



The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child

By Francisco Jiménez



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After dark in a Mexican border town, a father holds open a hole in a wire fence as his wife and two small boys crawl through.

So begins life in the United States for many people every day. And so begins this collection of twelve autobiographical stories by Santa Clara University professor Francisco Jiménez, who at the age of four illegally crossed the border with his family in 1947.

"The Circuit," the story of young Panchito and his trumpet, is one of the most widely anthologized stories in Chicano literature. At long last, Jiménez offers more about the wise, sensitive little boy who has grown into a role model for subsequent generations of immigrants.

These independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots--and back again--over a number of years. As it moves from one labor camp to the next, the little family of four grows into ten. Impermanence and poverty define their lives. But with faith, hope, and back-breaking work, the family endures.

"A jewel of a book"--Rolando Hinojosa-Smith

"These stories are so realistic they choke the heart."--Rudolfo Anaya

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The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child By Francisco Jiménez Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 6 Up-Francisco Jimenez was born in Mexico, entered California illegally as a very young child, and spent his boyhood alternating between migrant farm work and the classroom. This collection of autobiographical short stories was written years later, when Jimenez had become an established professor at Santa Clara University (CA), but they give immediate access to the feelings of the growing boy. Adrian Vargas reads in a lightly accented English, offering a voice that is evidently that of the full grown man remembering, rather than that of the youth he remembers. Each story is simple, direct, and redolent with the smells of the earth, the sounds of the ever-changing home with its growing number of siblings, and the amazing experiences each new schoolroom offers. The frustrations range from those specific to poverty and migrancy, including the inability to follow up on promises made by a good teacher because the family moves on the day the offer of trumpet lessons has been proffered, through the universal experience of an older brother saddled with an ignorant younger sibling who insensitively feeds his prized penny collection into the grocery store's gumball machine. Jimenez and Vargas both maintain a leisurely pace appropriate to storytelling that can reach a wide audience, giving the images constructed from words time to bloom in the audience's mind before wrapping each tale in a tight, often surprising, close. Highly recommended for both pleasure listening and for classroom use and discussion.

Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA

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Review

... [a] moving book . . . "The Circuit beautifully captures the rhythms of everyday life and the dreams and aspirations of a migrant family. Jimenez writes credibly in the voice of his young protagonist. Pancho is a compelling and memorable character, at the emotional center of a book that will appeal to both adult and teenage readers."

Jimenez's exquisite autobiographical short story *The Circuit* is widely anthologized. . . . Like Steinbeck's classic *"Grapes of Wrath,"* Jimenez's stories combine stark social realism with heartrending personal drama.

An assortment of stories that remain independent, yet they intertwine . . . "Jimenez" wrote the story in an honest and delightful voice. It's a wonderful representation of a culture that exists in the U.S. but is foreign to most Americans.

There are moments of wonder . . . Francisco Jimenez is a master craftsman of words, with a simple yet crystalline style . . . "The Circuit" speaks intimately of migrant life in the western United States—a life that might be known by its politics or sociology but here is given a human face.

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From the Inside Flap

A collection of twelve short stories presented from the perspective of a young boy, in which the author narrates his childhood experiences growing up in a family of Mexican migrant farmworkers.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dale Winsett:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the book untitled The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child can be excellent book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Robert Collado:

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Willie Navarro:

Many people spending their time by playing outside together with friends, fun activity with family or just watching TV all day long. You can have new activity to spend your whole day by reading through a book. Ugh, do you consider reading a book will surely hard because you have to accept the book everywhere? It fine you can have the e-book, getting everywhere you want in your Smartphone. Like The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child which is having the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's see.

Jaime Friend:

Is it anyone who having spare time after that spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something new? This The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child can be the reply, oh how comes? A book you know. You are and so out of date, spending your time by reading in this fresh era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

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