

Volume VII Issue 4

Introduction and Editors' Note

This themed issue of *WOW Review* offers readers the opportunity to consider the complexity of factors that surround the immigration experience, both past and present. The 10 titles here join other books across past issues of *WOW Review* that look at the many reasons people immigrate within the global community.

Historically, some of these titles represent the search for a better life—one with opportunities to succeed, to be oneself, and to escape discrimination. *Touched by Fire* is the story of one family's journey from Russia via Berlin to New York City as they escape discrimination and possible death. Set in the early 1900's, the hardships, challenges and dreams of those coming to America during that time period are shared. In *The Castaways*, Tucker is one of many children who take to the rails during The Great Depression in the United States in order to search for work and alleviate the number of people to feed at home. Simon's family in *The Other Side of the Wall*, decide to go from East to West Berlin in order to "take control of their lives." Both of these titles are graphic novels, relying on art to tell these immigrant stories.

Both *Grandfather's Journey* and *The Matchbox Diary* consider the stories of past generations as they tell of immigrants from different parts of the world coming to the United States. Each invites readers to consider their family histories and the stories of grandparents and great-grandparents who brought their cultures and heritage to the United States from another country.

Other titles provide more contemporary experiences and invite readers to reflect on both the global and local society in which they exist and their relationships to immigrants. *The London Jungle Book* casts a light of celebration on two cultures in the story of one artist's journey from India to England. A focus in this book is the perspectives with which the artist views this strange land and culture—a reminder of the differences for any immigrant embarking on a journey of discovery.

With a more contemporary setting, this book leads to the other titles that share different perspectives on immigrants coming from Mexico. *Migrant, the Journey of a Mexican Worker* uses intricate drawing in a codex form to give insight to this immigration experience—one that is frequently discussed in contemporary news. *González & Daughter Trucking Co.: A Road Novel with Literary License* provides yet another glimpse into the experience of people coming across the Mexico/United States border to work and live. *Enrique's Journey* shares the true story of a teenager, one of thousands who yearly ride the trains from Guatemala through Mexico and across the United States border in search for their families who have already made the journey. The realistic insights of the books focused on crossing the US/Mexico border provide authentic reading that documents experiences that are occurring today. One last book

with a more contemporary setting is *The Name Jar*, a story that invites discussions around the importance of a name in maintaining one's cultural heritage.

These books offer unique perspectives on immigration—ones that can support a growing understanding of the global community and its people as they transition from one culture or nation to another.

As you read this issue of *WOW Review*, we invite you to share your own connections to each story's characters and themes as well as to other books that align with these books.

Janelle Mathis, Editor



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