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From the Other Side

He picked up his things and looked at his watch, then turned towards the place where he had felt safe, probably because it had always been there for him: his room.

He said goodbye to the walls that held so many memories: his dreams, his ideas, his emotions, and now his feelings of homesickness. The walls were fashioned with multicolored graffiti, with figures and forms that only he could see, that only he could read, that only he could understand.

He also said farewell to the windows that had carpeted his solitary face on sunny afternoons with the greatest array of harmonies and had announced each morning the waking hour's arrival. He said farewell to his bed and his pillow, intimate friends who knew his secrets and fantasies of love found and lost in memory.

And before leaving he said a prayer before the crucifix, then kissed it and remembered his life-long companion and that solitude was sometimes necessary (but not always) to find one's own heart. He looked at the crucifix again and then grabbed it and dropped it in his bag.

He went out, closing the door behind him, and tossed the match. He did not look back, continuing to walk as he felt the heat on his back... Tears welled up in his eyes and were drawn out by the brutal wind that blew as it did every December.

The silver moon followed him, illuminating the passageways overflowing with shadows that came to life and revived the adventures of childhood memories and wounded youth...From time to time he stopped, his sight hindered by a cloud as a gust of wind once again parched his grief-stricken face mourning the necessary departure...necessary to work, necessary to live, necessary to be happy, necessary to change his life, necessary to experience freedom, necessary to live in peace, necessary to find companionship, necessary to eat and have decent housing...

At the end of the street he met the one who would help him change his life on the other side. He climbed into the truck at his own pace and met eyes and faces much like his own: strained, heartbroken, and scared of leaving that place they loved so much. Their faces exhibited the same immense hope that things might change so they would not have to leave.

It was quite late. They had been waiting such a long time for this!

The greater the distance, the more his heart clung to his homeland. At one point he even felt like throwing himself to the ground, but he simply looked towards the hill he'd lived on and saw his hut as it was slowly consumed by the fire, along with his hope...

Meanwhile, the news headlines from the other side announced: "Government leaders will meet to propose measures to deal with the immigration issue...", "They have built a wall on the border...", "The newly passed immigration law will bring...", "Most immigrants come because...", "We must take strong action on immigration..."

While listening to the newspaper vendors announcing these headlines, he could only think, "What do they know? They are from the other side."