

For release, July 2011

# Uncertain Journey

By James Rouman

Follow the perilous journey of an Albanian illegal immigrant.

- Meet Rouman's intriguing, realistic characters
- Rejep; a young Albanian man dreaming of a new life
- Eudoxia; a spirited Greek-American woman, who defies her traditional upbringing
- A strong friendship that slowly deepens into love
- Set in Greece and the USA, the novel alludes to the plight of illegal aliens wherever they might be
- Condominium community life and ownership are addressed

In his quest of a promising future, Rejep encounters unexpected problems after he flees his home in Albania. *Uncertain Journey* is the story of the challenges he faces as an illegal alien in places where he is unwanted. This fast-paced novel introduces the reader to a remarkable woman who helps him against the wishes of her Greek-American family—and to a host of memorable characters who live in the condominium where he works anonymously, until his world, once thought secure, begins to unravel.

## Praise for *Uncertain Journey* and James Rouman, author. . .

**Kirkus Reviews:** ★ Remarkable Merit; “An illegal immigrant struggles to find a home in America in this moving tale of loneliness and belonging.” Received on June 27, 2011.

“*Uncertain Journey* puts a face on illegal immigration ... It is a timely book as the nation struggles with a burgeoning population of illegal aliens.”

— Sandra Fromson, Ph.D., Sociologist, University of Connecticut

“In our society ... illegal immigration is discussed as if...it did not involve real people in real places doing real things...**the author makes room for the human element—making it something of a love story.**”

— Stephen Trzaskoma, Ph.D., Professor of Classics, University of New Hampshire

## About the Author

James Rouman was born and raised in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Following service in the navy during World War II, he graduated from Northwestern University Medical School and practiced at a major tertiary-care center in Connecticut. The author's first novel, *Underwater Dreams*, (Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2006) was warmly received. *Odyssey Magazine* said, “*an interesting addition to the literature of the Greek-American immigrant experience.*”

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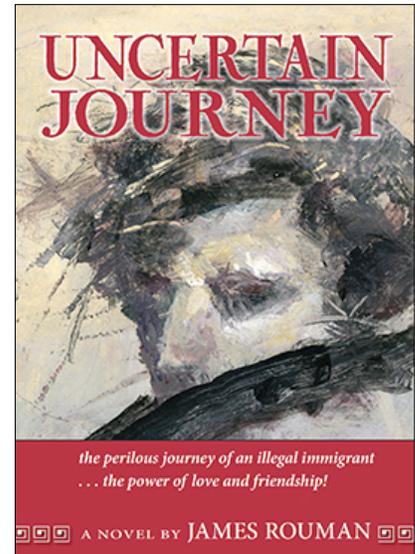
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## Kirkus' Review

Starred for *Remarkable Merit* - Received June 27, 2011

### **An illegal immigrant struggles to find a home in America in this moving tale of loneliness and belonging.**

Seeing no future for himself in communist Albania, 21-year-old Rejep Etaj crosses the border into Greece, a clannish place where he finds only one friend—Eudoxia Athanasiou, a young Greek-American expat who is herself something of a refugee from family expectations. Shipping out on a freighter, he follows her to her home in New England; she helps him settle, and an ambivalent romance struggles to grow in the face of her bigoted mother's disapproval and the precariousness of Rejep's status as an undocumented alien. Rouman provides a quietly realistic yet nerve-wracking take on the practicalities of an immigrant existence. Rejep's fate hangs on surmounting prosaic challenges such as getting past Eudoxia's answering machine when he washes up in New Hampshire and mastering the complexities of a janitorial job given to him by a Hungarian-immigrant building manager who admires Rejep's moxie and sees him as a readily exploitable worker. But the author also vividly illuminates his hero's conflicted soul. Rejep is proud of having a job, but the menial labor makes him feel like a caged animal; he relishes the exhilaration of leaving Albania for the wide world, but longs for the close-knit village life he left behind. Although he feels isolated, he is awash in a sea of immigrants who are trying to construct communities for themselves, which always entails the exclusion of others whom they see as different. The end of that process is the hermetic anomie of the well-off native-born Americans in the condominium where Rejep works, a place where people live cheek by jowl yet rarely venture into a neighbor's life. Writing with a limpid prose and a shrewd sympathy for his characters, Rouman finds universality in the travails of an iconic outsider.

**A subtle, absorbing portrait of the immigrant experience.**

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