



# Words in Transit: Stories of Immigrants

*Ilan Stavans*

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The Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts is home to immigrants and refugees from around the globe, and their presence revitalizes the region and redefines its culture. Their journeys have involved fear, uprootedness, and isolation as well as perseverance, creativity, and hope. *Words in Transit* collects the personal stories of nearly thirty people who have made this area their new home. These stories were recorded by New England Public Radio in collaboration with the Copeland Colloquium at Amherst College and produced by Tema Silk and Cathleen O'Keefe under the direction of John Voci.

Gathered together in a beautifully designed book that showcases Beth Reynolds's photographic portraits of each immigrant, these oral histories illuminate the many paths leading to the Pioneer Valley and demonstrate the shared experience among those seeking a new life in a foreign land. Storytellers include a massage therapist from Ireland, a Fulbright scholar from Palestine, a health educator from Taiwan, a literature professor from Spain, and a yoga teacher from Romania. Other participants hail from far-flung places including Haiti, Jamaica, El Salvador, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Bhutan, Laos, Syria, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Congo, Slovenia, Iraq, and Ukraine. Introduced by the renowned scholar of translation and global literature Ilan Stavans, these stories testify to the resilience, bravery, and hopefulness of western New England émigrés. Proceeds from this book go to scholarships for immigrants at Holyoke Community College.

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