The following journal questions for Sonia Nazario’s *Enrique’s Journey* are adapted from questions and discussion topics posted by Rebecca Campbell of Northern Arizona University.

1. How did Sonia Nazario write this book? Examine the author’s background. What about her background gives her empathy for her characters?
2. What trends in immigration did she show?
3. What is Enrique’s living situation before and after his mother leaves? How does he feel after his mother leaves? Does this compare to any emotions you have ever felt?
4. Why does Enrique decide to go to the North? What would you have done?
5. What negative habits does Enrique develop in his mother’s absence? How does this compare to negative habits that college students adapt when separated from their families?
6. What happens to Enrique on his journey?
7. What are the attitude of many Mexicans toward Enrique and other Central Americans immigrants? How does this compare to US attitudes?
8. What often is the attitude of the police with whom Enrique has encounters? Is this justified?
9. What is the primary mode of travel for immigrants passing through Mexico?
10. What dangers does Enrique face on his journey? How would you react?
11. What does Enrique do at the border?
12. How does Enrique cross the border?
13. How does Enrique find his mother? What events make this more difficult?
14. The author says that immigration is “a powerful stream, one that can only be addressed at its source.” What is the meaning of this statement?
15. Discuss Enrique’s relationship with his mother. How is that relationship different from the relationships each has with other people?
16. What does the author mean when she says that for these children, finding their mothers “becomes the quest for the Holy Grail”?
17. Contrast the images of the United States that Lourdes/Enrique see on television versus what each finds in the United States.
18. Contrast the descriptions of the first attack Enrique endures on his journey with the first kindnesses he is shown.
19. Discuss the attitudes toward immigrants and immigration Lourdes and Enrique encounter in Honduras, Mexico, and the United States. Do those attitudes differ even within different parts of each country?  
20. Summarize Enrique’s early attempts. Why does each fail?  
21. Trace the different names given to the train. What does each name reveal about the journey?  
22. The gangs aboard the trains are portrayed in both a positive and negative light. How?  
23. Contrast the sides of the Rio Grande. What is Enrique’s life like on his side of the river that in Mexico is called Rio Bravo?  
24. Describe Enrique’s final journey into the United States.  
25. What problems develop almost immediately when Enrique is reunited with his mother? Do these problems surprise you?  
26. What motivates Enrique to stay in the United States? What things make him wish to return to Honduras?  
27. What factors cause conflict between Enrique and Lourdes? How do they seek to overcome these factors?  
28. Contrast Enrique’s life in the United States with the life he left behind.  
29. How do you feel when Maria Isabel leaves Honduras?  

Briefly respond to the following quotations that affect you the most. Give reasons for your strong reaction:  

1. “In one neighborhood near where Enrique’s mother grew up, fifty-two children arrive at kindergarten each morning. Forty-four arrive barefoot. An aide reaches into a basket and places a pair of shoes into each one’s hands. At 4 P.M., before they leave, the children must return the shoes to the basket. If they take the shoes home, their mothers will sell them for food” (27).  
2. “On March 2, 2000, he goes to his grandmother Agueda’s house. He stands on the same porch that his mother disappeared from eleven years before. He hugs Maria Isabel and Aunt Rosa Amalia. Then he steps off” (44).  
3. “Looking at the small, soft-spoken boy lying on the bench, he reminds himself that a live migrant is better than a dead one. In eighteen months, Diaz has had to bury eight of them, nearly all mutilated by the trains. Already today, he has been told to expect the body of yet another, in his late thirties” (47).
4. “Their prize possessions are scraps of paper, wrapped in plastic, often tucked into a shoe. On the scraps are telephone numbers: their only way to contact their mothers. Some do not have even that” (50).

5. “He is among the 20 to 30 percent of those boarding the trains in Tapachula who are fifteen or under, by estimate of Grupo Beta, a government migrant rights group in Chiapas” (67).

6. “Enrique’s train runs only a few times a week, but it averages three derailments a month—seventeen accidents in a particularly bad month…” (71).

7. “Nearly one in six migrant girls detained by authorities in Texas says she has been sexually assaulted during her journey, according to a 1997 University of Houston study. Some girls journeying north cut off their hair, strap their breasts, and try to pass for boys. Others scrawl on their chests, TENGO SIDA. ‘I have AIDS’” (78).

8. “Riding trains through the state of Chiapas has taught him that any upraised hand might hurl a stone. But here in the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz, he discovers that people are friendly. They wave hello and shout to signal if hostile police are lying wait for them in an upcoming town” (103).

9. “The priest Salamón Lemus Lemus chuckles as he looks out on the grounds of the María Auxiliadora church. ‘They have taken over my church,” he says smiling. Hundreds of migrants mill around in the courtyard. They sleep in every nook and cranny of the church…”” (111).

10. “Reyes, who had walked two and a half hours to Nogales says she shouted at the mayor, “We are human. We should treat people in a humane way. It’s okay to send people back. But they shouldn’t shoot them, beat them this way” (119).

11. “The cargo is beginning to change. It is valuable and more easily damaged—Volkswagons, Fords, and Chryslers. Security guards check the freight cars, catch every rider they can, and hand them over to the authorities. More important, says Cuauhtemoc González Flores, an official of the Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana railroad, is the fact that if a migrant falls and is injured or killed, it costs $8 a minute to stop the train, often for hours until investigators arrive” (120).

12. “Only a bribe, Enrique knows, will keep him from being deported back to Central America…Some officers will let you go for 20 pesos. Others demand 50—or more—and then turn you over to la migra to be deported anyway. Now he prays the coins he has will be enough” (121).
13. “He relishes the camaraderie: how riders take care of one another, pass along what they know, divide what they have. Migrants will often designate one person to look out for trouble while the others rest. They give one another advice. In spots along the route where the train slows and migrants sprint from the shadows to board, reaching for the ladders, migrants riding atop the cars should quit if the train is going too fast” (123).

14. “El Mexicano is the longest tunnel. For eight minutes, the train vanishes inside. Black diesel smoke rises, hugging the tops of the cars. It burns the lungs and stings the eyes” (124).

15. “Live wires carry electricity above the trains for 143 miles north…the wires still carry 25,000 volts to prevent vandalism. Signs warn: DANGER—HIGH VOLTAGE. But many of the migrants cannot read. They do not even need to touch the lines to be killed” (129).

16. “Sometimes Enrique does not eat at all. He feels weak. Occasionally local fishermen give him a fish they have caught. Friends at the camp share their meals…One teaches him how to fish with a line coiled on a shampoo bottle…” (150).

17. “Enrique learns that El Tirindaro is part of a smuggling network. He has partners in three safe houses on the U.S. side of the river, people who will hide migrants if Border Patrol agents are in pursuit…The price is $1,200” (151).

18. “Though many mothers expect the separation to be short, typically they last six to eight years, says Analuisa Espinoza, a Los Angeles Unified School District social worker who specializes in immigrants. By then, they are strangers. Some mothers, picking up children from smugglers, hug the wrong ones. Enrique wonders: What does his mother look like now?” (156).

19. “Over time, though, they realize they are strangers. Neither knows the other’s likes or dislikes” (194).

20. “For most immigrants who come to the United States, the biggest downside is the toll parent-child separations exact on families” (244).