

“Because I Am” by Alison

*This story is published with the expressed consent from Victor. I thank Victor for allowing me to tell his story.*

It was a sunny day in Guerrero, Mexico and Victor who was two years old was playing outside with his brother who is four years old and was always bossing Victor around. Victor and his brother went inside their house which was really small with the walls made out of dirt and bricks and the roof made out of metal, when they got in they notice that their mom and dad were packing up.

"Ma" Victor said confused, "what is going on, why are you packing everything?"

"Victor," Victor's mom said, "your father and I decided to go to California with your aunt, we can't afford enough food for all of us here."

"But mom," Victor said now really worried, "what's going to happen to grandpa and grandma?"

"Don't worry," Victor's mom said, "when we get a job over there we are going to send some money, now go pack all of your stuff and when you're done come to the table to have our last meal here."

Victor did what her mom said but still was mad and worried that they were going to move to another place. Victor started packing but didn't know what to pack so he just put everything in a black bag including all his toys. When he was done he went to the table and already all his family was there, his mom put a big plate of scrambled eggs and some beans in front of him.

"Do I have to eat all this," Victor said, "I can't finish that."

"Victor," said his mom, "eat all you can so you're full and save all the rest ok, now hurry packing everything we are leaving tomorrow at two in the morning."

"WHAT, we can't go at two in the morning," Victor said, "I have to sleep." He was so angry they had to leave so early, so instead of packing he went to sleep so in the morning he would be able to wake up.

When he woke up it was all dark. He heard his parents talking about "coyotes" and that they have to pay them a lot of money. Victor didn't know what coyotes were but he didn't like that

name. Victor when outside and his brother was chasing some chickens (like he always does) in the back of his house. It wasn't a good morning, even though he slept really early he was really tired, but now he heard his mom screaming that it was time to go.

His dad lifted him up to the truck and Victor whispered in his ears, "are we going to stay in the truck for the whole trip?"

"No son," his dad said, "we are first going with the truck but then we are walking with the coyotes."

"Ohh," Victor said, "but what are coyotes?"

His dad left and didn't even hear him. His dad started the car and they were headed to a place where our coyote is supposed to be. All of Victor's family got off the truck and started following some people who were following two men. Still Victor didn't know who the coyotes were but he guessed it was the two men in front. The two men started walking and everyone else was following.

It was getting dark and still their family was still walking, until finally one of the coyotes said, "Let's all take a break because we will be walking almost the whole night."

Victor immediately sat down because he was so bored and tired, even though his dad was carrying him most of the time. His dad got out some fruit and shared with his mom and brother; his dad didn't give any to Victor because he had been eating on the way so he was already full. The coyote started walking, and so did everyone else.

"Dad," Victor says, "I don't want to walk. Can you carry me?"

"No," Victor's dad said, "we are going to be walking a long time, and I don't want to get tired, maybe later."

Victor was mad but understood him so he kept his mouth shut for the rest of the night. He was now tired and cooled because in the night it was cooled as Antarctica and in the day it was hot as fire. It was getting harder to walk and Victor asked his dad to carry him but his dad too was tired, they keep on walking and it only got harder.

It was the next day and some people were already giving up and going back, but Victor family kept on going with the coyotes and didn't give up; Victor was surprised that his brother didn't bug him a lot on those days.

Victor and his family had been walking now for three days and they had one last day to go without getting caught. That night helicopter had flown really close to them and almost found them but they got lucky and survived the whole trip.

Victor was finally in the United States but now they have to go to their aunt's house in California. They didn't have any money and couldn't afford anything to eat and couldn't even afford a ticket for the bus to take them to California so his dad tried to call Victor's aunt so she could come and pick them up. His aunt came and was happy they could go home.

Victor and his family only stayed there for two weeks and came here to Illinois. Victor gets in a lot of trouble, but Victor was proud of one thing: he was a Mexican.

Student Responses on the blog:

**IDD:** As a human being I can connect to that because when we go to Wisconsin we always walk a lot because we don't want to use the car, and the beach is like 1 mile away. As a reader I never knew that people had to walk all the way to the United States. As a writer I am wondering why they can't drive there.

**MM.:** Alison, This was a beautifully captured story. I appreciate Victor's story because my Mom also had to go through an extensive process to get to the U.S. from the Philippines. In this story, Victor revealed such perseverance that is admirable on so many levels. As a writer, you used dialogue in a way that made me feel like I was there at that moment. Thank you both Alison and Victor for sharing this amazing story.

**IVF:** Thanks Alison for a good story and how you imagined what happened.