The long dusty, desert road snaked on forever into the distance. Arnulfo gazed out the window of the prison bus and watched the red earth expand into the distance, meeting the blue sky and wispy white clouds on the horizon. He watched the sage brush, yucca, and other desert plants dot the land in intermittent patterns of beauty. He looked at the faces around the bus; most of them were dark like his. Some looked scared, some angry, some so confused and painful he couldn’t bare to look at them, and some were lost and distant like his, peering into the open. The bus moved on, passing through vast corn fields as far as the eye could see. Arnulfo thought about food, how the only reason he was there was because he was trying to feed himself and his family. The world had changed; the waves of oppression, dehumanization, and the raping of the land had made the Raramuri people (of the Copper Canyon) famished, broken and lost. But he could still run, he could always run. He hoped his people never stopped running.

Running saved him because for a moment, one pure blissful moment, he was free and alive. He had been running a pack full of marijuana across the US and Mexican border when he was caught. He had been bribed with money by the drug cartels to do it; he needed to feed his children with that money. He wondered what would happen to his children and wife now that he was going to jail. They probably didn’t even know. He could see them waiting. Waiting, waiting, waiting, forever. He looked out the window. He saw a herd of deer grazing in the desert valley. He watched them and thought of a time when his running wasn’t shameful, when he didn’t have to run away, when he didn’t have to run scared, when he didn’t have to run from the world. He gazed at the deer, deep into the deer… and his world changed.

The burring orb of life and heat was high in the pale blue sky when he started running. He had been following the herd for most of the morning and his focus was intense. When the vague trail came over slick rock or darted into the bramble he would have to open his ears, and bend his body feeling the motion of the deer, deducing where it had went.

The herd was just over a rise grazing in the sweltering heat when Arnulfo spotted them; he broke into stride, his powerful legs flowing over the earth like water, his dark hair and red shirt billowing in the wind. The herd surged forward in one synchronized movement. Arnulfo ran, singling out a big buck with a rack to slow him down. He ran just close enough to let it know it was being chase. A sense of serenity took hold of him and his focus locked in on the buck. The animal instinctively headed toward the shelter of the immense canyon walls, traversing the land with power and ease. The runner pushed in return, directing the deer toward the open and the heat. Hunter and hunted touched the existence of the vast canyon as they ran, adding another beat of life to eons past and eons to come. The world was open and expansive and he connected to it with each step softly thudding on the earth and the beat of his rhythmic swaying arms. His muscles were like dancers coiling and releasing sending pangs of joy reverberating through his body.

The deer and the man ran through the desert intensely aware of each other. The man watched the deer, feeling its every movement and watching for weakness, a change in pace, or direction, a burst of energy, or exhaustion. He extended his mind into the tendrils of his pray and listened. He listened to the fear, he listened to the fight, he listened to the strength, and he listened to the desire to live and the willingness to give. As he listened he grew more aware of its heart beat, more aware of its life, and he felt respect, admiration and gratitude. The deer tilted his ears back listening to the man. The crack of every twig, the thud of every step, and ran fast in fear and passion. As the deer listened he grew more aware of the man’s heart. He listened to its intention, to provide for his children, and felt the circle of life.

*“There, a steep incline and a thicket of bramble- shelter”* these were the deer’s thoughts as it vanished up a bank from Arnulfo. Arnulfo flew up the hill, his lungs burning his legs churning, and stopped abruptly at the top; the deer had vanished. The world was deathly quiet except for the sounds of cicadas in the bush. He slowly closed his eyes and deduced where the animal went. He found it standing in the shade of a bush panting, and with one final hurrah sent it running again.

Arnulfo’s sweat dripped from his brow watering the earth. Oh how grateful he was for his sweat. He felt the water from the hidden springs and the warm earth that gave root to the desert plants that fed his people. Then his soul was one with the deer. He shared its pain; the blood running through his body was the blood of the deer. The deer twisted, buckled, and fell. Arnulfo peered deep into the deer’s eyes and was with the deer’s soul, gratitude and sadness spilling from his heart as he carried and was carried into peace. Then he fell, tears pouring from his eyes splashing the deer’s body, rejoicing and grieving to create life and death on that day.

Arnulfo’s world shifted again and he was passing through the prison gates, with the dying hope of life on the wind.