

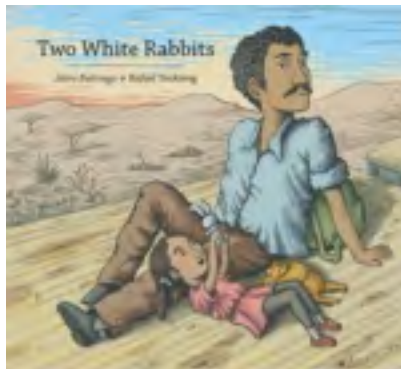
industry. She is now a professional illustrator and concept artist and is planning her next picture book. More about Guojing can be found at the Creative Authors website.

Katie Walker, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX



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Book Review: Two White Rabbits

Written by Jairo Buitrago

Illustrated by Rafael Yockteng

Translated by Elisa Amado

Groundwood Books, 2015, n.p.

ISBN: 9781554987412

A young girl and her father travel north towards the United States border, a grueling journey that regularly occurs in various Central American countries and Mexico. While readers do not know the exact origin of the journey within this book, the end pages of the book show a tiny basket with a string of worry dolls—typical of Guatemala. The father and child travel by foot, water, train and truck accompanied, in most pictures, by a reappearing coyote. Typical of childhood, the little girl counts everything, looks for cloud formations in the sky, and plays along the way with other children. A boy gives the little girl two white rabbits that symbolize the migrant travelers as they continue their journey. The symbolism attunes readers to the contemporary issue of border crossing when the rabbits are freed near the border without anyone to accompany them and yet with no real way to go over the fence pictured in the illustration—a betrayal of hoped

freedom. The innocence of childhood is apparent in the counting, questions, and obvious confidence in her father's plan for their travels.

Patricia Aldana, President of the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Foundation, shares a passage at the end of this story that relates it to the reality of refugees, especially those thousands who have arrived at the US/Mexico border from Central America. She reminds readers that they do not know why children and parents embark on this journey and asks readers to consider our role in helping people who may not have safe comfortable lives.

Two White Rabbits has received numerous awards, such as selection for the Kirkus Best Picture Books of the Year 2015, School Library Journal Best Picture Books of the Year 2015, NCTE Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children Recommended Book 2016, USBBY 2016 Outstanding International Books, and 2016 Notable Books for a Global Society.

Two White Rabbits can be paired with Maxine Trottier's (2011) *Migrant*. Both books reveal the imagination children use to make sense of their current life situations. *Migrant* by Jose Manuel Mateo (2014) can be used to realistically share the challenge of migration. In Mateo's book, readers will find detailed pictures in Codex that describe the treacherous journey to the US/Mexico border. Other immigration titles that can enhance an understanding of the migrant life can be found in the themed issue of *WOW Review, Vol. VII, Issue IVu*.

Author Jairo Buitrago resides in Mexico and has authored numerous books. He captures the simple child language in the first person telling of *Two White Rabbits*, yet the text carries a depth of insight for those keenly aware of the dangers faced by those hoping to cross the US border. His other written works can be found on this website.

The illustrations express the simplicity of the scenario. Digitally created and frequently on a white background, these colorful pictures divert the reader from the issue at hand and focus on the child's perspective. Rafael Yockteng, illustrator, lives in Columbia and has collaborated previously with Jairo Buitrago on other titles such as *Jimmy the Greatest* (2012)

Janelle Mathis, University of North Texas, Denton, TX



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