

1 NICK monologue // FRANK monologue

NICK. (*To audience.*) It was always hot in my grandparents' house. And I'm not talking "I should've worn short sleeves" hot. No, it was more like "it's August in Ethiopia" hot. Growing up, I remember sitting in their living room, sweating, and trying to figure out my relation to these people who not only didn't seem to share my same environmental needs, but who also had reached an age I could barely comprehend. But my grandparents firmly believed in the three "f's" of life: family, faith and food. So every Sunday for twenty-nine years, I bore the heat and religiously showed up for dinner. (*Lights up on the living room. Frank seated in his usual chair.*)

FRANK. (*To audience.*) The very day I turned fourteen, my father put me on a boat. In my pocket, he stuffed two hundred lira and the address of a cousin in a place called Hoboken, New Jersey. The only advice my father gave me — "*Tengo famiglia.*" If you just said that in English, it would be "I support a family." But in Italian, it means more, much more — "I am a man, I am doing well for my woman and my children, I have a reason for being alive."

FRANK. (*To audience.*) I arrived to learn my cousin had left Hoboken for a faraway land called Brooklyn. So for six weeks, I lived underneath a pier off the Hudson River — every minute of every day trying to figure out a way to earn enough money to get back home. (*Aida enters.*)