Joseph Sorrentino began documenting the lives of farmworkers in western New York in 2002. The vast majority of farmworkers in this area—and in the US—are from Mexico and it’s generally agreed that well over half of them are here illegally. After seeing the difficult conditions under which they live and work here, he decided to travel to remote villages in southern Mexico in 2003 to see first-hand the conditions that were driving them to make the dangerous journey across the border.

His trip took him to the coffee-growing regions in the Sierra Juarez in Oaxaca and to Cuetzalan, Puebla where he found extreme poverty. In Aquí y Allá, he tries to show how Mexico’s agricultural policies and trade agreements with the US have increased poverty in rural Mexico, forcing people off their lands to search for work in the US. He also tries to show how necessary Mexican farmworkers are to the US.