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**Book Review: Sonia Nazario. *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother*. Random House, 2006.**

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**Sonia Nazario.** *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother.* Random House, 2006.

*Enrique's Journey* disrupts typical discourses of illegal migration by considering who migrates, why migrants leave their homes and families, and how every migration is implicated in other migrations. The book relates one main story: a Honduran teenager struggles to find his mother, years after she left him behind to work in the United States. Details of Enrique's experiences propel the book, insisting that we can only understand trends in migration by attending to individual stories.

To this end, Nazario, a journalist for the *Los Angeles Times*, recounts the specific ways that Enrique and children like him travel to the U.S. from Central America. They walk, run, swim, climb, ride buses, and hitchhike. Many steal rides in Mexico aboard a freight train, which has been dubbed "the train of death" for the peril that people face as they jump on and off, struggle against the gangs that claim the train as their territory, and simply try to retain a hold on the roof of the train. Often, children make successive attempts to reach the U.S., some being robbed, beaten, raped—and occasionally fed, healed, cared for—before being turned back to try the trip all over again.

These details of what children are willing to endure in order to reunite with their mothers enliven the social complexities of economically-driven chain migration. Familial ties in the country of origin both motivate and discourage migration in the first place, and once a woman has migrated, familial ties become a part of the push and pull for those she left behind. Social relations are stretched, breached, created, and displaced. Mothers who leave one family often form a new family in the States; children who attempt to ameliorate the breach with their mothers inevitably leave other family members behind. Migration begets migration.

At the same time, economic and social forces in the U.S. pull migrants here just as strongly as economic forces in their countries of origin push them to find jobs elsewhere. The children who make up the wave of migrants that Nazario studies have been left by mothers who often end up working in domestic jobs in the U.S., cleaning other people's homes and caring for other people's children. The economic pull to participate in paid domestic service in the U.S. makes women unavailable for their personal domestic roles in their country of origin. The cruel irony of this arrangement is not lost on the women Nazario interviews.

Nazario herself is forthcoming (if not reflective) about her complicity in the domestic displacement of economic immigration. Her desire to know more about the topic was piqued after the son of her Guatemalan housekeeper recounted his own experience traveling North to reunite with his mother after thirteen years of separation. This fact is jarring in light of the fact that Nazario argues that mothers would do best to stay in Central America with their families rather than travel to the U.S. to find work. Though the occasions when Nazario contributes possible solutions to the "problem" of illegal migration are few, they do distract from the strength of her description and narrative. At times the book loses sight of the main story in order to attend to less complete but equally important scenes and tales along the way. This weakness is trivial, since what is lost in narrative consistency is gained in thematic comprehensiveness.

*Enrique's Journey* reminds readers that any migration involves common struggles of moving through this world—the entangled feelings of love, loss, resentment, and forgiveness, along with the physical sensations of hunger, pain, heat, exposure, and exhaustion. Migration is a human experience. At the same time, migration makes some of us (especially children) more vulnerable than others. Nazario encourages readers to question the economic, social, and political relationships that reproduce this vulnerability.

---Liana Tuttle Vasseur

**Robert Courtney Smith.** *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants.* The University of California Press, 2006.

*Mexican New York*, by Robert Courtney Smith, is a highly rich and detailed ethnography on the transnational lives of Mexican migrants in New York City. Written at a time when theorizations and understandings of transnational life are still in flux, the book aims at critiquing and improving upon earlier discussions of transnational practices among contemporary migrants. The book benefits greatly from Smith's rarely-paralleled fifteen years of ethnographic research, working with Tiquanense migrants in both New York City and Tiquani, a town in the Mixteca region of southern Mexico. This extended case analysis enables Smith to examine both first- and second-generation immigrants and allows for analysis of how transnational processes evolve over the life-course of individuals. Despite the title of the book though, it does not offer an exhaustive review of