

10: FREEDOM CRY



EVERY TIME I GET A CHANCE, I WATCH TV. I TELL MAMI THAT I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS COUNTRY. BUT REALLY, I JUST WANT TO KEEP MY MIND OFF EVERYTHING I COULD BE WORRYING ABOUT RIGHT NOW.



NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS.

THE DAY WE WERE SURPRISED IN OUR HIDING PLACE, I HAD NO IDEA THAT IT WOULD BE GOOD-BYE TO OUR COUNTRY.



HOW COULD I LIVE IN THIS WORLD FULL OF STRANGERS AND GRAY LIGHT INSTEAD OF A COUNTRY OF COUSINS AND FAMILY AND FAMILY FRIENDS AND YEAR-ROUND SUNSHINE?



**Welcome to
the United States
of America**



THE GARCIAS HAVE INVITED US TO MOVE OUT TO THEIR HOUSE IN QUEENS, BUT MAMI WON'T HEAR OF IT. ANY DAY NOW, WE WILL BE RETURNING HOME.

WHERE DO I BEGIN TELLING STRANGERS ABOUT A PLACE WHOSE SMELL IS ON MY SKIN AND WHOSE MEMORY IS ALWAYS IN MY HEAD? TO THEM, IT'S JUST A GEOGRAPHY LESSON; TO ME, IT'S HOME.



BUT AS EACH DAY GOES BY, AND THE LEAVES ALL FALL OFF LIKE THE TREES HAVE SOME DISEASE, AND OCTOBER TURNS INTO NOVEMBER, I WONDER IF I'M GOING TO BE HERE FOR A LOT LONGER THAN JUST THE FIRST SNOWFALL OF THIS YEAR.



DO YOU HAVE THE MONEY TO BUY ALL THIS, YOUNG LADY?



PART OF ME WANTS TO AVOID GOING IN AND FACING EVEN MORE SAD NEWS. BUT THE TERROR OF DEPORTATION IS BIGGER THAN A DISAPPOINTMENT I'M BECOMING USED TO.



MR. WASHBURN IS HERE.



YOUR FATHER AND UNCLE ARE DEAD.