

# Prologue: Our Migrant Souls

The prologue "Our Migrant Souls" explores the complexities and rich histories of individuals from diverse Latin American backgrounds. The narrative begins with a reflection on the author's interactions with a young woman from Honduras, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, who shares stories that reflect her multifaceted identity and experiences as an undocumented individual. As the author listens, they recognize the weight of her struggles: the emotional toll of her relationship with an undocumented boyfriend, memories of family tensions, and moments of resilience through hardship, including periods of living in a car and witnessing family discord.

The text weaves a tapestry of identity, highlighting the protagonist's heritage, which encompasses African, Indigenous, and European roots. These elements manifest in her appearance and experiences, crafting a narrative that defies simplistic racial categories. The author highlights how terms like "Latino" and "Hispanic" often fail to encapsulate the rich, diverse backgrounds of individuals, reducing them to mere labels that overlook their complex histories.

The prologue also delves into the imposition of harmful stereotypes by mainstream narratives, positioning Latinx individuals as low-skilled laborers and stripping away their humanity. The author recounts personal experiences in their family's journey, emphasizing the pride tied to cultural identity amidst a backdrop of pervasive prejudice. This journey leads to an exploration of what it means to be a "people," advocating for a deeper understanding of interconnected histories and shared traumas that inform their identities.

Through academic insights, the author aims to empower the young woman and others like her, connecting them to their collective heritage that has been shaped by struggle, resilience, and contributions to American society. The narrative concludes with a commitment to honor these stories and foster a sense of strength from the shared experiences of migration and cultural identity in the face of ongoing adversity. The prologue encapsulates a deeply personal yet universally resonant call for recognition and understanding of the Latinx identity, rooted in history, community, and resilience.