

be better, but what if someone locked the door, trapping him? It could turn into an oven.

Enrique looks elsewhere. A good place to hide could be under the cars, balancing on a small shock absorber, but he might be too big to fit. Besides, trains kick up rocks. Worse, if his arms grew tired or if he fell asleep, he would drop directly under the wheels. He tells himself: That's crazy.

He could stand on a tiny ledge, barely big enough for his feet, on the end of a hopper car. Or he could sit on the round compressor at the end of some hoppers, his feet dangling just above the train wheels: shiny metal, three feet in diameter, five inches thick, churning. His hands would turn numb after hours of hanging on, though.

Enrique settles for the top of a hopper. From his perch fourteen feet up, he can see anyone approaching on either side of the tracks up ahead or from another car. As usual, the train lurches hard from side to side. Enrique holds on with both hands.

He doesn't carry anything that might keep him from running fast. At most, a plastic bottle for water, tied to his arm. Some migrants climb on board with a toothbrush tucked into a pocket. A few allow themselves a small reminder of family. Maybe a rosary, or a Bible, or a tiny drawing of San Cristóbal, the patron saint of travelers, or of San Judas Tadeo, the patron saint of desperate situations. One father wraps his eight-year-old daughter's favorite hair band around his wrist.

There are several children on board, and Grupo Beta, the government migrant rights group in Chiapas, estimates that