

## A DREADED STOP

Each time the train slows, Enrique goes on high alert for *la migra*. Migrants wake one another and begin climbing down to prepare to jump. They lean outward, trying to glimpse what is causing the train to change pace. Is it another false alarm? A bad curve, a migrant disconnecting the brake line, or a conductor pulling off onto a siding to let another train pass can all cause a train to slow. If the train speeds up again, everyone climbs back up. The movement down and up the ladders looks almost choreographed.

Slowing down at Huixtla, with its red-and-yellow depot, can mean only one thing: La Arrocerá is coming up. La Arrocerá is the immigration checkpoint Enrique fears most. It is in an isolated agricultural area, with few houses or busy streets where migrants can hide. Usually half of those aboard a train here are caught by *migra* agents. Enrique decides he will jump off the train, run around the checkpoint, and catch up with the train so he can reboard it on the other side.

He arrives in the heat of noon. Tension builds. Some migrants stand on top of the train to see if *migra* agents are up ahead. The first migrants who spot agents down the tracks scream a warning to the others: “¡Bájense! Get down!” As the train brakes, migrants jump.

The train stops. Enrique lies flat, facedown, arms spread-eagle, hoping *la migra* won't see him. But several agents do. Sometimes Mexican immigration authorities put people on the train who pretend to be migrants. The imposters radio