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Ms. Schechter  
Freshman Composition  
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Getting There is Half the Fun

My father sits on the stairs while leaning on his arms. He calmly retells his story, pausing occasionally to figure out how to say it in English. My father wears casual clothing with a bright blue vest. Every once in a while, his eyes dart to the TV. He makes hand gestures when trying to remember numbers.

I left Vietnam because the commie  
what was it   
communist they coming   
Me, 16 years old.   
I live with my brother.   
We left around 1990... 1990...   
Actually in June of 1970.   
I left on a boat,   
I paid with shi-lion.   
That was about 13 and a third ounces of gold.   
Money was worthless.   
Two shi-lion,   
Two tickets.   
The trip was...  
hope.   
Life in Vietnam was poor.

In Hong Kong,   
I could make more money   
Send it back.   
The boat was about ninetee...  
 Nineteen foot.  
 Nineteen foot.   
Feet.   
My boat had about 300 people.   
On the second day,  
 We ran out of water and food.   
The only thing we eat  
 Was a small cookie for each one.   
And luckiliz,   
it had heavy rain.   
The trip took six days.   
And we went to Hong Kong refugee camp.   
Because we can read and speak Cantonese,  
 Me and my brother are allow to work   
I was happy I could make little money   
And send it to my mom.   
It is not much ,  
But at least they did not have to suffer  
I hate that refugee camp   
Because it is overcrowded, hot, dirty and crime too.   
I was there for three years.

My uncle live in New York.   
He apply for us to come to America.   
I like to listen to American songs   
That is how I learn English.   
I speak perfect broken English   
I did many job   
One year later, I got my driver license,   
The first car I drove was a 14 foot truck...  
I became a delivery truck driver   
I was sacred but still have to drive it on road   
because I carry my family’s hope   
I have to apply my whole family   
Of seven to come to this country.   
I cannot be afraid.