Impermanence and poverty define their lives. But with faith, hope, and back-breaking work, the family endures. (Grades 6 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to The Circuit](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute | [Lesson Plans Novel for The Circuit](#) produced by Santa Clara University |

*The Girl Who Could Silence the Wind* by Meg Medina. Candlewick, 2012. 256 pgs.

Sixteen-year-old Sonia Ocampo was born on the night of the worst storm Tres Montes had ever seen. And when the winds mercifully stopped, an unshakable belief in the girl's protective powers began. All her life, Sonia has been asked to pray for sick mothers or missing sons, as worried parents and friends press silver milagros in her hands. Sonia knows she has no special powers, but how can she disappoint those who look to her for solace? Still, her conscience is heavy, so when she gets a chance to travel to the city and work in the home of a wealthy woman, she seizes it. At first, Sonia feels freedom in being treated like all the other girls. But when news arrives that her beloved brother has disappeared while looking for work, she learns to her sorrow that she can never truly leave the past or her family behind. With deeply realized characters, a keen sense of place, a hint of magical realism, and a flush of young romance, Meg Medina tells the tale of a strong-willed, warm-hearted girl who dares to face life's harsh truths as she finds her real power. (Grades 6 and up)

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to The Girl Who Could Silence the Wind](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

*The Red Umbrella* by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. Yearling | Random House, 2012. 288 pgs.

The Red Umbrella is the moving tale of a 14-year-old girl's journey from Cuba to America as part of Operation Pedro Pan—an organized exodus of more than 14,000 unaccompanied children, whose parents sent them away to escape Fidel Castro's revolution. In 1961, two years after the Communist revolution, Lucía Álvarez still leads a carefree life, dreaming of parties and her first crush. But when the soldiers come to her sleepy Cuban town, everything begins to change. Freedoms are stripped away. Neighbors disappear. Her friends feel like strangers. And her family is being watched. As the revolution's impact becomes more oppressive, Lucía's parents make the



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heart-wrenching decision to send her and her little brother to the United States—on their own. Suddenly plunked down in Nebraska with well-meaning strangers, Lucía struggles to adapt to a new country, a new language, a new way of life. But what of her old life? Will she ever see her home or her parents again? And if she does, will she still be the same girl? *The Red Umbrella* is a moving story of country, culture, family, and the true meaning of home.

Classroom Resources: [Vamos a Leer Educator's Guide to The Red Umbrella](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute

*The Secret Side of Empty* by Maria E. Andreu. Running Press Kids, 2014. 336 pgs.

What's it like to be undocumented? High school senior M.T. knows all too well. With graduation and an uncertain future looming, she must figure out how to grow up in the only country she's ever called home... a country in which she's "illegal." M.T. was born in Argentina and brought to America as a baby without any official papers. And as questions of college, work, and the future arise, M.T. will have to decide what exactly she wants for herself, knowing someone she loves will unavoidably pay the price for it. On the way, M.T. must navigate first love, letting go of her childhood friends as they begin a life she can't share, a difficult relationship with a father who grew up a world away and a mother struggling to find her way in America. What is it like when the only country you've ever known says you don't belong? *The Secret Side of Empty* offers an intimate, often surprising glimpse into a story you often hear on the news but have never heard told this way before. Author Maria E. Andreu draws from her personal experience as a former undocumented immigrant to explore issues of belonging, keeping secrets and what it's like to be undocumented. More than that, *The Secret Side of Empty* is a story that will touch anyone who has ever felt excluded or unsure about the future or has kept a secret she felt was too big to share. (Grades 7 and up)



## FILMS

*A Better Life*, 2011, directed by Chris Weitz. Drama. 98 min. Rating: PG-13

Mexican actor Demián Bichir plays Carlos Galindo, an undocumented immigrant who purchases the gardening business—truck, tools, and clients—from his old boss, who wants to return to Mexico. Carlos' goal is to provide a better future for his only son Luis (José Julián). But Luis is embarrassed of his working-class dad, hangs around with gangas after high school, and dates the niece of a local gang leader. One day, another immigrant steals the gardening truck, and Carlos' life begins to unravel. For this role, Mr. Bichir was nominated for a Best Actor Academy Award.

*Babel*, 2006 directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu. Drama 143 min. Rating: Rated-R

In this Oscar-nominated film, Adriana Barraza plays an illegal immigrant and nanny who takes her two young charges with her back to Mexico for her son's wedding (their parents are stuck in Morocco and no one else can care for them, so she's stuck). On the way back, her nephew dumps them in the middle of the Sonoran desert; they're lost. In a heartbreaking sequence, she and the kids bake under a crushing sun and she slogs through the sand and the heat to find help. This brutal setting is the same that thousands of real-life immigrants—right or wrong—have crossed on their way to find a better life for themselves and their families.

*Balseros/Cuban Rafters*, 2002, directed by Carles Bosch and Josep Maria Doménech. Documentary. 120 min. Rating: Not Rated

The story of Cuban refugees who risked their lives in homemade rafts to reach the United States, and what life is like for those who succeed.

*Bread and Roses*, 2000, directed by Ken Loach. Drama. 110 min. Rating: Rated R

A young Mexican woman immigrates illegally to LA to join her sister to work as a non-union janitor. The two become involved in the effort to organize a janitor's union which creates considerable tension.

*Documented*, 2013, directed by Jose Antonio Vargas and Ann Raffaella Lupo. Documentary. 89 min. Rating: Not Rated

In 2011, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas outed himself as an undocumented immigrant in the New York Times Magazine. 'Documented' chronicles his journey to America from the Philippines as a child; his journey through America as an immigration reform activist/provocateur; and his journey inward as he re-connects with his mother, whom he hasn't seen in 20 years. engagements, an appearance before Congress and, most dramatically, his reunion over Skype with his mother.

*El Norte*, 1983, directed by Gregory Nava. Drama. 141 min. Rating: Rated-R

The film features two indigenous youths who flee Guatemala's genocidal civil war in the 1980s. Traveling through Mexico, they arrive in Los Angeles after an arduous journey and start their



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new life. Nava based the film on his own experiences growing up in San Diego, California, with relatives on both sides of the border. In 1995, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

*Entre Nos*, 2009 directed by Gloria La Morte and Paola Mendoza. Drama. 80 min. Rating: Not Rated  
A story based on facts which offers a fresh take on the issue of new immigrants in the United States. Mariana totes her two children from Colombia to reunite with her husband in Queens, New York. Her life is devastatingly turned around when her husband abandons the family. The woman and her kids have to fend for themselves in a foreign country. Mariana desperately searches for work. In the end, she resourcefully navigates a surprising avenue for making some money, the city's recycling.

*Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America*, 2012, directed by Peter Getzels and Eduardo Lopez. Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated  
A powerful documentary that exposes the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the immigration crisis we face today. From the territorial expansionist policies that decimated the young economies of Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba, to the covert operations that imposed oppressive military regimes in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, *Harvest of Empire* provides an unflinching look at the origins of the growing Latino presence in the United States. Adapted from the landmark book written by journalist Juan Gonzalez, the film tells the story of an epic human saga that is largely unknown to the great majority of citizens in the U.S., but must become part of our national conversation about immigration.

*Leaving no Trace/Sin Dejar Huella*, 2000, directed by Maria Navaro. Drama. 109 min. Rating: Not Rated  
The story follows Ana and Aurelia, two women on the road to Cancun who wish to flee their former lives. Ana is a former Mayan art smuggler who is being chased by a federal investigator and needs to get out. Aurelia wants to provide a better life for her children and leave her drug-dealer boyfriend behind. Together, they road trip across Mexico to cross the border into a new life.

*Those Who Remain/Los que se quedan*, 2009, directed by Carlos Hagerman and Juan Carlos Rulfo. Documentary. 96 min. Rating: Not Rated  
An exquisitely-photographed film about immigrants who crossed the U.S.–Mexico border and return to visit their relatives, told from the point of view of those who stayed home. The movie offers a poignant view of the emotional costs of immigration. It is also an insightful portrayal of Mexico and its culture.

*Maria Full of Grace*, 2004, directed by Joshua Marston. Drama. 101 min. Rating: Rated R  
A bright, spirited 17-year old, Maria Alvarez, lives with three generations of her family in a cramped house in rural Colombia and works stripping thorns from flowers in a rose plantation. The offer of a lucrative job involving travel--in fact, becoming a drug "mule"--changes the course of her life. Far from the uneventful trip she is promised, Maria is transported into the risky and



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ruthless world of international drug trafficking. Her mission becomes one of determination and survival and she finally emerges with the grace that will carry her forward into a new life.

*Mi Familia*, 1995, directed by Gregory Nava. Drama. 128 min. Rating: Rated-R

This heartwarming story has not one, but three border crossing scenes and they make great political and social commentary. In the first, a young country boy from Mexico walks for a year from his village to Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century. He just walks in. The border? "In those days, the border was just a line in the sand," says the narrator, underlining the often-unacknowledged close historical ties between Mexico and the United States. Later, his pregnant wife (Jennifer Lopez) is wrongly deported in a Great Depression-era round-up where Mexicans, whether legal or not, were driven to central Mexico and dumped. This really happened, after Mexicans were (surprise!) blamed for taking jobs away from Americans. Months after giving birth, she crosses the Rio Grande with her baby boy, losing him in the waves at one point, in a heart-stopping scene. You'd have to be made of stone not to be touched.

*Mojados: Through the Night*, 2004, directed by Tommy Davis. Documentary. 65 min. Rating: Not Rated

Director Tommy Davis tags along with four migrants from a small village in Mexico as they leave their families and embark on a 120 mile trek across the deserts of Texas, attempting to evade the U.S. Border Patrol. They must overcome dehydration, hypothermia and come face to face with death.

*Sin Nombre*, 2009 directed by Cary Jôji Fukunaga . Drama. 96 min. Rating: Rated-R

Honduran teenager Sayra reunites with her father, an opportunity for her to potentially realize her dream of a life in the U.S. Moving to Mexico is the first step in a fateful journey of unexpected events.

*Sleep Dealer*, 2008, directed by Alex Rivera. Sci-Fi. 90 min. Rating: PG-13

Mexico. The near future. Memo Cruz has always dreamed of leaving his tiny village and heading north. But, when he is ultimately forced to leave, Memo finds a future so bizarre--border walls, shantytowns, hi-tech factories, remote control drones and aqua-terrorists--that it looks a lot like today.

*The Dream is Now*, 2013, directed by Davis Guggenheim. Documentary. 31 min. Rating: Not Rated

Both moving and thought-provoking, *The Dream is Now* brings this pressing issue to America's attention, where we can all debate, discuss, and decide for ourselves what is right, what is fair, and what is best for our nation.

*The Harvest/La Cosecha*, 2011, directed by U. Roberto Romano. Documentary. 80 min. Rating: Not Rated

This gripping documentary follows three of the more than 400,000 migrant child farm workers in the United States who miss out on childhood and school as they work up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, without the protection of child labor laws.



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*The Other Side of Immigration*, 2009 directed by Roy Germano. Documentary. 55 min. Rating: Not Rated  
Based on over 700 interviews in Mexican towns where about half the population has left to work in the United States, *The Other Side of Immigration* asks why so many Mexicans come to the U.S. and what happens to the families and communities they leave behind. Through an approach that is both subtle and thought-provoking, filmmaker Roy Germano provides a perspective on undocumented immigration rarely witnessed by American eyes, challenging audiences to imagine more creative and effective solutions to the problem.

*Under the Same Moon*, 2007, directed by Patricia Riggen. Drama. 106 min. Rating: PG-13  
The debut feature from director Patricia Riggen, this drama centers on a young boy's journey across the U.S./Mexico border to be reunited with his mother. Adrian Alonso stars as Carlitos, a Mexican adolescent living with his grandmother while his mother works as a maid in the U.S., hoping someday to send for her child. But when the grandmother dies unexpectedly, Carlitos must sneak across the border and seek out his mother.

*Which Way Home*, 2009, directed by Rebecca Cammisa. Documentary. 90 min. Rating: Not Rated.  
*Which Way Home* is a feature documentary film that follows unaccompanied child migrants, on their journey through Mexico, as they try to reach the United States. We follow children like Olga and Freddy, nine-year old Hondurans, who are desperately trying to reach their parents in the U.S.; children like Jose, a ten-year old El Salvadoran, who has been abandoned by smugglers and ends up alone in a Mexican detention center; and Kevin, a canny, streetwise fourteen-year old Honduran, whose mother hopes that he will reach the U.S. and send money back to her. These are stories of hope and courage, disappointment and sorrow. They are the children you never hear about; the invisible ones.

Classroom Resources: [An Educator's Film Guide to Which Way Home](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute



## APPENDIX

- Images from *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*. Provided courtesy of the author and illustrator, Duncan Tonatiuh.
- Excerpt of chapter “Inside Out” from *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jiménez (University of New Mexico Press, 1997).
- Excerpt of “First Crossing” story by Pam Muñoz Ryan from *First Crossing: Stories About Teen Immigrants*, edited by Donald R. Gallo (Candlewick Press, 2004).

# PANCHO RABBIT AND THE COYOTE

• *A Migrant's Tale* •



DUNCAN TONATIUX

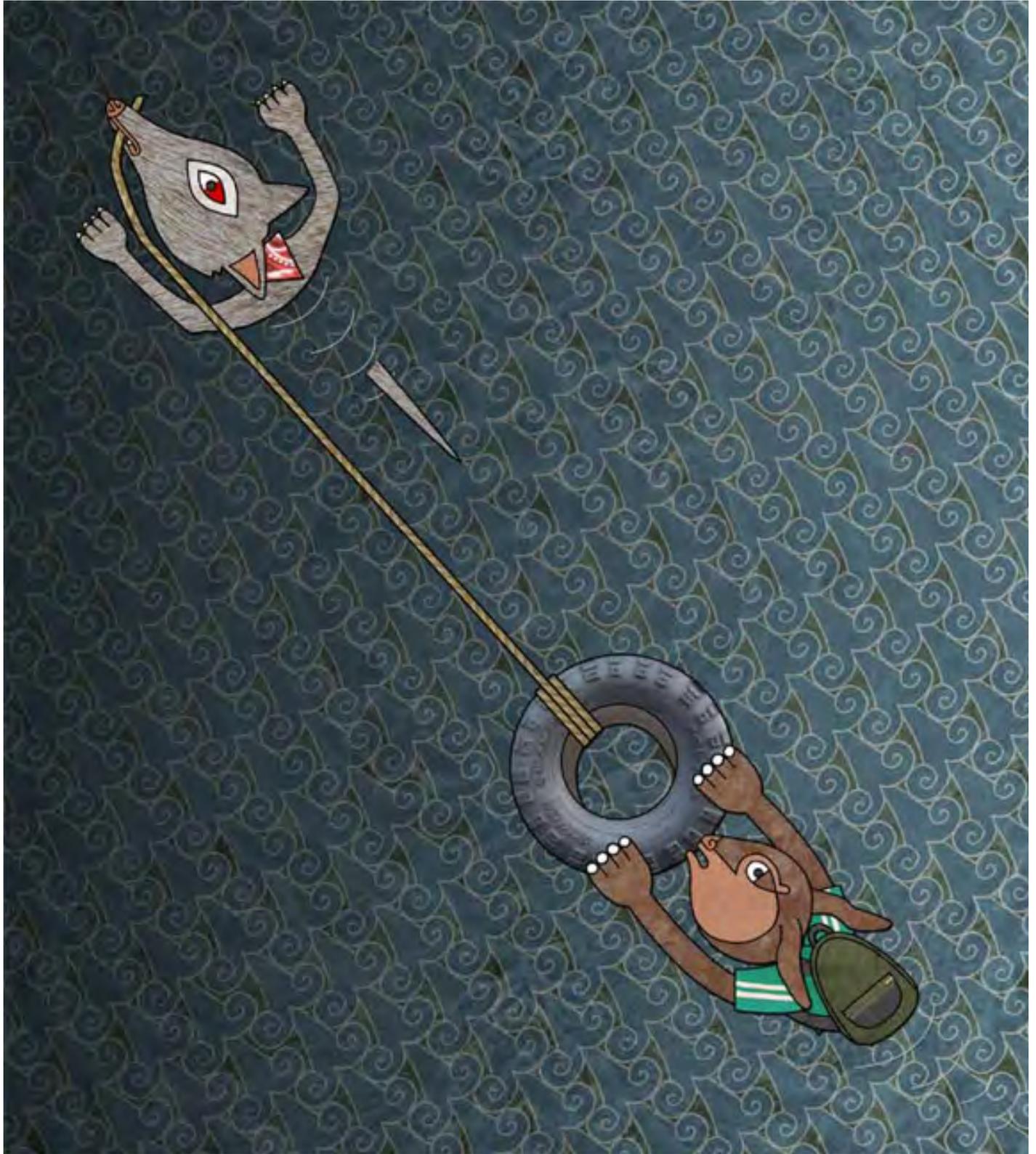


















# The Circuit

stories from the life  
of a migrant child

Francisco Jiménez



Houghton Mifflin Company  
Boston

## Inside Out

“I remember being hit on the wrists with a twelve-inch ruler because I did not follow directions in class,” Roberto answered in a mildly angry tone when I asked him about his first year of school. “But how could I?” he continued. “The teacher gave them in English.”

“So what did you do?” I asked, rubbing my wrists.

“I always guessed what the teacher wanted me to do. And when she did not use the ruler on me, I knew I had guessed right,” he responded. “Some of the kids made fun of me when I tried to say something in English and got it wrong,” he went on. “I had to repeat first grade.”

I wish I had not asked him, but he was the only one in the family, including Papá and Mamá, who had attended school. I walked away. I did not speak or understand English either, and I already felt anxious. Besides, I was excited about going to school for the first time that following

Monday. It was late January and we had just returned, a week before, from Corcoran, where my family picked cotton. We settled in Tent City, a labor camp owned by Sheehey Strawberry Farms located about ten miles east of Santa Maria.

On our first day of school, Roberto and I got up early. I dressed in a pair of overalls, which I hated because they had suspenders, and a flannel checked shirt, which Mamá had bought at the Goodwill store. As I put on my cap, Roberto reminded me that it was bad manners to wear a hat indoors. I thought of leaving it at home so that I would not make the mistake of forgetting to take it off in class, but I decided to wear it. Papá always wore a cap, and I did not feel completely dressed for school without it.

On our way out to catch the school bus, Roberto and I said good-bye to Mamá. Papá had already left to look for work, either topping carrots or thinning lettuce. Mamá stayed home to take care of Trampita, and to rest because she was expecting another baby.

When the school bus arrived, Roberto and I climbed in and sat together. I took the window seat and, on the way, watched endless rows of lettuce and cauliflower whiz by. The furrows that came up to the two-lane road looked like giant legs running alongside us. The bus made several stops to pick up kids and, with each stop, the noise inside got louder. Some kids were yelling at the top of their lungs. I did not know what they were saying. I was

getting a headache. Roberto had his eyes closed and was frowning. I did not disturb him. I figured he was getting a headache too.

By the time we got to Main Street School, the bus was packed. The bus driver parked in front of the red brick building and opened the door. We all poured out. Roberto, who had attended the school the year before, accompanied me to the main office, where we met the principal, Mr. Sims, a tall, red-headed man with bushy eyebrows and hairy hands. He patiently listened to Roberto, who, using the little English he knew, managed to enroll me in the first grade.

Mr. Sims walked me to my classroom. I liked it as soon as I saw it because, unlike our tent, it had wooden floors, electric lights, and heat. It felt cozy. He introduced me to my teacher, Miss Scalapino, who smiled, repeating my name, "Francisco." It was the only word I understood the whole time she and the principal talked. They repeated it each time they glanced at me. After he left, she showed me to my desk, which was at the end of the row of desks closest to the windows. There were no other kids in the room yet.

I sat at my desk and ran my hand over its wooden top. It was full of scratches and dark, almost black, ink spots. I opened the top, and inside were a book, a box of crayons, a yellow ruler, a thick pencil, and a pair of scissors. To my left, under the windows, was a dark wooden counter the length of the room. On top of it, right next to my desk, was

a caterpillar in a large jar. It looked just like the ones I had seen in the fields. It was yellowish green with black bands and it moved very slowly, without making any sound.

I was about to put my hand in the jar to touch the caterpillar when the bell rang. All the kids lined up outside the classroom door and then walked in quietly and took their seats. Some of them looked at me and giggled. Embarrassed and nervous, I looked at the caterpillar in the jar. I did this every time someone looked at me.

Miss Scalapino started speaking to the class and I did not understand a word she was saying. The more she spoke, the more anxious I became. By the end of the day, I was very tired of hearing Miss Scalapino talk because the sounds made no sense to me. I thought that perhaps by paying close attention, I would begin to understand, but I did not. I only got a headache, and that night, when I went to bed, I heard her voice in my head.

For days I got headaches from trying to listen, until I learned a way out. When my head began to hurt, I let my mind wander. Sometimes I imagined myself flying out of the classroom and over the fields where Papá worked and landing next to him and surprising him. But when I daydreamed, I continued to look at the teacher and pretend I was paying attention because Papá told me it was disrespectful not to pay attention, especially to grownups.

It was easier when Miss Scalapino read to the class from a book with illustrations because I made up my own stories,

in Spanish, based on the pictures. She held the book with both hands above her head and walked around the classroom to make sure everyone got a chance to see the pictures, most of which were of animals. I enjoyed looking at them and making up stories, but I wished I understood what she was reading.

In time I learned some of my classmates' names. The one I heard the most and therefore learned first was Curtis. Curtis was the biggest, strongest, and most popular kid in the class. Everyone wanted to be his friend and to play with him. He was always chosen captain when the kids formed teams. Since I was the smallest kid in the class and did not know English, I was chosen last.

I preferred to hang around Arthur, one of the boys who knew a little Spanish. During recess, he and I played on the swings and I pretended to be a Mexican movie star, like Jorge Negrete or Pedro Infante, riding a horse and singing the *corridos* we often heard on the car radio. I sang them to Arthur as we swung back and forth, going as high as we could.

But when I spoke to Arthur in Spanish and Miss Scalapino heard me, she said "No!" with body and soul. Her head turned left and right a hundred times a second, and her index finger moved from side to side as fast as a windshield wiper on a rainy day. "English, English," she repeated. Arthur avoided me whenever she was around.

Often during recess I stayed with the caterpillar. Some-

times it was hard to spot him because he blended in with the green leaves and twigs. Every day I brought him leaves from the pepper and cypress trees that grew on the playground.

Just in front of the caterpillar, lying on top of the cabinet, was a picture book of caterpillars and butterflies. I went through it, page by page, studying all the pictures and running my fingers lightly over the caterpillars and the bright wings of the butterflies and the many patterns on them. I knew caterpillars turned into butterflies because Roberto had told me, but I wanted to know more. I was sure information was in the words written underneath each picture in large black letters. I tried to figure them out by looking at the pictures. I did this so many times that I could close my eyes and see the words, but I could not understand what they meant.

My favorite time in school was when we did art, which was every afternoon, after the teacher had read to us. Since I did not understand Miss Scalapino when she explained the art lessons, she let me do whatever I wanted. I drew all kinds of animals but mostly birds and butterflies. I sketched them in pencil and then colored them using every color in my crayon box. Miss Scalapino even tacked one of my drawings up on the board for everyone to see. After a couple of weeks it disappeared, and I did not know how to ask where it had gone.

One cold Thursday morning, during recess, I was the

only kid on the playground without a jacket. Mr. Sims must have noticed I was shivering because that afternoon, after school, he took me to his office and pulled out a green jacket from a large cardboard box that was full of used clothes and toys. He handed it to me and gestured for me to try it on. It smelled like graham crackers. I put it on, but it was too big, so he rolled up the sleeves about two inches to make it fit. I took it home and showed it off to my parents. They smiled. I liked it because it was green and it hid my suspenders.

The next day I was on the playground wearing my new jacket and waiting for the first bell to ring when I saw Curtis coming at me like an angry bull. Aiming his head directly at me, and pulling his arms straight back with his hands clenched, he stomped up to me and started yelling. I did not understand him, but I knew it had something to do with the jacket because he began to pull on it, trying to take it off me. The next thing I knew he and I were on the ground wrestling. Kids circled us. I could hear them yelling Curtis's name and something else. I knew I had no chance, but I stubbornly held on to my jacket. He pulled on one of the sleeves so hard that it ripped at the shoulder. He pulled on the right pocket and it ripped. Then Miss Scalapino's face appeared above. She pushed Curtis off of me and grabbed me by the back of the collar and picked me up off the ground. It took all the power I had not to cry.

On the way to the classroom Arthur told me that Curtis

claimed the jacket was his, that he had lost it at the beginning of the year. He also said that the teacher told Curtis and me that we were being punished. We had to sit on the bench during recess for the rest of the week. I did not see the jacket again. Curtis got it but I never saw him wear it.

For the rest of the day, I could not even pretend I was paying attention to Miss Scalapino; I was so embarrassed. I laid my head on top of my desk and closed my eyes. I kept thinking about what had happened that morning. I wanted to fall asleep and wake up to find it was only a dream. The teacher called my name but I did not answer. I heard her walk up to me. I did not know what to expect. She gently shook me by the shoulders. Again, I did not respond. Miss Scalapino must have thought I was asleep because she left me alone, even when it was time for recess and everyone left the room.

Once the room was quiet, I slowly opened my eyes. I had had them closed for so long that the sunlight coming through the windows blinded me. I rubbed my eyes with the back of my hands and then looked to my left at the jar. I looked for the caterpillar but could not see it. Thinking it might be hidden, I put my hand in the jar and lightly stirred the leaves. To my surprise, the caterpillar had spun itself into a cocoon and had attached itself to a small twig. It looked like a tiny cotton bulb, just like Roberto had said it would. I gently stroked it with my index finger, picturing it asleep and peaceful.

At the end of the school day, Miss Scalapino gave me a note to take home to my parents. Papá and Mamá did not know how to read, but they did not have to. As soon as they saw my swollen upper lip and the scratches on my left cheek, they knew what the note said. When I told them what happened, they were very upset but relieved that I did not disrespect the teacher.

For the next several days, going to school and facing Miss Scalapino was harder than ever. However, I slowly began to get over what happened that Friday. Once I got used to the routine in school and I picked up some English words, I felt more comfortable in class.

On Wednesday, May 23, a few days before the end of the school year, Miss Scalapino took me by surprise. After we were all sitting down and she had taken roll, she called for everyone's attention. I did not understand what she said, but I heard her say my name as she held up a blue ribbon. She then picked up my drawing of the butterfly that had disappeared weeks before and held it up for everyone to see. She walked up to me and handed me the drawing and the silk blue ribbon that had the number one printed on it in gold. I knew then I had received first prize for my drawing. I was so proud I felt like bursting out of my skin. My classmates, including Curtis, stretched their necks to see the ribbon.

That afternoon, during our free period, I went over to check on the caterpillar. I turned the jar around, trying to

see the cocoon. It was beginning to crack open. I excitedly cried out, "Look, look," pointing to it. The whole class, like a swarm of bees, rushed over to the counter. Miss Scalapino took the jar and placed it on top of a desk in the middle of the classroom so everyone could see it. For the next several minutes we all stood there watching the butterfly emerge from its cocoon, in slow motion.

At the end of the day, just before the last bell, Miss Scalapino picked up the jar and took the class outside to the playground. She placed the jar on the ground and we all circled around her. I had a hard time seeing over the other kids, so Miss Scalapino called me and motioned for me to open the jar. I broke through the circle, knelt on the ground, and unscrewed the top. Like magic, the butterfly flew into the air, fluttering its wings up and down.

After school I waited in line for my bus in front of the playground. I proudly carried the blue ribbon in my right hand and the drawing in the other. Arthur and Curtis came up and stood behind me to wait for their bus. Curtis motioned for me to show him the drawing again. I held it up so he could see it.

"He really likes it, Francisco," Arthur said to me in Spanish.

"*¿Cómo se dice 'es tuyo' en inglés?*" I asked.

"It's yours," answered Arthur.

"It's yours," I repeated, handing the drawing to Curtis.

*Marco's father has crossed the border into the United States illegally several times to make money to support his family in Mexico. Now it is Marco's turn to make the dangerous journey.*

## First Crossing

Pam Muñoz Ryan



Revolution Boulevard in downtown Tijuana swarmed with gawking tourists who had walked over the big cement bridge from the United States to Mexico. Shop owners stood in front of their stalls calling out, "I make you good deal. Come in. I make you good price." Even though it was January, children walked the streets barefooted and accosted shoppers, determined to sell gum and small souvenirs with their persistent pleas: "Come on, lady, you like gum? Chiclets? Everybody like gum." Vendors carried gargantuan bouquets of paper flowers, hurrying up to cars on the street and trying to make sales

through open windows. It appeared that no one ever accepted the first rebuff from tourists. The Mexicans simply badgered them until they pulled out their wallets. With its shady, border-town reputation, Tijuana maintained an undeniable sense of mystery, as if something illegal was about to transpire.

Marco added up the hours he'd been riding on buses from his home in Jocorepec, Jalisco, in order to reach Tijuana. Eighteen hours? Twenty-three hours? It was all a blur of sleeping and sitting in stations and huddling as close to his father as possible so he wouldn't have to smell the sweat of strangers. Now, even though they were finally in the border town, their journey still wasn't over. Papá pointed to a bench in front of a liquor store, and Marco gratefully dropped onto it. Even though it wasn't dark yet, a neon sign flashed TEQUILA and KAHLÚA in the liquor store window. Marco felt conscious of himself, as if everyone who passed by knew why he was there. For some reason he felt guilty, even though he hadn't yet done anything wrong.

"*No te apures*. Don't worry," said Papá, reaching into a brown bag for a peanut. He calmly cracked and peeled it, letting the shells drop on the sidewalk.

Marco looked at him. Papá had an eagle's profile: a brown bald head with a bird-of-prey nose. Once, when he was a little boy, Marco had seen a majestic carved wooden Indian in front of a cigar store in Guadalajara and had said, "Papá, that's you!" Papá had laughed but

had to agree that the statue looked familiar. Marco looked just like Papá but with ten times the hair. They had the same walnut-colored skin and hooked noses, but Papá's body was muscular and firm while Marco's was skinny and angular, all knees and elbows.

"How do we find the *coyote*?" asked Marco.

"Do not worry," said Papá. "The *coyote* will find us. Like a real animal stalking its next meal, the *coyote* will find us."

Marco took off his baseball cap and ran his fingers through his thick, straight hair. He repositioned the hat and took a deep breath. "Papá, what happens if we get caught?"

"We have been over this," said Papá, still cracking peanuts. "We will have to spend a few hours at the border office. We stand in line. They ask us questions. We give them the names we discussed. They take our fingerprints. Then we come back here to Tijuana. The *coyote* will try to move us across again, tomorrow or the next day or even the next. It could take two attempts or a dozen. Eventually, we make it. It's all part of the fee."

"How much?" asked Marco.

"Too much," said Papá. "It is how it is. They are greedy, but we need them."

Marco had heard stories about *coyotes*, the men who moved Mexicans across the border. Sometimes they took the money from poor peasants, disappeared, and left them stranded in Nogales or Tecate with no way home.

*Coyotes* had been known to lead groups into the desert in the summer, where they would later be found almost dead and riddled with cactus thorns. And then there were the stories about scorpion stings and rattlesnake bites after following a *coyote* into a dry riverbed. Just last week, Marco overheard a friend of Papá's tell about a group of people who hid in a truck under a camper shell, bodies piled upon bodies. The border patrol tried to stop the truck, but the *coyote* was drunk and tried to speed away. The truck overturned, and seventeen Mexicans were killed. Since then, Marco's thoughts had been filled with his worst imaginings.

Papá saw the wrinkle in Marco's forehead and said, "I have always made it across, and I wouldn't keep doing this if it wasn't worth it."

Marco nodded. Papá was right. Everything had been better for the family since he'd started crossing. His father had not always worked in the United States. For many years, before Marco was ten, Papá had gone to work at a large construction site in Guadalupe, thirty miles away from their village of Jocotepec. Six days a week, Papá had carried fifty-pound bags of rock and dirt from the bottom of a crater to the top of the hill. All day long, up and down the hill.

Marco had asked him once, "Do you count the times you go up and down the hill?"

Papá had said, "I don't count. I don't think. I just do it."

Papá's frustration had grown as the years went by. He

was nothing more than a *burro*. When the hole in the ground was dug and the big building finished, he had been sent to excavate another hole. And for what? A pitiful five dollars for his nine hours? The day that one of *los jefes* spat on his father as if he was an animal, Papá set the fifty-pound bag down and began to walk away.

The bosses laughed at him. "Where are you going? You need work? You better stay!"

Papá turned around and picked up the heavy bag. He stayed for the rest of the day so that he could collect his pay and get a ride home, but he never went back.

He told Mamá, "My future and the children's future are marked in stone here. Why not go to the other side? There, I will make thirty, forty, fifty dollars a day, maybe more."

For the past four years, Marco had seen Papá only twice a year. He and his mother and younger sisters had moved into another rhythm of existence. He woke with the roosters, went to school in the mornings, and helped Mamá with Maria, Lilia, and Irma in the afternoon. During harvest, he worked in the corn or *chayote* fields and counted the days until Papá would come home.

The money orders always preceded him. They made Mamá happy and made Papá seem godlike in her eyes. They still did not own a house, but now they were able to pay the rent on time and had plenty left over for things like a television and the clothes and games Marco's sisters always wanted. They had money for the market and

food, especially for the occasions when Papá came home and Mamá cooked meat and sweets every day. The first few nights were always the same. Mamá made *birria*, goat stew, and *caprotada*, bread pudding. Then Papá went out with his *compadres* to drink and to tell of his work in Los Estados, the states. The family would have his company for a month, and then he would go back to that unknown place, disappearing somewhere beyond the vision of the departing bus.

"What is it like, Papá?" Marco always asked.

"I live in an apartment above a garage with eight messy men. We get up early, when it's still dark, to start our work in the flower fields. In the afternoon, we go back to the apartment. We take turns going to the store to buy tortillas, a little meat, some fruit. There is a television, so we watch the Spanish stations. We talk about sports and Mexico and our families. There is room on the floor to sleep. On weekends we sometimes play *fútbol* at the school and drink a few *cervezas*. Sometimes we have regular work, but other times we go and stand on the corner in front of the gas station with the hope we will be picked up by the contractors who need someone to dig a ditch or do some other job a *gringo* won't do. It goes on like this until it's time to come back to Mexico."

For several years, Marco had begged to go with Papá. His parents finally decided that now that he was fourteen, he was old enough to help support the family. With both Marco and Papá working, the family could buy a

house next year. Mamá had cried for three days before they left.

When it was time to board the bus to Guadalajara, Marco had hugged his mother tight.

"Mamá, I will be back."

"It will never be the same," she'd said. "Besides, some come back and some do not."

Marco knew he would return. He already looked forward to his first homecoming, when he would be celebrated like Papá. As the bus pulled away from Jocotepec, Marco had waved out the small window to the women, and for the first time in his life, had felt like a man.

Marco leaned back on the hard bench on the Tijuana street and closed his eyes. He already missed Jocotepec and his sisters playing in the corn fields behind the house. He even missed the annoying neighbor's dog barking and Mamá's voice waking him too early for mass on Sunday morning when he wanted to sleep.

Papá nudged him. "Stay close to me," he said, grabbing Marco's shirtsleeve.

Marco sat up and looked around. There was nothing unusual happening on the street. What had Papá seen?

A squat, full woman wrapped in a red shawl came down the sidewalk with a determined walk. Marco thought her shape resembled a small Volkswagen. Her blue-black hair was pulled back into a tight doughnut on the top of

her head, not one strand out of place. Heavy makeup hid her face like a painted mask, and her red mouth was set in a straight line. As she passed, she glanced at Papá and gave a quick nod.

"Let's go," he said.

"That's the *coyote*?" said Marco. "But it is a woman."  
"Shhh," said Papá. "Follow me."

Papá weaved between the tourists on the street, keeping the marching woman in his sight. She pulled out a beeping cell phone and talked into it, then turned off the main avenue and headed deeper into the town's neighborhood. Others seemed to fall in with Papá and Marco from doorways and bus stops until they were a group of eight: five men and three women. Up ahead, the *coyote* woman waited at a wooden gate built into the middle of a block of apartments. She walked in and the little parade followed her. They continued through a dirty *callejón* between two buildings, picking their way around garbage cans until they reached a door in the alley wall.

"In there," she ordered.

Marco followed Papá inside. It seemed to be a small basement with plaster walls and a cement floor. Narrow wooden stairs led up one wall to someplace above. A light bulb with a dangling chain hung in the middle of the room, and in a corner was a combination television and video player with stacks of children's videotapes on the floor. The woman came inside, shut the door, and bolted it. The men and women turned to face her.

"Twelve hundred for each, American dollars," she said.

Marco almost choked. He looked around at the others, who appeared to be peasants like him and Papá. Where would they have gotten that kind of money? And how could Papá pay twenty-four hundred dollars for the two of them to cross the border?

The transients reached into their pockets for wallets, rolled up pant legs to get to small leather bags strapped around their legs, unzipped inside pouches of jackets, and were soon counting out the bills. Stacks of money appeared. The *coyote* walked to each person, wrote his or her name in a notebook, and collected the fees. Papá counted out 120 bills, all twenties, into her chubby palm.

In his entire life, Marco had never seen so much money in one room.

"*Escucha*. Listen. Since September 11, I have had trouble trying to get people across with false documents," she said, "so we will cross in the desert. I have vans and drivers to help. We'll leave in the middle of the night. If you need to relieve yourself, use the alley. The television does not work, only the video." Her cell phone beeped again. She put it to her ear and listened as she walked up the stairs, which groaned and creaked under her weight. Marco heard a door close and a bolt latch.

It was almost dark. Marco and Papá found a spot on the concrete floor near the video player. Marco put his backpack behind him and leaned against it, protecting

himself from the soiled wall, where probably hundreds of backs had rested.

One of the women, who was about Mamá's age, smiled at Marco. The others, tired from their travels, settled on the floor and tried to maneuver their bags for support. No one said much. There was murmuring between people sitting close to each other, but despite the obligatory polite nods, anxiety prevented too much interaction.

A man next to Papá spoke quietly to him. His name was Javier, and he'd been crossing for twelve years. He had two lives, he said: one in the United States and one in his village in Mexico. The first few years of working in the States, he dreamed of the days he would go home to Mexico and his family, but now he admitted that he sometimes dreaded his trips back. He wanted to bring his wife and children with him to work and live in the U.S., but they wouldn't come. Now he went home only once a year. What worried him was that he was starting to prefer his life on the other side to his life in Mexico.

Papá nodded as if he understood Javier.

Marco said nothing because he knew that Papá was just being polite. He would never prefer the United States to Mexico.

Marco was too nervous to sleep. He reached over and took several videotapes from the pile. They were all cartoon musicals, luckily in Spanish. He put one in the machine, *The Lion King*, and turned the volume down

low. Trancelike, he watched the lion, Simba, lose his father.

"*Hakuna matata*," sang the characters on the video. "No worries."

A series of thoughts paraded through Marco's mind. The desert. Snakes. The possibility of being separated from Papá. Drinking beer with the men in Jocorepec after eating goat stew. A woman *coyote*. Scorpions. He closed his eyes, and the music in the video became the soundtrack of his piecemeal nightmare.

Hours later, Papá woke Marco. "Now, *M'ijo*. Let's go."

Marco, jarred from sleep, let Papá pull him up. He rubbed his eyes and tried to focus on the others, who headed out the door.

A man with a flashlight waited until they all gathered in a huddle. He wore all black, including his cap, the brim pulled down so far that all that was apparent was his black moustache and a small, narrow chin.

They picked their way through the alley again, following the direction of the man's light. At the street, a paneled van waited, the motor running. The door slid open, and Marco could see that the seats had been removed to create a cavern. It was already filled with people, all standing up. Men and women held small suitcases and had plastic garbage bags next to them filled with their belongings.

There didn't seem to be an inch of additional space until the flashlight man yelled, "*¡Mueva!*" Move.

The people in the van crammed closer together as each of the group of eight climbed inside.

"*Más!*" said Flashlight Man. The people tried to squash together. Papá jumped inside and grabbed Marco's hand, pulling him in, too, but Marco was still half out. The man shoved Marco as if he were packing an already stuffed suitcase. The others groaned and complained. The doors slid shut behind Marco. When the van surged forward, no one fell because there was no room to fall. Their bodies nested together, faces pressed against faces, like tightly bundled stalks of celery. Marco turned his head to avoid his neighbor's breath and found his nose pressed against another's ear.

The van headed east for a half hour. Then it stopped suddenly, the door slid open, and Flashlight Man directed them into the night. His cell phone rang to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," and he quickly answered it. "One hour. We will be there," he said into the phone. Then he turned to the small army of people and said, "Let your eyes adjust to the night. Then follow me."

Marco and Papá held back. They were the last in the group forming the line of obedient lambs walking over a hill and down into an arroyo. There was no water at the bottom—just rocks, dirt, and dry grasses. Visions of reptiles crowded Marco's mind. He was relieved when they climbed back up and continued to walk over the mostly barren ground. They crossed through a chainlink fence where an opening had been cut.

"Are we in the United States?" asked Marco.

"Yes," said Papá. "Keep walking."

They walked along a dirt road for another half hour, and in the distance, headlights blinked. Flashlight Man punched a number into his cell phone. The headlights came on again.

"That's it," said Flashlight Man, and they all hurried toward the van, where they were again sandwiched together inside.

*That wasn't so bad*, thought Marco, as the van sped down a dirt road. A tiny bud of relief began to flower in his mind. No worries.

Within five minutes, the van slowed to a crawl and then stopped. Marco heard someone outside barking orders at the driver. Suddenly, the van door slid open and Marco met La Migra.

Four border-patrol officers with guns drawn ordered them out and herded them into two waiting vans with long bench seats. *A small consolation*, thought Marco. They rode back to the border-patrol station in silence. Inside, it was exactly as Papá had said. They stood in line, gave false names during a short interview, were fingerprinted, and released.

"Now what?" asked Marco, as they stood in front of the border-patrol building on the Mexico side.

"We walk back to *la casa del coyote*," said Papá.

It was seven in the morning as they walked down the narrow streets. Most shops weren't open yet, and bars and

fences enclosed the vendors' stalls, which were filled with piñatas, leather goods, ceramics, and sombreros. Papá bought premade burritos and Cokes inside a corner *tienda* before they turned down the street that led to Coyote Lady's house.

Many of their group had already found their way back to the basement room off the alley. Papá and Marco found a spot against the wall and fell asleep. They woke late in the afternoon, went to the taco vendor on the corner for food, and came back and watched the video *The Little Mermaid*.

Marco listened to the fish maiden's song. She wanted to be free to go to another world. *Like me*, he thought. It seemed *everyone* wanted to get to the other side.

In the middle of the night, they were roused and put in a van for another attempt to cross over. Again, the border patrol sat in wait and ambushed them, as if they had known they were coming. Each night the van took them a little farther east into the desert, but after five attempts, they were no farther into the United States than they'd been the first night.

Early Sunday morning, Coyote Lady came down the stairs into the basement room. She wore a dress like the ones Marco's mother wore for church, a floral print with a white collar, although it was much bigger than any dress his mother owned. Her face was scrubbed clean of makeup, and she looked like someone's aunt or a neighborhood woman who might go to mass every day.

"Today is a big football game, professional, in San Diego. La Migra will be eager to get people into the U.S. in time for the game. We start moving you in one hour, one at a time. The wait will not be bad at the border this morning. But later today, closer to game time, it will be *horrible*."

Marco looked at Papá. He did not want to be separated from him.

Papá said, "How?"

"In a car," said Coyote Lady. "We hide you. If I take only one across at a time, the car doesn't ride low in the back and does not look suspicious. I drive in a different lane each time. As you can see, we are having trouble with the usual ways, so we try this. It has worked before, especially on a busy day."

Marco didn't like the idea of being away from Papá. What would happen if Papá got across and he didn't? Or what if he couldn't find Papá on the other side? Then what would he do? He didn't like this part of the journey. Suddenly, he wished he'd stayed home another year in Jocotepec.

As if reading his mind, Papá said, "I will go before you, Marco. And I will wait for you. I will not leave until you arrive. And if you don't arrive, I will come back to Tijuana."

Marco nodded.

Coyote Lady gave orders and told a woman to get ready to go. Every hour she stuck her head inside the room and called out another person.

Papá and Marco were the last of the group to go. They walked outside.

In the alley, the trash cans had been pushed aside to make room for an old car, a sedan. Flashlight Man waited beside the car, but he wasn't wearing his usual black uniform. Instead he had on jeans, a blue-and-white football jersey, and a Chargers cap. He lifted the hood.

Inside, a small rectangular coffee table had been placed next to the motor, forming a narrow ledge. Two of the wooden legs disappeared into the bowels of the car and two of the legs had been cut short and now provided the braces against the radiator and motor.

"Okay," he said. "You lie down in here. It only takes a half hour. There is a van waiting for you in Chula Vista that will take you to your destinations."

Papá climbed up. Flashlight Man positioned his feet and legs so they would not touch the motor. Papá put his head and upper body on the tiny tabletop, curling his body to make it smaller. For an instant before the hood was closed, Papá's eyes caught Marco's.

Marco turned away so he wouldn't have to see his father humbled in this manner.

"*Vámanos*," said Coyote Lady, and she wedged into the driver's seat. Flashlight Man sat on the passenger side. A Chargers football banner and blue pompoms sat on the dashboard as further proof of their deception. The car backed out of the alley and left. Marco closed the gate behind them.

He paced up and down the alley. They had said it would take an hour roundtrip. The minutes crawled by. Why did Papá agree to do this? Why did he resign himself to these people? "It is the way it is," Papá had said. Marco went back into the basement room and walked in circles.

After one hour, he put in a tape, *Aladdin*, and tried to pay attention as the characters sang about a whole new world. It was so easy in the video to get on a flying carpet to reach a magical place. *Where is this new world? Where is Papá? Did he get through?* Marco had never once heard a story of someone crossing over under the hood of a car. He tried to imagine being inside, next to the engine. His stomach churned. *Where is my magic carpet?*

The door opened suddenly. Flashlight Man was back. "Let's go," he said.

The car was already positioned in the alley with the hood up. Coyote Lady took Marco's backpack and threw it in the trunk. Marco climbed up on the bumper and swung his legs over the motor, then sat on the makeshift ledge. Flashlight Man arranged Marco's legs as if he were in a running position, one leg up, knee bent. One leg straighter, but slightly bent. Marco slowly lowered himself onto his side and put his head on the tabletop. Then he crossed his arms around his chest and watched the sunlight disappear to a tiny crack as the hood was closed.

"Don't move in there," said Flashlight Man.

*Don't worry, thought Marco. My fear will not permit me to move.*

The motor started. The noise hurt his ears, and within minutes it was hot. The smell of motor oil and gasoline accosted his nostrils. He breathed through his mouth, straining his lips toward the slit where the light crept through for fresh air. The car moved along for about ten minutes until they reached the lanes of traffic that led to the border crossing. Then it was stop and go. Stop and go. Marco's legs began to cramp, but he knew not to move one inch. He tried not to imagine what would happen if he rolled onto the inner workings of the car.

The car lurched and stopped, over and over. Marco wanted to close his eyes, but he was afraid that he would get dizzy or disoriented. He watched the small crack between the car and hood as if it were his lifeline. A flash of color obliterated his line of sunlight as a flower vendor stopped in front of the car, trying to make one last sale to those in the car next to them. "*¡Flores, flores! You buy cheap!*"

The line of cars started to move again, but the flower vendor continued to walk in front of their car. Coyote Lady pressed on the horn. Marco's body trembled as the sound reverberated through his body. He inched his hands up to cover his ears. The vendor stepped out of the way, and the car began to move faster.

Marco never knew when they actually crossed the line. He only knew when the car began to speed up on

the freeway. His body pulsed with the vibrations of the car. Afraid to close his eyes, he watched beads of moisture move across the radiator, as if they had the ability to dance. Marco could not feel his right foot. It had fallen asleep. Panic crept into his chest and seized his muscles. He slowly pressed his hand back and forth across his chest to relieve the tightness. "No worries," he whispered. "No worries."

The car stopped and shook with a door being slammed. Marco heard someone fiddling with the hood latch. Light streamed into his eyes, and he squinted. Flashlight Man pulled him from the car and handed over his backpack. Marco stumbled from his dead foot, and his body still rocked with the feeling of the moving car. He looked around. He was in a parking lot behind an auto shop. Papá was waiting.

"We made it," said Papá, clapping Marco on the back. "We're in Chula Vista."

Marco said nothing. He couldn't hear what Papá had said because of the noise in his ears, as if they were filled with cotton and bees. He felt as if he'd been molested, his body misappropriated. He pulled away from Papá's arm and climbed into the waiting van, this one with seats and windows. The door slid shut. Marco turned his face to the window and saw Coyote Lady and Flashlight Man driving away.

The others in the van smiled and talked as if they'd all just come from a party. The relief of a successful crossing

permeate the air, and when one man told how he was hidden in a door panel of a truck, smashed in a fetal position for one hour, and thought he might suffocate, Marco laughed the hardest.

As the people were dropped off in towns along the way north, they shook hands with Marco and Papá and left them with the words "Buena suerte," good luck. When Papá and Marco were the only ones left in the van and the driver finally headed up Freeway 5 toward Encinitas, Papá grinned at him. "Okay now?"

Marco nodded. "Okay." He looked out the window at the people in the cars on the freeway. They were all headed somewhere in the United States of America. Marco wondered how many were headed to a whole new world.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pam Muñoz Ryan's maternal grandparents emigrated to the United States from Aguascalientes, Mexico, during the Great Depression. Her grandmother, Esperanza Ortega Muñoz, had seven children, including Ryan's mother, also named Esperanza. The riches-to-rags life of her grandmother was the inspiration for Ryan's book *Esperanza Rising*, about a family that had lived in wealth in Mexico but was later forced into a life of poverty in a farm-labor camp in southern California. That novel became an

seemed to have unleashed their tongues. Marco listened as they talked of their jobs in towns he'd never heard of before: Escondido, Solana Beach, Poway, Oceanside. Papá told them that he and his son were going to Encinitas to work in the flower fields and that it was his son's first time crossing over. Faces turned toward Marco.

Marco cringed, his discomfort showing. *Why did he have to mention me?*

One of the men laughed out loud. "At least you were not rolled inside a mattress like I was on my first time!"

"Or like me," said a young woman, grinning. "They dressed me as an *abuelita*, a grandmother, with a wig and old clothes and had me walk across with another woman's identification. I was shaking the entire time."

Marco could only force a smile, but everyone else laughed.

Stories spilled from their lips about their first times or their friend's or family member's: hiding inside hollowed-out bales of hay, cramped inside a hide-a-bed sofa from which the bed frame had been removed, buried in the middle of a truckload of crates filled with cackling chickens. Marco found himself chuckling and nodding in co-misery. An almost giddy air seemed to prevail as they all reveled in one another's bizarre stories and sometimes life-threatening circumstances.

He found himself eager to hear of each exploit and began feeling oddly proud and somehow connected to this unrelated group. A strange camaraderie seemed to

