



IN A CITY FILLED WITH STORIES,



JUST AS WE
READ SIGNS,

AT A GLANCE WE PUT
STORIES ON OTHERS.

BUT, THESE
STORIES
ARE FLAT -



THERE'S NOTHING
BEHIND THEM...

TO GET BEYOND THE SURFACE, WE
HAVE TO TAKE THE TIME TO LISTEN.

AND IN DOING SO, A
WORLD OPENS UP.

AS SO MANY HAVE BEFORE THEM,
THOSE WE WILL LEARN FROM ON
THIS JOURNEY HAVE FOUND
THEIR WAY HERE FROM ALL OVER.



ADRIAN



ANDRES



SEDDIK



MEI YOH REN



BECKI



AMIN



TAMARA



JEFF



ANGELO

HERE ARE A FEW
FACES THAT WE'LL
MEET ALONG THE WAY.



BERLIN



MARIE



SHADAD



SHAHEEN



SYEDA

NOW, LET'S HEAR
THEIR STORIES...

OUR STORIES START WITH OUR NAMES.

FOR SHADAD, CHILDHOOD WAS THE BEST TIME OF HIS LIFE.

BUT AS MANY DO, THEY HAVE TO GROW UP FAST. THE GIRL WITH AN ABSENT FATHER IS TEASED RELENTLESSLY.



FREE FROM RESPONSIBILITY, CHILDHOOD MEANT

INNOCENCE,

LOVE,

AND HOPE.



UNTIL ONE DAY HE RETURNS, SOOTHING HER HEART AND A PHOTO OF THEIR REUNION ENDS CRUEL TAUNTS. AND MARIE SAYS, "NOW I KNOW MY FATHER."

NAMED FOR A LOST OLDER BROTHER, AMIN ALO'S NAME ("TO BELIEVE"/"SUN") SHAPES HIS STORY.



IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO GO TO SCHOOL, KATIE'S PARENTS LIVED APART FROM THEIR CHILDREN - IT WAS HARD BUT SHE UNDERSTOOD.



AND WHEN HER MOTHER FINALLY EARNED ENOUGH MONEY TO SEND HER TO SCHOOL WITH HER FRIENDS, TENZIN CRIED JOYFULLY.

THE THREAT OF VIOLENCE PREVENTED ANGELO FROM GOING TO SCHOOL - IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS: "I SAW SOME THINGS THAT A CHILD SHOULDN'T SEE."

SEDDIK SAW ONLY WAR AND OPPRESSION. ANY RESISTANCE WAS FORCEFULLY STAMPED OUT - A BOY THROWING A ROCK AT A TANK IS BLINDED IN A HAIL OF BULLETS.



HIS PEOPLE BARRED FROM MOVING FREELY,



NOT ONLY COULDN'T HE GO TO SCHOOL, HE COULDN'T LEAVE HIS HOUSE AND NEVER WENT OUTSIDE.

PRISONERS IN THEIR OWN HOME.

A BOY SPEEDING
ON A MOTORBIKE,



AND THEN A
TERRIBLE BLAST.



AMIR SEES IT ALL, ENROUTE
TO MEET HIS FRIENDS.



FRIENDS WHOM
HE MUST NOW
FIND AND
IDENTIFY IN
THE RUBBLE



BUT HIS
TORMENT
DOESN'T
STOP THERE,

AS HE HAS TO
TELL THEIR
DISBELIEVING
MOTHERS THAT
THEIR BOYS
AREN'T COMING
HOME AGAIN.



SOME TRAGEDIES ARE NATURAL,
BUT NO LESS PAINFUL.



THE EARTH QUAKES AND SPLITS, IN
HER TERROR, JESSICA PRAYED AND
PROMISES TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE.

AND AFTERWARDS,
VANESSA OBSERVES:



"LIFE CAN CHANGE
IN AN INSTANT -
GOOD OR BAD"

EVEN IN THE MIDST OF EVERYTHING,
LIFE GOES ON.

IN RESPONSE TO BEING TOLD WHO SHE
CAN LOVE, SYEDA PROTESTS, "I'M NOT A
FLOWER" AND DEFIANTLY ASSERTS HER
RIGHT TO CHOOSE LOVE ALL HER OWN.



YES, THIS SEARCH SOMETIMES
LEADS TO A BROKEN HEART, YET
THEY PERSIST UNDAUNTED...



GERALDA LONGS FOR ONE WHO CAN
READ THE SECRETS IN HER HEART.



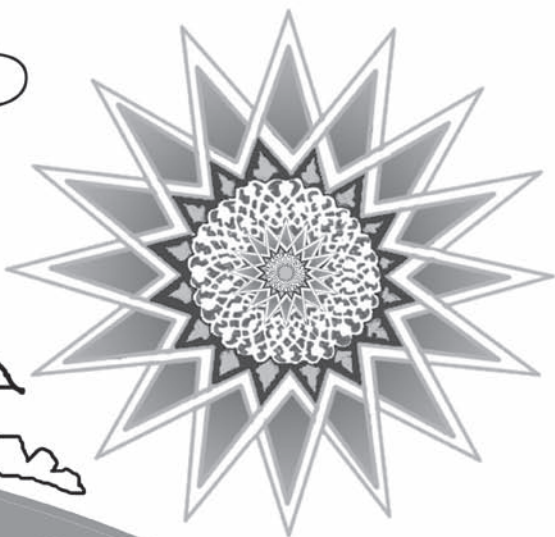
A BOY WHO CAN
EMBRACE HER
TO SILENCE
WITH HIS KISS.

THE BOY WHO TAUGHT HIMSELF
TO READ AND BE WORLDLY (OVER
HIS PARENTS' OBJECTIONS),

AS A YOUNG MAN, TRAVELS
TO A NEW LAND, AND DREAMS
ON AN AIRPLANE...



SHAHEEN DREAMS OF A NEW LIFE
AND A BRIGHT FUTURE.



HE DREAMS OF LEARNING TO
TAME THE SUN IN ORDER TO
HELP THE PEOPLE OF HIS
COUNTRY AND OTHERS IN
NEED AROUND THE WORLD.



PROPELLED BY DREAMS,
A NEW CHAPTER AWAITS...

THIS NEW LAND
HOLDS SURPRISES -



MONEY

DOESN'T FALL
FROM THE SKY,

BUT

SNOW
DOES.



BUT HE'LL
PRESS ON.



MAKING IT IS A
CONSTANT
UPHILL BATTLE.



WHAT SEEMED
LIKE A LAND OF
OPPORTUNITY IS
NOT FOR ALL...

HE SAYS: "YOU
HAVE TO PLAY
IN YOUR LIFE."



DESPITE THE COLD, BAREFOOT,
JEFF DANCES IN THE SNOW
(NOT GOLD) COVERED STREETS.

INITIAL EXCITEMENT
TURNS TO SADNESS -
TEARS COME AS
JOANNE LONGS FOR
FAMILY AND FRIENDS
NOW FAR FAR AWAY.



BUT WITH HELP FROM
NEW FRIENDS - SHE
PERSEVERES.



A TEACHER, MARCELLE,
SPEAKS OF THE RESILIENCE
SHE SEES IN HER STUDENTS:
"A LITTLE MORE THAN
SCARRED BY LIFE, BUT STILL
ABLE TO SEE THE JOY AND
BEAUTY IN THEMSELVES AND
THE WORLD AROUND THEM."

SHE COULD BE
DESCRIBING
TAMARA, WHO
SMILES AS SHE
EXPLAINS HOW



A TRAGIC CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT
INSPIRES HER MISSION TO HELP
OTHERS BY STUDYING MEDICINE.

ANDRES
AND
ADRIAN
DON'T KNOW
EACH OTHER.



BUT THEIR STORIES
ARE PAINFULLY ALIKE.



BOTH CAUGHT
UP IN CYCLES
OF VIOLENCE.



EVEN IN A NEW LAND,
LEAVING IT BEHIND
REQUIRES A CHOICE.



AND THEY DO,
FOR LITTLE
BROTHERS,
GIRLFRIENDS,
GRANDPARENTS
- FOR THEIR
FUTURES.



ANDRES DREAMS
OF BEING A CHEF.



NOW, ADRIAN ASSISTS
HIS TEACHERS AND
CLASSMATES
BY CAREFULLY
ACTING AS AN
INTERPRETER
FOR THEM.



SHRUGGING HIS
SHOULDERS, HE
SAYS,
"YEAH,
I LIKE
BEING
HELPFUL."

BECKI WORKS TO HELP
HER PARENTS PAY BILLS.



AND SO, A BIT LIKE THE
TOOTH FAIRY, SHE
FINDS ANOTHER WAY.



AT FIRST,
HER MOM
WOULDN'T
TAKE IT.

BUT BECKI'S
STUBBORN TOO.



PLEASED, HER MOTHER ACCEPTS
SILENTLY. FOR BECKI, HONORING
AND RESPECTING ONE'S
PARENTS IS ESSENTIAL.

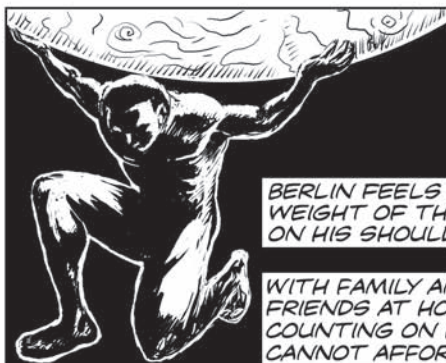


EVEN WITH A FOOT IN THIS NEW WORLD,
THEY MAINTAIN A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY
TO THOSE WHO'VE STAYED BEHIND.

THIS IS CERTAINLY
TRUE OF RAMON.
JUST AS THIS NEW
LIFE IS AHEAD OF
HIM, A NEW LIFE IS
ABOUT TO BE BORN
BACK HOME. THE
YOUNG FATHER-TO-
BE LONGS TO BRING
MOTHER AND CHILD
TO JOIN HIM.



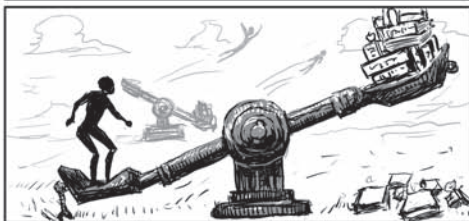
HERE, HE PLANS TO TEACH HIS CHILD
THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND
PROVIDE A LIFE OF OPPORTUNITY.



BERLIN FEELS THE
WEIGHT OF THE WORLD
ON HIS SHOULDERS.

WITH FAMILY AND
FRIENDS AT HOME
COUNTING ON HIM, HE
CANNOT AFFORD TO FAIL.

TO SUCCEED, THEY HOLD NOTHING HIGHER
THAN THE PROMISE OF EDUCATION.



AS SHADAD PUTS IT, IT IS A "WEAPON
CALLED KNOWLEDGE," TO PROPEL
HIM INTO HIS FUTURE.

WHILE LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE IS DIFFICULT,

SO INTENT UPON TELLING THEIR STORIES,

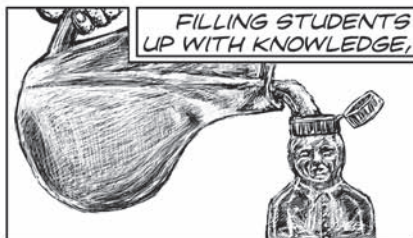
AS SHADAD OBSERVES, "LOOKING AT THE PAST POINTS US TO THE FUTURE."



THEY OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES.

THEY SEE THE POWER IN THEIR STORIES TO TEACH AND HELP OTHERS.

BUT THEY NEED TO HAVE A SPACE IN WHICH TO SHARE THEIR STORIES. THIS MEANS TEACHING IS NOT



FILLING STUDENTS UP WITH KNOWLEDGE,

IN A ONE-DIRECTIONAL FLOW FROM TEACHER TO STUDENT.



JOHN DEWEY DEFINED CAPACITY NOT AS AN EMPTINESS TO BE FILLED, BUT AS A "FORCE POSITIVELY PRESENT" - POTENTIAL TO BE DEVELOPED.



FOR SPI'S ERICK GORDON, STUDENTS ARE "CONTAINERS OF STORIES" WHO BRING THE BASIS FOR CURRICULUM WITH THEM INTO THE CLASSROOM.

IN ORDER TO CREATE THIS OPENING FOR POSSIBILITIES TEACHING IS

RECOGNIZING THAT STUDENTS COME WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCES,



AND LEARNING IS MULTI-DIRECTIONAL - IT TAKES PLACE ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER IN A COMMUNITY.



BY LEARNING TO LISTEN

WE COME TO SEE ALL THAT WE SHARE IN OUR STRUGGLES AND OUR JOY,

DISSOLVING WALLS (BOTH LITERAL AND METAPHORICAL) THAT STOOD BETWEEN US.

TAMARA IMAGINES PEOPLE READING HER STORY AND THINKING ABOUT THEIR OWN LIVES.



AND IN TURN THEY SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES AND INSPIRE NEW DREAMS...

THIS HAS BEEN JOURNEYS PAST; FUTURES FORGED

A QUILT OF STORIES FASHIONED BY
NICK SOUSANIS
AS TOLD TO BY SPI
TEACHERS AND
DISTRICT 79 AUTHORS

WITH GRATITUDE AND RESPECT FOR ALL.

WWW.PUBLISHSPI.ORG

NSOUSANIS@GMAIL.COM
SPINWEAVEANDCUT.COM

FONTS BY COMICRAFT.COM