

The Line

Bruce Springsteen

I got my discharge from Fort Irwin
took a place on the San Diego county line
felt funny bein' a civilian again
it'd been some time
my wife had died a year ago
I was still tryin' to find my way back whole
I went to work for the INS on the line
with the California Border Patrol

Bobby Ramirez was a ten year veteran
and we became friends
his family was from Guanajuato
so the job it was different for him
he said' "They risk death in the deserts and mountains"
pay all they got to the smugglers rings,
we send 'em home and they come right back again
Carl, hunger is a powerful thing."

Well I was good at doin' what I was told
kept my uniform pressed and clean
at night I chased their shadows
through the arroyos and ravines

Drug runners, farmers with their families,
young women with little children by their sides
come night we'd wait out in the canyons
and try to keep 'em from crossin' the line

Well the first time that I saw her
she was in the holdin' pen
Our eyes met and she looked away
then she looked back again
her hair was black as coal
her eyes reminded me of what I'd lost
she had a young child cryin' in her arms
and I asked, "Senora, is there anything I can do"

There's a bar in Tijuana
where me and Bobby drink alongside
the same people we'd sent back the day before
we met there she said her name was Louisa
she was from Sonora and had just come north
we danced and I held her in my arms
and I knew what I would do

She said she had some family in Madera county
if she, her child and her younger brother could just get through

At night they come across the levy
in the searchlights dusty glow
we'd rush 'em in our Broncos
and force 'em back down into the river below
she climbed into my truck
she leaned towards me and we kissed
as we drove her brothers shirt slipped open
and I saw the tape across his chest

We were just about on the highway
when Bobby's jeep come up in the dust on my right
I pulled over and let my engine run
and stepped out into his lights
I felt myself movin'
felt my gun restin' 'neath my hand
we stood there starin' at each other
as off through the arroyo she ran

Bobby Ramirez he never said nothin'
6 months later I left the line
I drifted to the central valley
and took what work I could find
at night I searched the local bars
and the migrant towns
Lookin' for my Louisa
with the black hair fallin' down