

Dreams of the Estrella del Norte

Confidential Draft

Cleveland Public Theatre
6415 Detroit Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44102

Song and the sound of the desert.

ERNESTO

Going North.
Follow the north star.

DANTE

Estrella del Norte.
They say follow the drinking gourd.

ERNESTO

Siga la Osa Menor.
Follow Estrella del Norte to freedom.

DANTE

To Freedom.

A Coyote, a paid transporter of immigrants, sits at a table as if speaking with a prospective traveler.

COYOTE

Sounds good, oh yes, si muy, muy romántico.
Pero, the problem is, you won't be seeing the no stars.
You won't see anything.
Esteras Ciego. Se cruza bajo la oscuridad
You will cross in the darkness.
You gotta ask yourself, ¿Tiene usted lo que se necesita? Do you have what it takes?
In a box for many hours. Can't know the time. It's burning hot in the day y es muy frío por la noche.
You must prepare yourself. Don't eat for 24 hours, or you'll be sorry and so will your companeros.
Drink as little as possible.
Maybe we stop for breaks. Maybe no.
If we stop. Calláte. Silencio.
And you pay up front.
You got the money, guey? Efectivo?

JUAN

Si.

MARIA

Please protect my Juan.

Singing of Duerme.

ERNESTO

There is a box, in the back of a truck, sealed tight.

DANTE

There is a man inside.

MARIA

Please protect him.

JUAN and ESTRELLA are in a box. They are squished in.

JUAN

Hey, niña. Muchacha! Can you move your arm. Gracias.

Hey, are you going to be silent this whole trip?

I am not going to hurt you. I am an honorable man. And you remind me of my sister.

You don't need to worry. I am like your brother in the hell, that is crossing this desert.

I know you're scared. I am scared.

And it hurts. This box. It's like a torture chamber. Every bump of the road hurts. OK, you don't have to speak. I'll tell you my story to pass the time.

My days as obrero worker are left behind. Everything went down since the factory closed. I did everything to bring food to the table. I have a big family. I could not sleep for days trying to find out how to get out of this misery.

One day I told Maria, my wife that I was going North, to find work. It was that or to become a murderer for the drug cartels. There is no future here Maria! I made a decision I had to borrow money from my family and friends for the journey. I wasn't going see my children die of hunger in front of me. The day that I left, that day has been embedded in my heart forever. It is a scar, a tattoo.

Do you have a story, muchacha? A family?

I don't think that Maria slept that night. "Take care of your brother and sister" I told my older son Jose. He is a dedicated student. Rolando the second one, he was always afraid of everything. On the stormy nights, he ran to our bed to hide under the covers. He was afraid of lightning.

My grandmother used to call him little chicken, because one day Maria dressed him in yellow. Since then he is Pollito. After him was Sandy—my princess.

Do you have a story? A family? Don't worry everything will be ok. We are following the North Star, Estrella del Norte, to a new land. I will take care of you.

VOICE

They are moving north in the back of a truck.

COYOTE

You won't be able to see, but you will be able to smell. The crate will be sealed from the outside. You will not be able to move much. You must remain quiet and still.

MARIA

This candle... this candle I light for Juan. My Juan. Mi amor. Mi Corozon. Mi Juanito. Esta vela es una oración. Please protect him. Keep him strong. May the lord forgive us all, but if a man steals bread for his starving child, is this a sin?

COYOTE

There will be no way of knowing time. There will be no time, and it will feel like an eternity. It will be an eternity.

MARIA

May the coyotes watch over him and guide the driver. May the snakes guard them. May the dirt and sand and the dry dry air be blanket of darkness to hide my Juan. May the enemy's hatred make them blind and deaf.

COYOTE

It will be an eternity and you will think you are going to starve. You will think you are dying. Usted pensara que está muerto.

MARIA

Enciendo esta vela. That it may call up an angel, a protector. Send an angel that he may be safe.

Por favor, envíe un ángel so he will not be alone.
Please, do not let him die alone.

COYOTE

OK. Put the money on the table.

MARIA

Juan, eres mi corazón.

COYOTE

I won't count it.

MARIA

I am your heart. You are not alone.

COYOTE

Because now it's about trust.

MARIA

I am your heart.

COYOTE

Your life is in my hands.

MARIA

Juan, eres mi corazón.

DANTE

They are moving west now on a dirt road,

ERNESTO

...they have crossed the border but they still aren't safe. Inside the box, they don't know what is happening.

JUAN

Soon this will be over. We will be free. God I'm thirsty.

Mi Hermana. Sister. Tell me your name.

ESTRELLA

Estrella.

JUAN

Estrella? A star, a beautiful star, shining in the night sky.

DANTE

He has not noticed that the truck stopped.

JUAN

Shall I tell you our future? I can see that life in my mind.

I am working. With my hands. I am working hard. I can send money back and finally I will sleep, that sleep I have not had in a long time, the sleep that comes when a man knows his children are fed. That is what I see in my imagination.

ERNESTO

He does not know that the truck is turned off. The driver has left.

DANTE

They are alone in the desert.

JUAN

I will bring all my family North. We will start a new life, my children will be educated. They will be fed and we will be free.

ESTRELLA

Shh.

JUAN

What?

ESTRELLA

SHHH!

JUAN

How long have we been stopped? Do you think we made it? Oh god—I need water.

ESTRELLA

Callate!

Two men, Bob and Mike, appear. They are some kind of border guard—official police, or minute men, we don't know. They approach the box.

MIKE

Quiet.

BOB

I don't like this. The driver must have seen us coming.

MIKE

Calm down.

BOB

He could be hiding in the hills with a gun.

MIKE

Hopefully its just a driver and he ran.

BOB

There could be more of them. This could be a trap.

MIKE

Keep a lookout—I'm gonna look in this crate.

BOB

There's only two options: drugs or illegals.

Mike pops open crate. It's just JUAN. ESTRELLA is no longer there. JUAN falls out, disoriented.

JUAN

Auxilio, agua.

BOB

Down on the ground!

JUAN

No te entiendo. Tienes agua.

MIKE

Down on the ground. Down. Hands where we can see them.

BOB

How many were in the truck? Is the driver armed? Where is the driver?

JUAN

Degen ala muchacha.

MIKE

What muchacha? What girl?!

JUAN

Donde esta? No la lastimen.

BOB

Get back down! I'm warning you.

JUAN

Agua pro favor. *(He reaches for help. BOB pushes him down.)*

MIKE

Do as we say.

BOB

Who is the girl?

JUAN

No la lastimen pro favor. Es solo una muchacha.

MIKE

We don't know who you're talking about.

BOB

Tell us about the drivers, and the drugs. *(He begins to kick JUAN.)*

MIKE
Down on the ground.

BOB
Tell us.

MIKE, BOB, and JUAN freeze.

ESTRELLA begins to sing and rise.

VOICE
Estrella. Estrella del Norte.
For one hundred years people prayed to that
star following it north.
A different people in a different time.
And their prayers became a force.
Their songs rose up as an angel.

A powerful woman with a prayer on her lips
can make magic happen.

MARIA
May this flame join with the scars from our
struggle to make an angel to watch over my
husband. Like a star shining down and
bringing hope. Por favor. Por favor

The men move in regular speed. Loudness.

ERNESTO
Tell us about the driver and the drugs.

DANTE
Put your head down.

ERNESTO
Tell us about the drugs and the illegals.

DANTE
Put your head down.

ERNESTO
Tell us illegal.

DANTE
Down

Illegal. ERNESTO

Down DANTE

Illegal. ERNESTO

Illegal. DANTE

Illegal. ERNESTO

Illegal. ERNESTO/DANTE

Freeze. DANTE joins movement.

Illegal. Down. Illegal. Down. Illegal. ERNESTO

ERNESTO joins movement.

Agua, por favor. Auxilio. Auxilio. JUAN

JUAN joins the movement sequence from the beginning.

The following text is first spoken by MARIA. Then ESTRELLA joins her. Then only ESTRELLA speaks.

MARIA/ESTRELLA
As I look into the world I see beyond the scars, the scars hidden for far too long.
It is time to unveil the scars to the world.
Look at me! You, you, you and you
I have survived, I am the beacon of hope and now I will be the one to erase these scars
and heal these wounds
Do not be fooled by this fragile exterior
I am stronger than you know and I will be ready for you

(Estrella joins.) So pay mind and be very careful as I am now the hunter
Unlock your earthly fears and hand them to the heavens.
toss the thoughts of bondage into the atmosphere
I stand here, resolute *(Maria stops.)*
feel the rhythm of this heart
grab this new found freedom
and cleanse the soul
the shadow is left behind
self-worth is thy protector. Freedom is thy right.

Black out. The candle blows out. The COYOTE goes to sleep.

Bob? MIKE

Yeah. BOB

You ok? MIKE

Yeah. What the hell just happened? BOB

I think I passed out. MIKE

Where's the illegal? BOB

He must have run. MIKE

I see his tracks. Here! BOB

He won't get far. MIKE

BOB

Let's go after him.

MIKE

No. Forget it. What's the point?

BOB

You're right. He'll be dead by tomorrow evening.

MIKE

No one will see him. He will die alone.

BOB

It would take a miracle for him to survive.