

These days it feels like all the progress minority groups have made over the decades is being threatened and instead of moving forward our society is in danger of regressing. "Vexing Gifts" is set on the border, where I grew up. It envisions a world in which our current President is able to take his "border wall vision," his nativism, racism and xenophobia to an extreme. It is not too hard to imagine the deportation of undocumented immigrants with criminal records quickly evolving into the deportation of innocent immigrants and even naturalized citizens who don't fit the mold of those in power. It's not hard to imagine because these things have already been taking place since I wrote the story. If we can't learn from past travesties – like the Japanese interment debacle and the Nazi genocide of Jewish people – brought about by the ugly and inhumane sentiments harbored and stoked by White nationalism, then what does the future hold for America? This is what Vexing Gifts explores through the lens of a Latino family trying to survive in the shadow of the looming border wall and all it represents.