



# *A Map is Only One Story: Twenty Writers on Immigration, Family, and the Meaning of Home*

edited by Nicole Chung & Mensah Demary

## About the Book

From rediscovering an ancestral village in China to experiencing the realities of American life as a Nigerian, the search for belonging crosses borders and generations. Selected from the archives of Catapult magazine, the essays in *A Map Is Only One Story* highlight the human side of immigration policies and polarized rhetoric, as twenty writers share provocative personal stories of existing between languages and cultures.

Contributors: Lauren Alwan, Cinelle Barnes, Victoria Blanco, Jennifer S. Cheng, Nina Li Coomes, Bix Gabriel, Nur Nasreen Ibrahim, Deepti Kapoor, Porochista Khakpour, Soraya Membreno, Kamna Muddagouni, Jamila Osman, Nadia Owusu, Niina Pollari, Krystal A. Sital, Natalia Sylvester, Sharine Taylor, Kenechi Uzor, Steph Wong Ken, and Shing Yin Khor

## Suggested Opening Prayer

*A Prayer for Immigrant Justice from Justice for Immigrants*

Blessed are You, Lord God, King of all creation.

Through Your goodness, we live in this land that You have so richly blessed.

Help us always to recognize our Blessings come from You

and remind us to share them with others,

especially those who come to us today from other lands.

Help us to be generous, just, and welcoming,

as You have been and are generous to us.

## Discussion Questions

These are some suggested questions to get your discussion started.

- Is there a story in the book that sticks out to you as particularly powerful, sad, interesting, or informative? Discuss how the story impacted you.
- How did the arrangement of the book impact your experience of reading it? What did you like or not like about the way the stories are put together?
- Were there any stories that you didn't like as much? Why?
- Many stories touch on moments in time when people were intensely threatened or when staying in their home became suddenly impossible. Does reading about these experiences help you understand the refugee experience better? Are these situations difficult to imagine?
- Are the differences in the stories told by men and the stories told by women? What did you notice in those narratives?
- How does food and cooking factor in the stories? Why do you think food is a common topic in refugee and immigrant stories?
- How do the stories of refugees who grew up as refugees differ from the stories of adults who were forced to flee their homes?
- What surprised you about *A Map is Only One Story*? What are some major takeaways from the different stories in the book?
- What is the difference between assimilation and integration? How do you think those two concepts have functioned in America?
- How has reading *A Map is Only One Story* affected your opinion about immigration, migration, citizenship, and being an American?

## About the Editors

Nicole Chung is the author of the national bestseller *All You Can Ever Know*. Named a Best Book of the Year by The Washington Post, NPR, Library Journal, and many other outlets, *All You Can Ever Know* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, a semifinalist for the PEN Open Book Award, an Indies Choice Honor Book, and an official Junior Library Guild Selection. Chung's writing has appeared in The New York Times, The New York Times Magazine, GQ, TIME, The Guardian, and Vulture, among others, and she also writes a weekly advice column for Slate. Her next book is forthcoming from Ecco Books/HarperCollins.

Mensah Demary acquires and publishes literary fiction and narrative nonfiction books as editor-in-chief of Soft Skull Press. He co-wrote the New York Times bestselling *Let Love Have the Last Word: A Memoir* by rapper/actor Common. His writing has appeared in Vice, Slate, Salon, The Common, Medium's *Unruly Bodies*, Literary Hub, and elsewhere. Demary lives and writes in Brooklyn with his partner and their family.

Paste Magazine, "[A Map Is Only One Story Boasts 20 Must-Read Essays About Immigration](#)"  
Parnassus Books, <https://parnassusmusing.net/2020/02/21/a-pathway-to-greater-empathy-and-understanding-mensah-demary-on-a-map-is-only-one-story/>  
Reading Women Podcast, "[Interview | Nicole Chung, Editor in Chief of Catapult Magazine](#)"  
Culturally Relevant Podcast, "[Confronting White Privilege in 'A Map Is Only One Story' \(with Cinelle Barnes\)](#)"

## Further Reading

### Websites:

- Reimagining Migration, "[Assimilation, Integration and Refugees](#)"
- Informed Immigrant, [informedimmigrant.com](http://informedimmigrant.com)
- American Immigration Council, "[How the United States Immigration System Works.](#)"
- Freedom for Immigrants, [freedomforimmigrants.org/](http://freedomforimmigrants.org/).
- Episcopal Migration Ministries, [episcopalmigrationministries.org](http://episcopalmigrationministries.org)

## Books

- They Called Us Enemy by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker
- Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations by Mira Jacob
- The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You by Dina Nayeri
- Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen by Jose Antonio Vargas
- A Good Provider Is One Who Leaves: One Family and Migration in the 21st Century by Jason DeParle
- We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled by Wendy Pearlman
- After the Last Border: Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America by Jessica Goudeau