

Transcript of “Gateways”

Lives We Take

warbler high in a tree
from branch to branch
just out of sight
easy to hear but not to see

across the valley by night
people in danger taking flight

borderlands, borderlands
stories we hear, stories we make
some lives we value, some lives we take

We tried to look at the border, both the real, specific borders that we were looking at - the Sonora and Arizona Border - but also the idea of a border itself...

Crossing

River, wide and shallow
I can wade across
Desert, bright and endless
I am lost

...But these borders are largely constructs that change...

White wing dove flying north from Sonora
I want to follow, cannot cross over
Swallow flying by the banks of the St. John
I overtake you and journey on

...The actual lives of people, day to day, are affected by these geo-political constructs...

River, wide and shallow
I can wade across
Desert, bright and endless
I am lost

Te voy a contar mi historia...
I will tell you my story...

I came here to Nogales, Arizona from
Guadalajara about six years ago...

Yo vení aquí a los tres años...
I came here when I was three years old...

*Pero, ya cuando llegue aquí, mi vi a mi esposo;
el trabajo tan duro que el tenía...*
But when I arrived here, I saw my husband;
The hard work that he was doing...

*Nunca imagine que después de un año de casar,
mi esposo me dijera ‘Me voy a Estados Unidos’...*
I never imagined that after one year of being married,
my husband would say ‘I am going to the United States’...

I guess everything changed after I got married.
So, when I talked to my family, they weren't very happy but they supported me
and they told me that I had a husband, and that I was supposed to now
follow that husband and do what was best for my child...

*No puedo opinar en una cosa más y menos, que es para mi esposa.
Yo respeto lo que ella decidió. Si está bien o si estuvo mal, no sé, es algo que respeto...*
...I cannot give my opinion on something that was, no more and no less, my wife's decision.
I respect what she decided. I don't know if it was right or wrong, but it's something I respect...

...so I followed my husband...

...y pues, aquí estamos, trabajando...
...and well, here we are, working...

A trabajar, también a llegando a trabajar No voy a ser flojo...
...I'm here to work; I'm not going to be lazy...

...nos padres trabajan día y noche...
...our parents work day and night...

...para vivir mejor.
...to live better.

...Cuando ves que tus hijos pueden tener una mejor futura aquí, se vale la pena...
...When you see that your children can have a better future here, it is worth the trouble...

...How a lot of people from Mexico come here to the US because it is supposed to be the good life. You'll find a good job, you'll earn good money, your kids will be able to have a good education. And so, he does that. He comes here and he brings his kids and then, eventually, his kids don't speak Spanish anymore. So, he can't communicate with them in Spanish and he's no good at English, and he feels distant from them...

We discovered something in common on both borders is the fact that the border can literally cut through your family...

Mi madre, no le visto hace diez/doce años...
I haven't seen my mother for ten or twelve years...

...pero fueron dieciocho años que tuvieron de pasar...
...but it was eighteen years that had to pass...

Pues, de todas maneras, aquí esta mi vida.
Ellos se van a quedar aquí, yo tengo que regresar a estar con mi familia...
Well, for all intents and purposes, my life is here.
They are going to stay here; I need to return [to the US] to be with my family...

Si me gusta pero, tan poco, no estoy a gusto...
I do like it [here] but at the same time, I'm not comfortable...

If it was up to me, I don't think I would be here.
You can make more money, it's true, but it doesn't buy you happiness...

Haber dejado mi gente, es un precio muy alto...
To have left my people is a very high price...

I wish I had my family with me...

...to be able to go to Mexico, for a whole month in the summer
and just spend all the time I can with my family;
soak it all up, feel like I did when I was there with them...

...Wow, these are the struggles that you have to go through for this "American Dream" ...
...What I call the "American Nightmare" ...

So I think there should be a way for those good people to be able to work.
Because that's all they want; they want to work; they want to be educated.

...queremos venir a lograr nuestros sueños;
queremos venir a trabajar bien;
queremos saber que aquí hay una esperanza para nosotros...
...we come to achieve our dreams;
we come to work well;
we want to know that there is a hope for us...

Here in [the] United States Americans experience that, through the recession, they lost their jobs and everything. Obviously, they were looking for better jobs. They even do jobs that they didn't like, but they did it because they wanted to progress. And it's the same, like, migrants come here because they are looking for something better.

...any reason to go, to come here, and go through all that effort, couldn't be to just waste it.

in the first place
the opposite of native is not alien
the opposite of native is imperial...

...there were people from all over the US and Canada there, who flew there in their airplanes, just to see this bird, this one bird, and that bird is a border-crosser and it is called a Mexican specialty [bird] and that means that is a very special bird. But, the person who crosses the border is not treated in a special way...

Una vida digna...

A dignified life

We usually think of them as illegals or as criminals, and all that, but they're humans too.

A lot of them are really good people.
They have come here, looking for a dream.
They are hard working people...

...and that's the biggest problem, is, in our views, you know, is this inability to see an issue, when it is a political issue, as a humanitarian issue...

Es algo muy importante que ustedes jóvenes

empiecen a hacer este tipo de estudios que estás haciendo tu porque...

It is very important that you young people start to do the sort of studies that you are doing because...

...because when you understand and you look at the reality of things, you have some kind of responsibility to do something about it...

I wish everybody could see what we saw.

And the problem is, even when people do see things, they don't always recognize...

...que se dan cuenta, que ellos abran su corazón...

...that they realize; that they open their hearts...

Esperamos que el gobierno

Se acuerde del hispano...

We hope that the government remembers the Hispanic.

You know, of course if you don't go to Mexico and you don't live in Alamos, you'll never know this, if you never cross the Border, and experience it and live that, you'll never know it...

What Will Stand?

maps and treaties, blood and bloodless wars,
shifting lines in time
pushing politics across the border
people pay the price

500 years from now
what will stand
what will stand
besides the land

500 years and
what will be
what will be
your country

sons and daughters, genealogies
shifting lines in time.
people holding on to family stories
keep history alive

500 years from now
what will stand
what will stand
besides the land

500 years and
what will be
what will be
your country

maps and countries, only in our minds
shifting lines in time

Speakers:

Two poets/writers

An undocumented migrant mother

An undocumented migrant daughter

A mother who emigrated from Mexico and is now a citizen

A mother who emigrated from Mexico and is now a permanent resident

A recently deported man

A Jesuit priest working at the Kino Border Initiative

A female university student who is a permanent resident

Two female university students who are natural-born US citizens