

Enrique sprints alongside rolling freight cars, focusing on his footing. The roadbed is slanted at a forty-five-degree angle and scattered with rocks as big as his fist. It is hard to keep his balance in his tattered sneakers.

Here the locomotives accelerate, sometimes reaching twenty-five miles per hour. He knows he needs to be speedy and climb up the ladder before the train reaches a bridge just beyond the cemetery. If he runs too slowly, when he tries to climb up, the ladder will yank him forward and send him sprawling. Then the churning wheels could take an arm, a leg, perhaps his life.

"*Se lo comió el tren.* The train ate him up," other migrants will say.

Already Enrique has four jagged scars on his shins from frenzied efforts to board trains.

The lowest rung of the ladder is waist-high. When the train leans away, it is higher. If the train hits a curve, the wheels kick up hot white sparks, burning Enrique's skin. By this time around, he has learned that if he overthinks all of this too long, he will fall behind—and the train will pass him by. Enrique grabs one of its ladders, summons his strength, and pulls himself up.

He is aboard.

Enrique looks ahead on the train. Men and boys are hanging on to the sides of tank cars, trying to find a spot to sit or stand.

Suddenly Enrique hears screams. Three cars away, a boy, twelve or thirteen years old, has managed to grab the bottom