



# Books About the Immigrant and Migrant Experience

## Grade K-3

**Buitrago, Jairo. *Two White Rabbits*.**

In this moving and timely story, a young child describes what it is like to be a migrant as she and her father travel north toward the U.S. border. As many thousands of people continue to make the arduous journey to the U.S. border in search of a better life, this is an important book that shows a young migrant’s perspective.

**Bunting, Eve. *How Many Days to America?: A Thanksgiving Story*.**

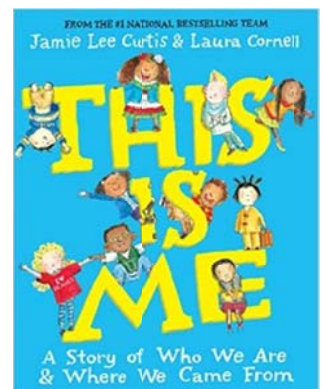
After the police come, a family is forced to flee their Caribbean island and set sail for America in a small fishing boat.

**Coy, John. *Their Great Gift: Courage, Sacrifice, and Hope in a New Land*.**

With lyrical text and thought-provoking photography, Coy explores the experiences of immigrants, particularly children. Images of families who came to the United States from many different parts of the world celebrate the diversity of our country and contain a vision of hope for the future.

**Curtis, Jamie Lee and Laura Cornell. *This is Me: A Story of Who We Are and Where We Came From*.**

Many children have family members who have immigrated to the United States, and many have had an occasion to fill an overnight bag. Here, a teacher whose great-grandmother came from afar asks her young students to imagine packing a suitcase when you must leave behind most of what you love and care about.



**de la Peña , Matt. *Last Stop on Market Street.***

Every Sunday after church, CJ and his grandma ride the bus across town. But today, CJ wonders why they don't own a car. How come they always have to get off in the dirty part of town? Each question is met with an encouraging answer from grandma, who helps him see the beauty—and fun—in their routine and the world around them.

**Elya, Susan M. *Home at Last.***

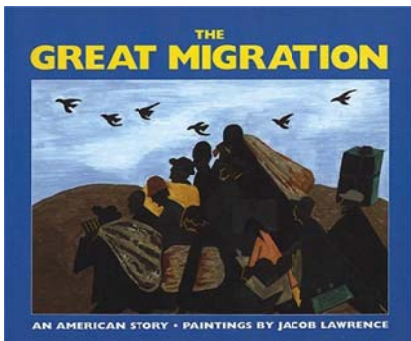
The Pati-o family relocates from Mexico and must adjust to all the changes that living in the U.S. brings. Ana starts school, her father finds work with Uncle Luis in the canning factory, but her mother has a more difficult time with the transition.

**Faruqi, Reem. *Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story.***

Lailah is in a new school in a new country, thousands of miles from her old home, and missing her old friends. When Ramadan begins, she is excited that she is finally old enough to participate in the fasting but worried that her classmates won't understand why she doesn't join them in the lunchroom.

**Foreman, Michael. *The Seeds of Friendship.***

Adam feels alone in the strange new city. He misses his old friends and the colors of his faraway home. When a teacher gives him a few seeds, it plants an idea in him—an idea that could transform his gray world forever.



**Greenfield, Eloise. *The Great Migration: Journey to the North.***

Between 1915 and 1930, more than a million African Americans left their homes in the South and moved to the North. This stirring collection of poems honors those who took part in the Great Migration, including the poet herself.

**Gunning, Monica. *A Shelter in Our Car.***

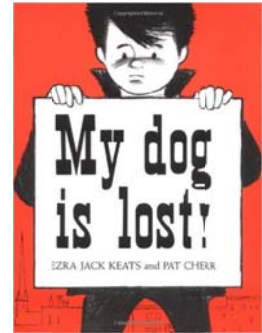
Zettie and her Mama left their warm and comfortable home in Jamaica for an uncertain life in the United States. Mama's unwavering love, support, and gutsy determination give Zettie the confidence that, together, she and her mother can meet all challenges.

**Hoffman, Mary. *The Color of Home.***

Hassan, a recent immigrant from Somalia, is homesick on his first day of school in America. Though his teacher is nice and the children are friendly, adjusting to a new culture, especially a different language, is a struggle.

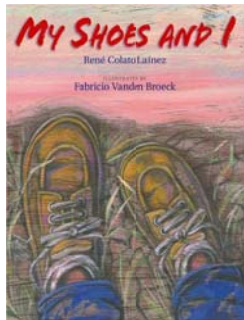
**Keats, Ezra Jack. *My Dog is Lost!***

One of the first books Keats ever wrote, *My Dog Is Lost!* is an appealing story about a Spanish-speaking boy on his second day in New York City, struggling to find his lost dog.



**Lainez, Rene C.. *From North to South.***

When Mamá is sent back to Mexico for not having proper papers, José and his Papá face an uncertain future. What will it be like to visit Mamá in Tijuana? When will Mamá be able to come home?



**Lainez, Rene C. *My Shoes and I.***

Mario's mother sends him a pair of beautiful new shoes for his walk from El Salvador to the United States where he will join her. The shoes grow filthy, develop holes, and wear down, but Mario and his father finally ford a river and join his mother.

**Lawrence, Jacob. *The Great Migration: An American Story.***

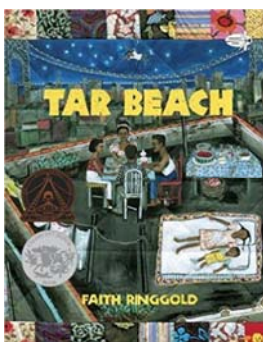
A noted black artist chronicles the 1916-1919 migration of African Americans from the South through a sequence of 60 paintings and accompanying narrative captions.

**Maestro, Betsy. *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration.***

An introductory history of immigration from thousands of years ago through the present, focusing on why different groups of people came to America and how they became a part of our national heritage.

**O'Brien, Anne S. *I'm New Here.***

Three students are immigrants and have trouble speaking, writing, and sharing ideas in their new American school. Through self-determination and with encouragement from their peers and teachers, the students learn to feel confident and comfortable in their new school without losing a sense of their home country, language, and identity.



**Ringgold, Faith. *Tar Beach.***

Ringgold recounts the dream adventure of eight-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot, who flies above her apartment-building rooftop, the 'tar beach' of the title, looking down on 1939 Harlem.

**Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin.***

This spin on the traditional tale of a city mouse and a country mouse explores the lives of Charlie, in urban America, and his cousin Carlitos, who lives in Mexico's countryside.

**Trottier, Maxine. *Migrant.***

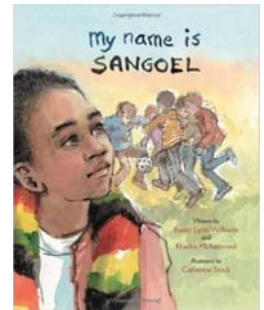
Anna is the child of Mennonites from Mexico, who have come north to harvest fruit and vegetables. Anna wonders what it would be like to be a tree rooted deeply in the earth, watching the seasons come and go, instead of being like a "feather in the wind."

**Watts, Jeri. *A Piece of Home.***

When Hee Jun's family moves from Korea to West Virginia, he struggles to adjust to his new home. But little by little, Hee Jun begins to learn English words and make friends on the playground.

**Williams, Karen and Khadra Mohammed. *My Name is Sangoel.***

When eight-year-old Sangoel comes to the United States from war-torn Sudan, everyone mispronounces his name until he has the bright idea to make a rebus of a sun and a soccer goal on his T-shirt.



**Woodson, Jacqueline. *This is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration.***

The story of one family's journey north during the Great Migration starts with a little girl in South Carolina who finds a rope under a tree one summer. She has no idea the rope will become part of her family's history.

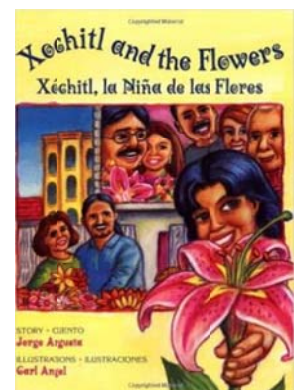
## Grade K-5

**Argueta, Jorge. *A Movie in my Pillow.***

Young Jorgito lives in San Francisco, but he hasn't forgotten his native El Salvador. As he changes from timid newcomer to seasoned city dweller, Jorgito's memories and new adventures form a patchwork of dreams that is perfectly suited to his new bicultural identity.

**Argueta, Jorge. *Xochitl and the Flowers.***

Miles away from their home in El Salvador, Xochitl (SOH-cheel) and her family make a new home in the United States, but nothing is the same.



**Dismondy, Maria. *Chocolate Milk, Por Favor.***

It's Gabe's first day of school in America, and he doesn't speak English. This story shows how a simple act of kindness is worth more than a thousand words. Kindness really is a universal language.

## Grade 1-4

**Bunting, Eve. *One Green Apple.***

Farah feels alone, even when surrounded by her classmates. It's hard being the new kid in school, especially when you're from another country and don't know the language. Then, on a field trip to an apple orchard, Farah discovers there are lots of things that sound the same as they did at home.

**Medina, Jane. *My Name is Jorge: On Both Sides of the River.***

Jorge is trying to learn the ways of his new country. He wants to fit in at school, but he doesn't want to forget his homeland, Mexico. His family is still doing things like they're in the old country, but Jorge wants to find out everything he can about his new country--on the other side of the river.

**Perez, L. King. *First Day in Grapes.***

All year long Chico and his family move up and down the state of California picking fruits and vegetables. Every September, they pick grapes and Chico starts at a new school again.

**Ramsey, Calvin A. *Ruth and the Green Book.***

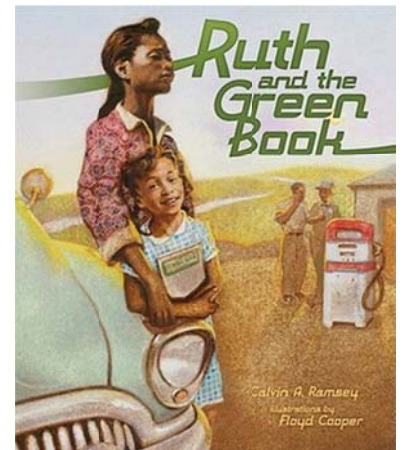
Ruth was so excited to take a trip in her family's new car! In the early 1950s, few African Americans could afford to buy cars, so this would be an adventure. But she soon found out that black travelers weren't treated very well in some towns.

**Ruurs, Margriet. *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey.***

Rama and her family, are forced to flee their village to escape the ravages of the civil war. With only what they can carry on their backs, Rama and her family set out to walk to freedom in Europe.

**Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey.***

With haunting echoes of the current refugee crisis this beautifully illustrated book explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leave their home and everything they know to escape

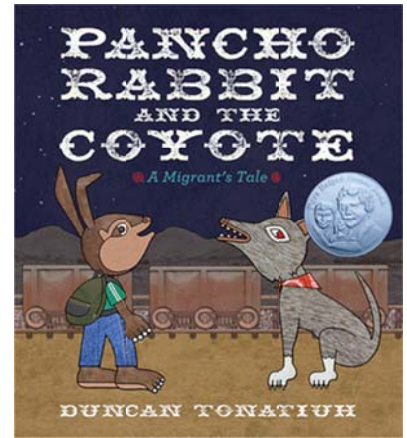




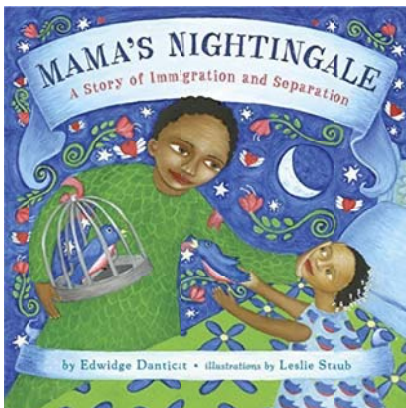
the turmoil and tragedy brought by war. This book will stay with you long after the last page is turned.

**Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale*.**

In this pointed allegory, Pancho, a young rabbit, sets out for El Norte to find his father. He falls in with a ravenous coyote who offers to guide him over the border (for a price), but when the food runs out, so does Pancho's luck.



## Grade 2-5



**Danticat, Edwidge. *Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation*.**

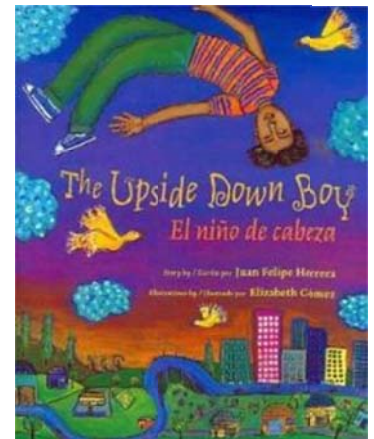
After her mother is sent to an immigration detention center, Saya finds comfort in listening to her mother's warm greeting on their answering machine. Moved by her mother's tales, Saya writes a story of her own—one that just might bring her mother home for good.

**Herrera, Juan Felipe *The Upside Down Boy*.**

Juanito is bewildered by the new school, and he misses the warmth of country life. Everything he does feels upside down. But a sensitive teacher and loving family help him to find his voice and make a place for himself in this new world through poetry, art, and music.

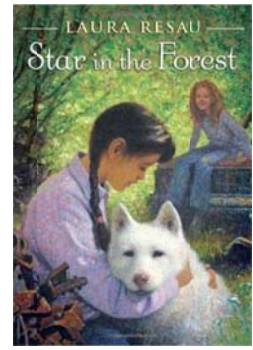
**Perez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There: Mi diario de aqui hasta alla*.**

One night, young Amada overhears her parents whisper of moving from Mexico to the other side of the border to Los Angeles, where greater opportunity awaits. As she and her family make their journey north, Amada records her fears, hopes, and dreams for their lives in the United States in her diary.



**Resau, Laura. *Star in the Forest*.**

Zitlally's family is undocumented, and her father has just been deported back to Mexico. As her family waits for him to return—they've paid a coyote to guide him back across the border—they receive news that he and the coyote's other charges have been kidnapped and are being held for ransom.



**Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*.**

A true story of a young boy who unites with thousands of other orphans to walk to safety to a refugee camp in another country after war destroys their villages in southern Sudan.

## Grade 3-7

**Ada, Alma Flo. *Dancing Home*.**

Mexico may be her parents' home, but it's certainly not Margie's. She has finally convinced the other kids at school she is one-hundred percent American—just like them. But when her Mexican cousin Lupe visits, the image she's created for herself crumbles.

**Alvarez, Julia. *How Tía Lola Came to Visit*.**

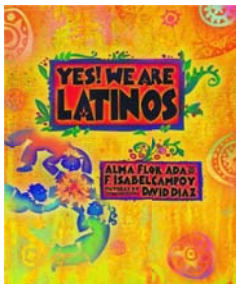
Moving to Vermont after his parents split, Miguel has plenty to worry about! Tía Lola, his quirky, *carismática*, and maybe magical aunt makes his life even more unpredictable when she arrives from the Dominican Republic to help out his Mami.

**Argueta, Jorge. *We Are Like the Clouds*.**

Why are young people leaving their country to walk to the United States to seek a new, safe home? Over 100,000 such children have left Central America. This book of poetry helps us to understand why and what it is like to be them.



## Grade 4-8



**Ada, Alma Flor and F. Isabel Campoy. *Yes! We Are Latinos: Poems and Prose About the Latino Experience*.**

Free-verse fictional narratives from the perspective of Latino and Latina youth provide specific stories and circumstances for the reader to better understand

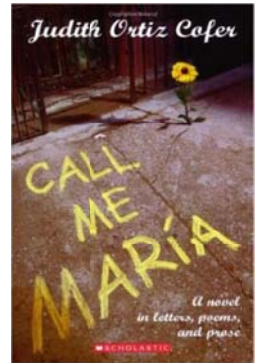
their quest for identity.

**Bode, Janet. *The Colors of Freedom*.**

Newly arrived teenaged immigrants describe their experiences in America, recount traditions of their native countries, and present short stories, poems, recipes, and artwork.

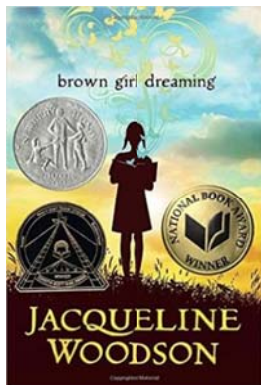
**Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *Call me Maria*.**

Maria is a girl caught between two worlds: Puerto Rico, where she was born, and New York, where she now lives in a basement apartment in the barrio. Finally, with the Spanglish of the barrio people ringing in her ears, she finds the poet within herself.



**Conkling, Winifred. *Sylvia and Aki*.**

Young Sylvia Mendez never expected to be at the center of a landmark legal battle. Young Aki Munemitsu never expected to be sent away from her home and her life as she knew it. The two girls definitely never expected to know each other, until their lives intersected on a Southern California farm in a way that changed the country forever.



**Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*.**

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.

## Grade 6-10

**Beatty, Patricia. *Lupita Mañana*.**

Crossing over the border is a dangerous business, but Lupita must cross from Mexico to America. Lupita and her big brother, Salvador, must smuggle themselves into the United States to earn money to support their mother and young siblings.



**Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *An Island Like You: Stories of the Barrio.***

A collection of stories captures the lives of different teenagers growing up in the barrio, including Rita, who goes to live with her grandparents in Puerto Rico and Luis, who spends his days working at his father's junkyard.

**Danticat, Edwidge. *Behind the Mountains.***

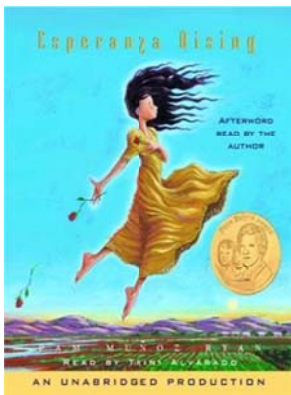
It is election time in Haiti, and bombs are going off in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. During a visit from her home in rural Haiti, Celiane and her mother are nearly killed. Looking at her country with new eyes, Celiane gains a fresh resolve to be reunited with her father in Brooklyn, New York.

**Kurtz, Jane. *Memories of Sun: Stories of Africa and America.***

What is it like to grow up in different parts of Africa today? And what's it like to be a child of two cultures -- an American living in Africa, or an African living in America? These twelve stories and three poems sing of Africa, of America, and of people changing, growing, crying, and laughing under the same sun.

**Osborne, Linda B. *This Land is Our Land: A History of American Immigration***

This exceptional work explores the history of American immigration from the early colonization of the continent to the contemporary discussions involving undocumented aliens. The so-called American melting pot has a history of exclusion, discrimination, and strife that has resulted in anti-immigration laws and segregation.

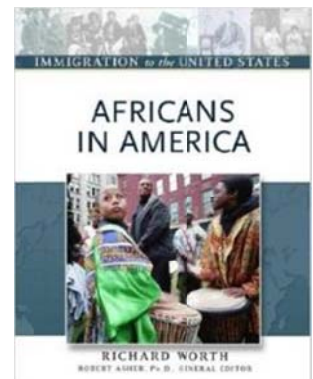


**Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Esperanza Rising.***

Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico until a sudden tragedy forces her to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. When her new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances.

**Worth, Richard. *Africans in America.***

The United States is truly a nation of immigrants. Spanning the time from when the Europeans first came to the New World, this book conveys the



excitement of these stories to young people. It highlights the themes, people, places, and events that were important to each immigrant group.

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