

**Core Collection: The New Immigration Story. By Hazel Rochman and Bill Ott.
Published in August 2005 Booklist.**

Leaving home is not what it used to be. It's no longer a one-way trip across borders to a self-confident, optimistic America; rather, the immigrant journey today is a more ambiguous process involving constant travel back and forth, physical and emotional. Thanks to cell phones and air travel, national boundaries are less rigid today, and the break with the Old Country is not as final. Writing in 1968, in an introductory note to *When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw*, Isaac Bashevis Singer lamented that "in our time, literature is losing its address." His concern was that our stories had lost their sense of home and, with that, their identity. Today, the issue is a little different. Literature has multiple addresses. Today's immigrant narratives reflect their creators' belief in what Héctor Tobar, author of *Translation Nation*, calls "a transnational identity," the notion that "bodies and souls can live between two countries, that the physical border need not exist in the mind."

But if the authors of the new immigration narratives welcome the ability to cross and recross borders, holding onto the old while embracing the new, they also recognize that balancing multiple worlds and multiple selves takes a psychic toll. Whether they are writing for adults or youth, many of today's writers on the immigrant experience dramatize the conflicts they feel about "becoming American." Writing in the January 2002 Booklist, Linda Sue Park argues that the hyphen in Korean-American, instead of being a connector, implies that she is somehow less American, her loyalties perhaps divided. And she says that most hyphenated writers of color resent the hyphen's implication: "Our ethnicity is assumed to be our only valid subject," she says.

Questions of ethnicity, race, and prejudice remain central to today's immigration narratives, as do many other themes familiar from such classic immigration novels as Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*: the break from the old country, the journey itself, the shame children feel over their parents' failure to learn the language or accept a new culture, the longing for "back home," and the search for roots.

Just as today's immigration authors reinterpret the genre's classic themes, so do they expand the familiar stories of past immigration, both forced and otherwise, telling the old stories in new ways and finding new stories that earlier writers were unable to tell. In this core collection, we limit our focus to the new immigration story, but there is another list waiting to be compiled of contemporary retellings of old stories. Such a list would include, for example, Julius Lester's *The Old African*, in which the tragic story of Africans sold into slavery is vivified through a combination of brutal history and stirring magic realism, and Louise Erdrich's recent children's book *The Game of Silence*, which re-imagines the story of displaced Native Americans forced to "migrate."

But that list will have to wait. The core collection below, including books for adults, young adults, and children, is limited to titles published since 1990 whose subject is immigration

today-in a world in conflict with itself, a world where straight lines, whether mapping a journey or connecting cause and effect, have all but disappeared. We make no claim for completeness, but to extend our range, we have listed numerous anthologies, collecting excerpts from novels, stories, and memoirs, all of which could be included in an expanded list.

ADULT BOOKS

Nonfiction

Abu-Jaber, Diana. *The Language of Baklava.*

Diana Abu-Jaber's vibrant, humorous memoir weaves together stories of being raised by a food-obsessed Jordanian father with tales of Lake Ontario shish kabob cookouts and goat stew feasts under Bedouin tents in the desert. These sensuously evoked repasts, complete with recipes, in turn illuminate the two cultures of Diana's childhood—American and Jordanian—while helping to paint a loving and complex portrait of her impractical, displaced immigrant father who, like many an immigrant before him, cooked to remember the place he came from and to pass that connection on to his children. *The Language of Baklava* irresistably invites us to sit down at the table with Diana's family, sharing unforgettable meals that turn out to be as much about "grace, difference, faith, love" as they are about food.

Anders, Gigi. *Jubana: The Awkwardly True and Dazzling Adventures of a Jewish Cubana Goddess.*

According to her colorful Mami Dearest, the life of young Gigi Anders will be simple if she can remember three maxims—be pretty, get married, and always drink TaB. Thus begins her instruction in the art of being a lady and the side effects of falling in love.

As the granddaughter of Eastern European and Russian shtetl-reared grandparents who immigrated as teenagers in the early 1920s to the fierce tropical beauty of Cuba, Anders is heir apparent to a legacy of transatlantic alienation. With dazzling wit and hilarity mined from the depths of loss and yearning, Anders chronicles her journey from beach baby to ostracized exile to vibrant intellectual, along the way balancing her obsession with killer outfits and zaftig, orgasmic meals—always with a can of TaB!—with the more serious pursuits of love, sanity, and lipstick in perfect siren red.

Becoming American: Personal Essays by First Generation Immigrant Women. Ed. by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah.

Is it possible to enter into a new place without surrendering your old self and all that defines it? That is the question explored in the twenty-two original essays contained in this extraordinary collection. It is the same question America grapples with as it enters the new century. As Lynn Freed writes in her inspiring and witty essay, "Embracing the Alien": "I do not belong here, and I have had to turn not belonging into a triumph."

Crossing into America: The New Literature of Immigration. Ed. by Louis Mendoza and S. Shankar.

A literary portrait of immigrant America including contributions from celebrated authors, young writers, and undocumented workers. This outstanding collection captures the diverse voices of the new literature of American immigration. Bringing together beautiful writing from celebrated authors, **Crossing into America** fills the literary void in public discussion about immigration. Since the immigration reforms of 1965 removed many of the racial barriers in American immigration laws, a new wave of immigrants has visibly transformed a society that has long prided itself on being a nation of immigrants. **Crossing into America** includes stories and memoirs of writers born in Mexico, Kashmir, the Philippines, South Africa, and Romania, as well as poignant reflections on the immigrant experience by the children of immigrants. This book follows these newest arrivals from their home countries through their engagement with America and also includes an accessible history of immigration policy, cartoons, and newspaper stories, and a section of conversations with activists, journalists, and scholars working in the front lines of our immigration battles.

Danticat, Edwidge. *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States.*

In four sections—Childhood, Migration, First Generation, and Return—the contributors to this anthology write powerfully, often hauntingly, of their lives in Haiti and the United States. Jean-Robert Cadet's description of his Haitian childhood as a *restavec*—a child slave—in Port-au-Prince contrasts with Dany Laferriere's account of a ten-year-old boy and his beloved grandmother in Petit-Gove. We read of Marie Helene Laforest's realization that while she was white in Haiti, in the United States she is black. Patricia Benoit tells us of a Haitian woman refugee in a detention center who has a simple need for a red dress—dignity. The reaction of a man who has married the woman he loves is the theme of Gary Pierre-Pierre's "The White Wife"; the feeling of alienation is explored in "Made Outside" by Francie Latour. The frustration of trying to help those who have remained in Haiti and of the *do-gooders* who do more for themselves than the Haitians is described in Babette Wainwright's "Do Something for Your Soul, Go to Haiti." The variations and permutations of the divided self of the Haitian emigrant are poignantly conveyed in this unique anthology.

Deng, Alephonsion and others. *They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky: The True Story of Three Lost Boys from Sudan.*

Benjamin, Alepho, and Benson were raised among the Dinka tribe of Sudan. Their world was an insulated, close-knit community of grass-roofed cottages, cattle herders, and tribal councils. The lions and pythons that prowled beyond the village fences were the greatest threat they knew.

All that changed the night the government-armed Murahiliin began attacking their villages. Amid the chaos, screams, conflagration, and gunfire, five-year-old Benson and seven-year-old Benjamin fled into the dark night. Two years later, Alepho, age seven, was forced to do the same. Across the Southern Sudan, over the next five years, thousands of other boys did likewise, joining this stream of child refugees that became known as the Lost Boys. Their journey would take them over one thousand miles across a war-ravaged country, through

landmine-sown paths, crocodile-infested waters, and grotesque extremes of hunger, thirst, and disease. The refugee camps they eventually filtered through offered little respite from the brutality they were fleeing.

In *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky*, Alepho, Benson, and Benjamin, by turn, recount their experiences along this unthinkable journey. They vividly recall the family, friends, and tribal world they left far behind them and their desperate efforts to keep track of one another. This is a captivating memoir of Sudan and a powerful portrait of war as seen through the eyes of children. And it is, in the end, an inspiring and unforgettable tribute to the tenacity of even the youngest human spirits.

Dorfman, Ariel. *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey.*

In this remarkable memoir, Dorfman describes an extraordinary life, torn between the United States, South America, and his Jewish heritage, between English and Spanish, between revolution and repression. Interwoven with the story of how Dorfman switched languages and countries--not once, but three times--is a day-to-day account of his multiple escapes from death during Pinochet's military takeover of Chile in 1973. Combining eight vignettes of his life before 1973 with eight scenes from the coup, Dorfman filters these events through an engaging, hybrid consciousness. A beautifully written and deeply moving auto-biography by one of the "greatest living Latin American writers" (*Newsweek*), *Heading South, Looking North* is at once a vivid account of a life as complex and mysterious as the fictional characters Dorfman has created, and an enthralling search for a permanent home, a political cause, and a cultural identity.

Fritz, Mark. *Lost on Earth: Nomads of the New World.*

In *Lost on Earth*, Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent Mark Fritz enters into the twilight world of contemporary refugees as they trek across landscapes that are continually being reshaped by the aftershocks of the Cold War.

As countries around the world are shattered by ancient feuds, seemingly unconnected global events are humanized in this account by people like Herbert Puchwein, a detective from Vienna who rescues a busload of orphans in Sarajevo, and Senada Suljic whose Bosnian family prays that their paths will cross again. Fritz tells of a bored East German girl who slips into a forest one day and finds a magical land on the other side; an engineer from Liberia who watches his neatly constructed life become dismantled by war; a jaded nurse from Ohio who drifts from emergency room to emergency room, hooked on adrenaline; and an exiled college student who fights to recapture his homeland.

Investigating the forces at play in the world, Fritz tells where these refugees are from, why they flee, and what they encounter during their journeys. Filled with terror and drama, tragedy and inspiration, *Lost on Earth* is a remarkable account of the human will to survive.

I Begin My Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience. Ed. By

Lillian Faderman and Ghia Xiong.

I Begin My Life All Over is an oral history of 36 real-life strangers in a strange land, an intimate study of the immigrant experience in contemporary America.

Kniffel, Leonard. *A Polish Son in the Motherland: An American's Journey Home.*

Searching for the remnants of his family, Leonard Kniffel left Chicago in 2000 to live in Poland. *A Polish Son in the Motherland* is the story of a search for roots and for the reasons why one family's ties were severed more than fifty years ago. Along the way, we see what half a century of communism did to Poland and how the residue of World War II lingers. The author's search begins inauspiciously, but he soon meets a local wine merchant and her son, who are eager to reveal the secrets of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, the town near which his grandmother was born. After he moves in with Adam, a local entrepreneur who trades in everything from shoes and cosmetics to computers and jam, he begins to master his ancestral language and learn the ways of the community from Adam's mother, who loves long walks in the woods—and meals made from what she picks there. Kniffel's search for a connection to Poland is propelled by memories of the stories his grandmother told him about her emigration to Michigan in 1913. While his family eludes him, the adventure becomes an investigation into the relationship between mothers and the legacy they give their sons. Poles who emigrated to America, the author concludes, must have been particularly good at assimilating into American culture. Less than fifty years after his maternal grandparents arrived in the United States, barely a trace of their Polishness existed in their grandchildren. Through his grandparents' struggles, their children became American and created a new world for themselves and their descendants. In returning to Poland himself, Kniffel sought and found a bridge to the "Great Migration" that changed the lives of so many millions—and millions yet to come. reconciliation, the one that truly matters."

Rodriguez, Richard. *Brown.*

In his dazzling new memoir, Richard Rodriguez reflects on the color brown and the meaning of Hispanics to the life of America today. Rodriguez argues that America has been brown since its inception—since the moment the African and the European met within the Indian eye. But more than simply a book about race, *Brown* is about America in the broadest sense—a look at what our country is, full of surprising observations by a writer who is a marvelous stylist as well as a trenchant observer and thinker.

Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I Was Puerto Rican.*

Esmeralda Santiago's story begins in rural Puerto Rico, where her childhood was full of both tenderness and domestic strife, tropical sounds and sights as well as poverty. Growing up, she learned the proper way to eat a guava, the sound of tree frogs in the mango groves at night, the taste of the delectable sausage called *morcilla*, and the formula for ushering a dead baby's soul to heaven. As she enters school we see the clash, both hilarious and fierce, of Puerto Rican and Yankee culture. When her mother, Mami, a force of nature, takes off to New York with her seven, soon to be eleven children, Esmeralda, the oldest, must learn new rules, a new language, and eventually take on a new identity. In this first volume of her much-praised, bestselling

trilogy, Santiago brilliantly recreates the idyllic landscape and tumultuous family life of her earliest years and her tremendous journey from the *barrio* to Brooklyn, from translating for her mother at the welfare office to high honors at Harvard.

From a rippled zinc shack in rural Puerto Rico to "the better life" in a decaying Brooklyn tenement, Esmerelda Santiago's Puerto Rican childhood is one of sorcery, smoldering war between the sexes, and high comedy. Hers is a portrait of a harsh but enchanted world that can never be reclaimed.

Tobar, Héctor. *Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish Speaking United States.*

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Héctor Tobar takes us on the definitive tour of the Spanish-speaking United States—a parallel nation, 35 million strong, that is changing the very notion of what it means to be an American in unprecedented and unexpected ways.

Tobar begins on familiar terrain, in his native Los Angeles, with his family's story, along with that of two brothers of Mexican origin with very different interpretations of Americanismo, or American identity as seen through a Latin American lens—one headed for U.S. citizenship and the other for the wrong side of the law and the south side of the border. But this is just a jumping-off point. Soon we are in Dalton, Georgia, the most Spanish-speaking town in the Deep South, and in Rupert, Idaho, where the most popular radio DJ is known as "El Chupacabras." By the end of the book, we have traveled from the geographical extremes into the heartland, exploring the familiar complexities of Cuban Miami and the brand-new ones of a busy Omaha INS station.

Sophisticated, provocative, and deeply human, *Translation Nation* uncovers the ways that Hispanic Americans are forging new identities, redefining the experience of the American immigrant, and reinventing the American community. It is a book that rises, brilliantly, to meet one of the most profound shifts in American identity.

Fiction

Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents.*

The Garcías—Dr. Carlos (Papi), his wife Laura (Mami), and their four daughters, Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—belong to the uppermost echelon of Spanish Caribbean society, descended from the conquistadores. Their family compound adjoins the *palacio* of the dictator's daughter. So when Dr. García's part in a coup attempt is discovered, the family must flee.

They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Dominican Republic. Papi has to find new patients in the Bronx. Mami, far from the compound and the family retainers, must find herself. Meanwhile, the girls try to *lose* themselves—by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating being caught between the old world and the new, trying

to live up to their father's version of honor while accommodating the expectations of their American boyfriends. Acclaimed writer Julia Alvarez's brilliant and buoyant first novel sets the García girls free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America.

Divakaruni, Chitra. *The Vine of Desire.*

The beloved characters of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's bestselling novel *Sister of My Heart* are reunited in this powerful narrative that challenges the emotional bond between two lifelong friends, as the husband of one becomes dangerously attracted to the other.

Anju and Sudha formed an astounding, almost psychic connection during their childhood in India. When Anju invites Sudha, a single mother in Calcutta, to come live with her and her husband, Sunil, in California, Sudha foolishly accepts, knowing full well that Sunil has long desired her. As Sunil's attraction rises to the surface, the trio must struggle to make sense of the freedoms of America—and of the ties that bind them to India and to one another.

Garcia, Christina. *Dreaming in Cuban.*

Here is the dreamy and bittersweet story of a family divided by politics and geography by the Cuban revolution. It is the family story of Celia del Pino, and her husband, daughter and grandchildren, from the mid-1930s to 1980. Celia's story mirrors the magical realism of Cuba itself, a country of beauty and poverty, idealism and corruption. DREAMING IN CUBAN presents a unique vision and a haunting lamentation for a past that might have been.

Set in Havana, Brooklyn, and the Cuban seaside in the 1970s, *Dreaming in Cuban* unravels the lives and fortunes of four women of the colorful Del Pino family. Celia is the aging matriarch faithful to Fidel . . . Felicia is her mad (and possibly murderous) daughter . . . Lourdes, her other child, is a capitalist counterrevolutionary . . . and her daughter, Pilar, is an artistic punk filled with impossible Cuban dreams.

Goldman, Francisco. *The Long Night of White Chickens.*

The Long Night of White Chickens is a novel truly born of two worlds: it is the story of Roger Graetz, raised in a Boston suburb by an aristocrat Guatemalan mother, and his relationship with Flor de Mayo, the beautiful young Guatemalan orphan sent by his grandmother to live with his family as a maid. When, years later in the 1980s, Flor is murdered in Guatemala while running an orphanage, Roger returns to uncover the truth of her death. There he is reunited with Luis Moya, a childhood friend, and together they venture on a quest and chronicle of Flow's whole life story that will prove to have unexpected, and unforgettable, repercussions.

Growing Up Ethnic in America: Contemporary Fiction about Learning to be American. Ed. by Maria Mazziotti Gillan and Jennifer Gillan.

The editors who brought us *Unsettling America* and *Identity Lessons* have compiled a short-story anthology that focuses on themes of racial and ethnic assimilation. With humor, passion, and grace, the contributors lay bare poignant attempts at conformity and the alienation sometimes experienced by ethnic Americans. But they also tell of the strength gained through the preservation of their communities, and the realization that it was often their difference from

the norm that helped them to succeed. In pieces suggesting that American identity is far from settled, these writers illustrate the diversity that is the source of both the nation's great discord and infinite promise.

Hwang, Caroline. *In Full Bloom.*

In Caroline Hwang's debut novel, **In Full Bloom**, all Ginger Lee wants is a promotion at the fashion glossy A la Mode magazine. All her mother wants is a nice, professional Korean son-in-law. Unable to keep her mother at bay, Ginger reluctantly agrees to let her play matchmaker.

At work, Ginger's efforts at advancement are thwarted by style fiends better practiced in the art of office warfare. Away from the job, she's surprised that her arranged dates are rejecting her before she gets a chance to reject them.

With wry humor, lively dialogue, and a compassionate take on being a single woman under a traditional mother's matchmaking thumb, this insightful debut is both a deliciously scathing portrait of life behind the catwalk and an endearing tale of a delicate mother-daughter bond.

Imagining America: Stories from the Promised Land. Ed. By Wesley Brown and Amy Ling. Thirty-seven short stories from 1900 to the present, written by some of our best authors—African, Asian, European, Jewish, Middle Eastern, and Native American—follow the waves of immigration into and migration within the United States. These stories are unique in time and circumstance, yet they address a common dilemma: how to reconcile America's mythologized "promise" with its more complex reality.

Jen, Gish. *Typical American.*

Gish Jen reinvents the American immigrant story through the Chang family, who first come to the United States with no intention of staying. When the Communists assume control of China in 1949, though, Ralph Chang, his sister Theresa, and his wife Helen, find themselves in a crisis. At first, they cling to their old-world ideas of themselves. But as they begin to dream the American dream of self-invention, they move poignantly and ironically from people who disparage all that is "typical American" to people who might be seen as typically American themselves. With droll humor and a deep empathy for her characters, Gish Jen creates here a superbly engrossing story that resonates with wit and wisdom even as it challenges the reader to reconsider what a typical American might be today.

This wonderful, bittersweet novel of misadventure and creeping assimilation begins in 1947, when the Shanghai-based Changs send young Ralph halfway around the world to study in New York. He sets off with two goals in mind—to master engineering and to avoid girls at any cost.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy.*

Lucy, a teenage girl from the West Indies, comes to North America to work as an au pair for Lewis and Mariah and their four children. Lewis and Mariah are a thrice-blessed couple—

handsome, rich, and seemingly happy. Yet, almost at once, Lucy begins to notice cracks in their beautiful facade. With mingled anger and compassion, Lucy scrutinizes the assumptions and verities of her employers' world and compares them with the vivid realities of her native place. Lucy has no illusions about her own past, but neither is she prepared to be deceived about where she presently is.

At the same time that Lucy is coming to terms with Lewis's and Mariah's lives, she is also unravelling the mysteries of her own sexuality. Gradually a new person unfolds: passionate, forthright, and disarmingly honest. In *Lucy*, Jamaica Kincaid has created a startling new character possessed with adamant clear-sightedness and ferocious integrity—a captivating heroine for our time.

Lee, Chang-Rae. *Native Speaker.*

In *Native Speaker*, author Chang-rae Lee introduces readers to Henry Park. Park has spent his entire life trying to become a true American—a native speaker. But even as the essence of his adopted country continues to elude him, his Korean heritage seems to drift further and further away.

Park's harsh Korean upbringing has taught him to hide his emotions, to remember everything he learns, and most of all to feel an overwhelming sense of alienation. In other words, it has shaped him as a natural spy.

But the very attributes that help him to excel in his profession put a strain on his marriage to his American wife and stand in the way of his coming to terms with his young son's death. When he is assigned to spy on a rising Korean-American politician, his very identity is tested, and he must figure out who he is amid not only the conflicts within himself but also within the ethnic and political tensions of the New York City streets.

Lee, Gus. *China Boy.*

Warm, funny, and deeply moving, Gus Lee's semi-autobiographical account of growing up in a conflict-ridden family, unable to fully embrace either American or Chinese culture, is an enthralling story of family relationships, the perils of boyhood, and the difficulty of being Chinese in 1950's San Francisco.

Shteyngart, Gary. *The Russian Debutante's Handbook.*

The Russian Debutante's Handbook takes us from New York City's Lower East Side to the hip frontier wilderness of Prava—the Eastern European Paris of the '90s—whose grand and glorious beauty is marred only by the shadow of the looming statue of Stalin's foot. There, with the encouragement of the Groundhog, a murderous (but fun-loving) Russian mafioso, Vladimir infiltrates the American ex-pat community with the hope of defrauding his young middle-class compatriots by launching a pyramid scheme that's as stupid as it is brilliant. Things go swimmingly at first, but nothing is quite as it seems in Prava, and Vladimir learns that in order to reinvent himself, he must first discover who he really is.

Straight, Susan. *Highwire Moon.*

In this powerful, great-hearted story, Susan Straight takes us back to the multiracial area of southern California that is, in Faulkner's phrase, her "postage stamp of soil." As in her highly acclaimed earlier novels, she has created a world of richly imagined characters struggling to retain their dignity and humanity in an often brutal environment. Serafina is a young Mexican Indian girl desperate to leave her impoverished existence in Oaxaca. Emigrating illegally to California, adrift on her own, she becomes involved with Larry Foley, a feckless trucker and occasional speed freak. When a baby daughter, Elvia, is born, Serafina cares for her tenderly until the day she is forcibly separated from her child and deported. Elvia, who has known nothing but sheltering love, is thrust into foster care. Eventually reclaimed by her father, she shares his chaotic life until she becomes pregnant at fifteen. In a frenzy of fear and despair, she is filled with an overwhelming need to find her mother. Her quest leads her into the world of migrant farm labor, where bitter toil, violence, and sexual predation make clear how little has changed since the Joad family harvested the grapes of wrath.

YOUTH
Nonfiction

Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural. Ed. By Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn.

Gr. 7-12. As we approach the twenty-first century, biracialism and biculturalism are becoming increasingly common. Skin color and place of birth are no longer reliable signifiers of one's identity or origin. Simple questions like What are you? and Where are you from? aren't answered--they are discussed.

How do you measure someone's race or culture? Half this, quarter that, born here, raised there. What name do you give that? These eighteen essays, joined by a shared sense of duality, address both the difficulties of not fitting into and the benefits of being part of two worlds. Danzy Senna parodies the media's fascination with biracials in a futuristic piece about the mulatto millennium. Garrett Hongo writes about watching his mixed-race children play in a sea of blond hair and white faces, realizing that suburban Oregon might swallow up their unique racial identity. Francisco Goldman shares his frustration with having constantly to explain himself in terms of his Latino and Jewish roots. Malcolm Gladwell understands that being biracial frees him from racial discrimination but also holds him hostage to questions of racial difference. For Indira Ganesan, India and its memory are evoked by the aromas of foods.

Through the lens of personal experience, these essays offer a broader spectrum of meaning for race and culture. And in the process, they map a new ethnic terrain that transcends racial and cultural division.

Love to Mama: A Tribute to Mothers. Ed. by Pat Mora. Illus. by Paula S. Barragan.

PreS-Gr. 4. In this beautifully illustrated book, 13 Latino poets write with joy, humor, and love about the powerful and undeniable bond between mothers, grandmothers, and children. These talented poets write passionately and vividly about the tremendous influence their mothers and grandmothers had on them.

Muslims in America. Ed. by Allen Verbrugge.

Gr. 9-12. With a wide selection of viewpoints, political and personal, this collection goes behind the stereotypes to show the rich diversity among Muslims in the U.S. Beginning with the post-9/11 backlash, the text also considers where many different immigrants came from and why.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East.*

Gr. 5-10. Fowzi, who beats everyone at dominoes; Ibtisam, who wanted to be a doctor; Abu Mahmoud, who knows every eggplant and peach in his West Bank garden; mysterious Uncle Mohammed, who moved to the mountain; a girl in a red sweater dangling a book bag; children in velvet dresses who haunt the candy bowl at the party; Baba Kamalyari, age 71; Mr. Dajani and his swans; Sitti Khadra, who never lost her peace inside.

Maybe they have something to tell us.

Naomi Shihab Nye has been writing about being Arab-American, about Jerusalem, about the West Bank, about family all her life. These new and collected poems of the Middle East — sixty in all — appear together here for the first time.

Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Being Young and Latino in the United States. Ed. by Lori Carlson.

Gr. 8-11. Ten years after the publication of the acclaimed *Cool Salsa*, editor Lori Marie Carlson has brought together a stunning variety of Latino poets for a long-awaited follow-up.

Established and familiar names are joined by many new young voices, and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Oscar Hijuelos has written the Introduction.

The poets collected here illuminate the difficulty of straddling cultures, languages, and identities. They celebrate food, family, love, and triumph. In English, Spanish, and poetic jumbles of both, they tell us who they are, where they are, and what their hopes are for the future.

Wachale! Poetry and Prose about Growing Up Latino. Ed. by Ilan Stavans.

Gr. 5-8. This groundbreaking bilingual anthology, carefully designed for middle readers, is a mosaic of voices demonstrating the energy, creativity, and diversity of the fastest-growing minority group in America. Wachale! (Spanglish for “watch out!”) includes folk tales, stories, and poems in both English and Spanish, and brief autobiographical essays by both well-established and emerging writers representing all shades of Latinos, such as Chicanos in the Southwest, Puerto Ricans in New York, and Cubans in Florida, as well as Dominicans, Guatemalans, and other subgroups. Geared toward ten- to thirteen-year-olds, this is a window to Latino experiences north of the Rio Grande.

Warren, Andrea. *Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnamese Orphan Became an American Boy.*

Gr. 5-12. An unforgettable true story of an orphan caught in the midst of war

Over a million South Vietnamese children were orphaned by the Vietnam War. This affecting true account tells the story of Long, who, like more than 40,000 other orphans, is Amerasian -- a mixed-race child -- with little future in Vietnam. *Escape from Saigon* allows readers to experience Long's struggle to survive in war-torn Vietnam, his dramatic escape to America as part of "Operation Babylift" during the last chaotic days before the fall of Saigon, and his life in the United States as "Matt," part of a loving Ohio family. Finally, as a young doctor, he journeys back to Vietnam, ready to reconcile his Vietnamese past with his American present. As the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War approaches, this compelling account provides a fascinating introduction to the war and the plight of children caught in the middle of it.

Fiction

Alvarez, Julia. *How Tía Lola Came to Visit / Stay.*

Gr. 4-7. Moving to Vermont after his parents split, Miguel has plenty to worry about! Tía Lola, his quirky, *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.

Although ten-year-old Miguel is at first embarrassed by his colorful aunt, Tia Lola, when she comes to Vermont from the Dominican Republic to stay with his mother, his sister, and him after his parents' divorce, he learns to love her.

Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *An Island like You: Stories of the Barrio.*

Gr. 7-12. "Rita is exiled to Puerto Rico for a summer with her grandparents after her parents catch her with a boy. Luis sits atop a six-foot mountain of hubcaps in his father's junkyard, working off a sentence for breaking and entering. Sandra tries to reconcile her looks to the conventional Latino notion of beauty. And Arturo, different from his macho classmates, fantasizes about escaping his community. They are the teenagers of the barrio -- and this is their world.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Behind the Mountains.*

Gr. 5-9. In "Behind the Mountains" Edwidge Danticat tells the story of Celiane and her family's struggles in Haiti and New York.

It is election time in Haiti, and bombs are going off in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. During a visit from her home in rural Haiti, Celiane Espérance and her mother are nearly killed.

Looking at her country with new eyes, Celiane gains a fresh resolve to be reunited with her father in Brooklyn, New York.

The harsh winter and concrete landscape of her new home are a shock to Celiane, who witnesses her parents' struggle to earn a living, her brother's uneasy adjustment to American society, and her own encounters with learning difficulties and school violence.

Writing in the notebook which her teacher gave her, thirteen-year-old Celiane describes life

with her mother and brother in Haiti as well as her experiences in Brooklyn after the family finally immigrates there to be reunited with her father.

First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants. Ed. by Don Gallo.

Gr. 7-10. Fleeing from political violence in Venezuela, Amina and her family have settled in the United States. Sarah, adopted, is desperate to know her Korean birth parents. Adrian's friends have some spooky — and hilarious — misconceptions about his Romanian origins. Whether their transition is from Mexico to the United States or from Palestine to New Mexico, the characters in this anthology have all ventured far and have faced countless challenges. Each of these stories is unique, and each one has something to say to all of us.

Gunning, Monica. *America, My New Home.* Illus. by Ken Condon.

Gr. 2-5. From her Caribbean island birthplace, a young girl carries a dream and journeys to a new land that is at once puzzling, frightening, and inspiring. In twenty-three compelling poems, Jamaican-born poet Monica Gunning tells her immigrant's story with gentle humor, grace, and a child's sense of wonder. She describes a place where skyscrapers, rather than the moon, light the night; where people dress in woolens, ready for snow; where no one knows your name. Yet this same place offers exciting treasures: dizzying amusement park rides, stirring symphony concerts, flashy circus performers, towering cathedrals, and captivating art museums that speak to those who linger. Above all, this new land is place where "hope glows, a beacon / guiding ocean-deep dreamers / from storm surfs to shore."

Hoffman, Mary. *The Color of Home.* Illus. by Karen Littlewood.

K-Gr. 3. This remarkably moving picture book follows first-grader Hassan through his first few days at school. Hassan has only recently arrived in the United States after he and his family were forced to flee Somalia, and he deeply misses the colorful landscape of his former home in Africa. But with the help of his parents, an understanding teacher, and a school art project, Hassan finds that by painting a picture of his old home and sharing his story, his homesickness and the trauma of leaving a war-torn country are lessened. And he finds that there are many things to like about his new home in America. The colorful, impressionistic illustrations are a perfect complement to the wonderful text by Mary Hoffman, author of the highly acclaimed *Amazing Grace*. Together art and text make this poignant story accessible and affecting for a young audience.

Jiménez, Francisco. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child.*

Gr. 5-12. "'La frontera'...I heard it for the first time back in the late 1940s when Papa and Mama told me and Roberto, my older brother, that someday we would take a long trip north, cross la frontera, enter California, and leave our poverty behind." So begins this honest and powerful account of a family's journey to the fields of California—to a life of constant moving, from strawberry fields to cotton fields, from tent cities to one-room shacks, from picking grapes to topping carrots and thinning lettuce. Seen through the eyes of a boy who longs for an education and the right to call one place home, this is a story of survival, faith, and hope. It is a journey that will open readers' hearts and minds.

MacMahon, Patricia and McCarthy, Conor Clarke. *Just Add One Chinese Sister.* Illus. by Karen A. Jerome.

PreS-Gr. 2. Claire and her mother are working together on a scrapbook as they relive their first days and hours together following Claire's arrival from her birth home in China. Claire's big brother, Conor, had kept a journal as he anticipated the day his new sister would arrive, and these entries also become part of their book of memories. They remember how, at first, Claire was scared of her new parents and brother, who all spoke a different language than she was used to hearing. But these foreigners loved the adopted Claire, and little by little, they shared experience that brought them together and made them into a family.

Marsden, Carolyn. *The Gold-Threaded Dress.*

Gr. 3-5. In Thailand she was named Oy, but here in America the teachers call her Olivia. Other things are not so easy to change, however. When Oy draws a portrait of herself with brown hair and eyes as round as coins, her classmate Frankie makes fun of her and calls her Chinese. And the popular girl Liliandra barely speaks to her, until she learns that Oy has something very special: a Thai dancing dress from her grandmother, shimmering with pink silk and golden threads, that makes her look like a princess. Will Oy risk shaming her family to win Liliandra's approval - and be part of the club she has envied from afar? With compassion and rare insight, Carolyn Marsden tells a simple tale about a young girl who searches for acceptance in a complex culture, while learning to treasure all that she is.

Memories of Sun: Stories of Africa and America. Ed. By Jane Kurtz.

Gr. 6-10. What is it like to grow up in different parts of Africa today?

And what's it like to be a child of two cultures — an American living in Africa, or an African living in America?

In South Africa visit the Bushman Farm, where a lonely girl meets a group of Bushmen who are making their living as a tourist attraction — and finds friendship and family as she's never known them before. In Tanzania join an American family on an unforgettable safari whose highlights include a broken car, a camp of armed men, heat, tsetse flies, and laughter. In Los Angeles be surprised by what happens when a teenage veteran from war in Sierra Leone comes into conflict with a local gang leader.

Na, An. *A Step from Heaven.*

Gr. 9-12. When she is five, Young Ju Park and her family move from Korea to California. During the flight, they climb so far into the sky she concludes they are on their way to Heaven, that Heaven must be in America. Heaven is also where her grandfather is. When she learns the distinction, she is so disappointed she wants to go home to her grandmother. Trying to console his niece, Uncle Tim suggests that maybe America can be "a step from Heaven." Life in America, however, presents problems for Young Ju's family. Her father becomes depressed, angry, and violent. Jobs are scarce and money is even scarcer. When her brother is born, Young Ju experiences firsthand her father's sexism as he confers favored status upon the boy

who will continue to carry the Park name. In a wrenching climactic scene, her father beats her mother so severely that Young Ju calls the police. Soon afterward, her father goes away and the family begins to heal.

Namioka, Lensey. *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*. Illus. by Kees deKeifter. Gr. 4-6. Everyone in the Yang family is a talented musician except for nine-year-old Yingtao, the youngest Yang. Even after years of violin lessons from his father, Yingtao cannot make beautiful music.

Now that his family has moved from China to Seattle, Yingtao wants to learn English and make new friends at school. Still, he must make time to practice his violin for an important family recital to help his father get more students. Yingtao is afraid his screeching violin will ruin the recital. But he's even more afraid to tell his family that he has found something he likes better than music.

Together he and his new friend Matthew think of a sure way to save the recital. They are certain nothing will go wrong.

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*.

Gr. 6-10. Violet Paz has just turned 15, a pivotal birthday in the eyes of her Cuban grandmother. Fifteen is the age when a girl enters womanhood, traditionally celebrating the occasion with a quinceañero. But while Violet is half Cuban, she's also half Polish, and more importantly, she feels 100% American. Except for her zany family's passion for playing dominoes, smoking cigars, and dancing to Latin music, Violet knows little about Cuban culture, nada about quinces, and only tidbits about the history of Cuba. So when Violet begrudgingly accepts Abuela's plans for a quinceañero—and as she begins to ask questions about her Cuban roots—cultures and feelings collide. The mere mention of Cuba and Fidel Castro elicits her grandparents' sadness and her father's anger. Only Violet's aunt Luz remains open-minded. With so many divergent views, it's not easy to know what to believe. All Violet knows is that she's got to form her own opinions, even if this jolts her family into unwanted confrontations. After all, a quince girl is supposed to embrace responsibility—and to Violet that includes understanding the Cuban heritage that binds her to a homeland she's never seen.

Park, Linda Sue. *Project Mulberry*.

Gr. 5-8. While working on a project for an after-school club, Julia, a Korean American girl, and her friend Patrick learn not just about silkworms, but also about tolerance, prejudice, friendship, patience, and more. Between the chapters are short dialogues between the author and main character about the writing of the book.

Recorvits, Helen. *My Name Is Yoon*. Illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska. .

K-Gr. 2. Yoon's name means Shining Wisdom, and when she writes it in Korean, it looks happy, like dancing figures. But her father tells her that she must learn to write it in English. In English, all the lines and circles stand alone, which is just how Yoon feels in the United States. Yoon isn't sure that she wants to be YOON. At her new school, she tries out different names –

maybe CAT or BIRD. Maybe CUPCAKE!

Say, Allen. *Grandfather's Journey.*

K-up. Lyrical, breathtaking, splendid—words used to describe Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey* when it was first published. At once deeply personal yet expressing universally held emotions, this tale of one man's love for two countries and his constant desire to be in both places captured readers' attention and hearts. Fifteen years later, it remains as historically relevant and emotionally engaging as ever.

Shin, Sun Yung. *Cooper's Lesson.* Illus. by Kim Cogan. Tr. by Min Paek.

PreS-Gr. 3. *Cooper's Lesson* is an inspiring story about identity and intergenerational friendship, featuring a young biracial boy, written in both English and Korean. Cooper has had about enough of being half and half. And he's really had enough of Mr. Lee, the owner of his neighborhood grocery store, speaking to him in Korean even though Cooper can't keep up. Frustrated, he often wonders why things have to be so complicated. Why can't he just be one race or the other? But one moment in Mr. Lee's store changes everything. Soon Cooper realizes that the things that make up a person are never simple — whether one talks about them in English or Korean. Richly hued oil paintings and tender vivid prose combine to bring the characters to life.

Soto, Gary. *Help Wanted.*

Gr. 7-10. Meet Carolina, who writes to Miss Manners for help not just with etiquette but with bigger messes in her life; Javier, who knows the stories his friend Veronica tells him are lies, but can't find a way to prove it--and many other kids, each caught up in the difficulties of figuring out what it means to be alive.

Ten stories portray some of the struggles and hopes of young Mexican Americans.

Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan.*

Gr. 3-5. Eight-year-old Garang, orphaned by a civil war in Sudan, finds the inner strength to help lead other boys as they trek hundreds of miles seeking safety in Ethiopia, then Kenya, and finally in the United States.

Yep, Laurence. *Thief of Hearts.*

Gr. 5-8. Stacy Palmer almost never thinks about being Chinese American, As far as she's concerned, she's just like everyone else.

Then Hong Ch'un comes to Stacy's school from China. Stacy and Hong Ch'un don't exactly get along, but when Hong Ch'un is accused of stealing and runs away, Stacy bows she must try to find her.

With her family's help, Stacy searches the tiny back streets of San Francisco's Chinatown. There, she gets a glimpse of what it was like for her Chinese mother, growing up in a different culture. And for the first time in her life she realizes her true heritage-and finally understands

what it means to be Chinese American.