

Freedom Litany

Jennifer: I asked a sexual assault coordinator working for the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine what percentage of women who came here from Africa as refugees had been sexually assaulted. She was quiet, then replied, "I would say all." – Anne Hallward, *The Sun*, January 2019, p7

Colleen: He spent time in the U.S. as a laborer when Mexicans were first brought legally by the trainload to take the agricultural jobs vacated by the interned Japanese and by the farmers and farmhands who'd gone away to fight and die in World War II.... As a picker in Texas in 1954 he was making fifty cents an hour, working twelve to fourteen hours a day, when he began to notice his daily checks were each short by about two hours' pay. He confronted the bosses, who said it was just the way things were done around there, and if he kept quiet about it, they would give him an extra five dollars a week on the sly. He agreed, though.... the sum of the bribe amounted roughly to what he was owed in the first place. – Poe Ballantine, *The Sun*, January 2019, p21

Dave: He didn't come here alone from Guatemala at age thirteen. He had his seventeen year-old sister to lead him; him and their six year-old brother. Yet they made it – all the way to Marietta, GA; forever leaving the only world they've ever known; forever leaving loved ones, mother and father. Now nineteen, he says, "I miss my mom." – Dave Dunn, based upon a visit with a detainee at Stewart Detention Center, May 2018

Jennifer: I don't remember the specific moment when my parents told us we were going to the United States.... I didn't think we were going to grow up here, that this would become home. I remember my little brother leaving his bike behind and telling our cousins to watch his bike for when he returned. ...When we arrived.... my mom started cleaning houses. My dad was working in a Chinese restaurant, and my mom eventually started

working in a restaurant as well. We would just go home and someone would watch over us and a bunch of other kids and we would go to bed. Our parents got home after we fell asleep, so we barely saw them. There was no one to help us with homework because our parents were working hard to get us on our feet and find a place for us to live. – Yemini Cambron, *Green Card Youth Voices*, Atlanta, p106

Colleen: I was seven years old when we migrated here, and so I didn't necessarily make the decision to give up anything or sacrifice anything. The sacrifice was made by my parents....My parents lost the ability to see their family members, who were struggling in Mexico. My dad couldn't see his dad before he passed away because of cancer.... The American Dream is embodied in my parents. My parents' sacrifice, that's the American Dream.... It's actually the people that come to this country and make it what it is and have done so for years and years.... We are what makes America great. [Now], I honor my parents sacrifice, their American Dream, [as a teacher] which allows me to serve my community and my country. – Yemini Cambron, *Green Card Youth Voices*, Atlanta, p110

Dave: I think it's helpful to remind white ethnics that they, too, came here in boats; that they, too, lived in slums; that they, too, had yellow fever; that they, too, were stigmatized as incorrigible; that they, and that everything that was said about them in those days is now being said about Salvadorans, Dominicans, African Americans, Mexicans, Vietnamese and Cambodians. – Tom Hayden, *The Sun*, January 2018, p10

Jennifer: Convenient amnesia about one's origins is an all-American trait.... What some of us also forget is that at nearly every stage of our country's history, the people who were already established as American citizens found convenient targets to designate as unable to assimilate: the indigenous peoples; conquered Mexicans; slaves; or the newest

immigrants, who were usually classified as nonwhite. – Viet Thanh Nguyen, *NY Times*, May, 19, 2018

Colleen: The immigrants [of the 19th century] came, for the most part, because they were fleeing hard circumstances, much as immigrants from Central America do today. But they also came because our borders were practically open until 1882, when the Chinese Exclusion Act was shamefully passed. Otherwise, the American dream was available to anyone who could pay a 50-cent tax.... To fourth- or fifth-generation Americans who now say their ancestors came here legally, unlike today's undocumented workers, that's largely because the getting in was easy. Today, the average wait-time for an immigrant visa is about six years and can stretch past a decade...time desperate people usually don't have. – Brett Stephens, *NY Times*, July, 19, 2019

Dave: [Here is] what it means to be American: to have come from elsewhere, with very little; to be mindful, amid every trapping of prosperity, of how little we once had, and were; to protect and nurture those newly arrived, wherever from, as if they were our own immigrant ancestors — equally scared, equally humble, and equally determined. That's the “real America” that today's immigrant-bashers... pretend to venerate.... You don't have to favor sanctuary cities and the abolition of ICE to be on the right side of this debate. But you do have to recognize that the newest immigrants have as much claim to the country and its lawful freedoms as any other American. – Brett Stephens, *NY Times*, July, 19, 2019

Jennifer: Recent polls show that 82% of Canadians think immigration has a positive impact on the economy; and two thirds see multiculturalism as one of Canada's key positive features. They rank it higher than hockey.
Hockey!!! – Jonathan Tepperman, *NY Times*, June, 28, 2017

Colleen: If undocumented immigrants in Georgia were to receive legal status, they could contribute an additional \$100 million in state and local taxes annually, which could cover the entire cost of Georgia's 2019 budget line item to repair and replace bridges across the state. – Emiko Soltis and Azadah Shahshahani, based upon American Immigration Council, "Immigrants in Georgia," 2017

Dave: In Georgia alone, if DACA recipients were to lose their status, the state would lose an estimated \$23.6 million in state and local taxes. To put this in perspective, \$24 million in state coffers could pay for 310 new school buses or the salaries of 704 new public school teachers in Georgia. – Emiko Soltis and Azadah Shahshahani, based upon Misha Hill and Meg Wiehe, "State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants," Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, April 2018

Jennifer: Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg teaches something quite beautiful about the three mitzvot (love of neighbor, love of stranger, love of God), or tenets of Judaism: By learning how to love ourselves, we learn how to love our neighbor. By learning how to love our neighbor, we learn how to love the stranger. And by learning how to love the stranger, we learn how to love God. This is the best summary of Judaism I know. – Rachel Timoner, *The Sun*, October 2018

Colleen: Our goals affect our perceptions.... What we call "knowing" was in fact an awareness limited to a particular perspective on reality, itself determined by a specific group responsible for formulating this perspective. – Ivone Gebara, *Longing For Running Water*, pg. 21

Dave: "Take and eat, all of you: this is my body and this is my blood." We are food and drink for one another. We are one another's body and blood. We are one another's salvation. – Ivone Gebara, *Longing For Running Water*, pg. ix