

## Voices of the Border: Testimonios of Migration, Deportation, and Asylum

**Tobin Hansen, Editor**

**María Engracia Robles Robles, Editor**

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The testimonies collected in *Voices of the Border* are powerful as they relay systemic failures to care for those who seek asylum at the US's southern border.

The humanitarian and Catholic Kino Border Initiative of Nogales serves detainees; its workers have also collected oral histories from those they aid, documenting heartbreaking stories that show why people cross the US's Southern border. None describe easy choices, but all have emotional pulls that mere statistics cannot. These include the tales of kidnapping survivors who were beaten when they were unable to produce ransom money, as well as parents looking for their children, a terminal cancer patient who was deported hours after requesting health care, and a woman who was thrown from a train and dismembered.

The testimonies are grouped by topics and preceded by introductory essays; these include statistics that help to put the covered experiences into context. Each voice is one among thousands. Joanna Williams contributes a scorching introduction to the abuses of governments with infuriating details, like an estimate that a third of all detainees suffer abuse by border patrol agents.

The testimonies are short and shocking, and are often translated from Spanish. Despite their brevity, many encompass whole life stories well, fitting sorrow and pain into just a few powerful sentences. Many of the speakers' identifying details have been changed; violence and poverty often made it impossible for them to continue living in their homes. Some have escaped gang violence, or have seen their family members killed; others fled physical and sexual abuse. Often, these immigrants had to leave their families behind. Alienation is a common theme.

*Voices of the Border* witnesses immigration and its complications on the US-Mexico border in an emotional, unforgettable way.

MEREDITH GRAHL COUNTS (July / August 2021)

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