

# **Mothers of the River**

Story of Moses // Unaccompanied Minor

## *Gospel of Justice*

*Series No. 1*

Written by

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Moses' Mother	Shared	Modern Mother
<i>She is on her knees as she is by the river Nile ready to put Moses in the basket as she sends him down the river.</i>		<i>She is standing next to her son at the bridge that her son is crossing as he leave her home.</i>
	My son, I love you.	
B'ni ani ohevet otkha.		
		Mi hijo, Te quiero.
	My Moses, I love you.	
Ohevet otkha.		
		Te quiero, te quiero, te quiero. <i>(pause)</i> Oh River!
<i>(yelling)</i> Oh, Cursed River! <i>(pause)</i> Oh God!		
		Why <b>my</b> son?
I wanted you.		
		My Moses?!
<i>(turns to God)</i> God, why did you give me a son? You knew I, an Israelite slave, could not keep a son. Why did you give him to me only to take him away?		
		<i>(yells at sky)</i> God why did you give me a son? You knew that these gangs would come and take him away from me. I have fought them off from my door for years, and I am too weary to do it again. Why did you give me a son you knew I could not keep? <i>(wailing)</i> I did everything right. I lit candles. I

		went to church. I prayed constantly with my rosary...
<i>(turns to baby)</i> I curse myself for bearing you in the hot sun. I ate all I could, but I knew it was never enough to sustain you.		
		<i>(turns to son)</i> Now I have to send you away—
	My son—	
Drifting down the Nile—		
		Crossing the Rio Chixoy. My baby. <i>(crying)</i> Know that this river is not your first. More shall come after it with waters more violent. Keep your eye out for the Grande, it will let you know you have arrived.
	<i>(turns to God in outburst)</i> God why?	
God why do you take him from me? Why did you give him to me, only to take him away now?		
	God how could you?	
Oh Sweet River. O, Dear God I scream in pain. I, with barely three months of nourishment, must now give the prize of my womb to these rapids, calmed only by the reeds. <i>(leans into baby, whispering)</i> From the warmth of my arms to the wake of these tall, thin splinters you shall fall. And I with every last gasp of breath within my breast cry forth for you: God bless.		

		God! <i>(turns to child)</i> Thirteen short years culminate into a painful goodbye. <i>(tired)</i> But your time of hiding is over now. My time of bargaining for your life is over. My home will be raided in searches for you. When I tell the gang recruiters you are gone, gone and I pray safe - don't worry about me, my boy. I can't hide you any longer, you are not safe here. Let God hide you under his wing elsewhere.
	<i>(In silence both mothers look to the sky)</i>	
	My boy!	
		Why was I cursed that you were born to me—
An Israelite slave bound in Egypt—		
		In the barrio of Guatemala. This filth and poverty. Why me and my family? Was it not enough that I was cursed with this life? Why, too, were you, my child, cursed?!
If I could have been born anywhere else. Maybe then I could keep you. I could hold you to my bosom and tell you everything is going to be okay. But I don't know it will be this time. Oh Moses I wish I could—		
	Keep you.	
		But I can't. There is nothing left for you here. There was never anything here for you. These slums that poisoned our lungs, the gangs that killed our family, the shack

		that can never be a home without you,
	Moses—	
		<i>(frenzied)</i> I love you! I love you! But, my son, you can have life! Go and find a new home. Go and start a new life. A better life. A life without me. A better life... without me.
If you had been blessed to have been born of an Egyptian artisan, or planner. Why were you not chosen for life? What cruelty is this death sentence from God? For me to lay you down, I must lack a heart of my own. What mother am I that I would leave my own son to die. I cannot bear to watch you die, my dear.		
		Why was I blessed with such a wonderful, young boy? Why would you have not been the pride of some other family. Of a loving home in California, in some suburb where the pains of these gangs and drugs would not reach you. Why were you not blessed with a mother who could care for you?
Or just a mother who could keep you?		
	Moses. <i>(pause)</i> I have to let you go.	
	<i>(The following should be read in quick succession.)</i>	
		But how?

What will become of him without me?		
		Will he have enough to eat?
Will the rapids throw him away, just as I am?		
		Will he find shelter at night?
	What will he be?	
Will he be found?		
	Will he be loved?	
		Will they take him in when he arrives?
	Will he die?	
Will someone else care for him?		
	Will he have faith?	
		<i>(slow and maternal, to son)</i> When you get to the border, remember to put on your nicer shirt. Wash your face before you leave the river. They like that. Tell them you're seeking asylum. I love you Moses, so much, that I am giving—
	You, my only son	
<i>(smiles sadly, to son)</i> Smile when you see the sun again. When a face, more loving than mine, uncovers you. Giggle the way you do. Let them know you are such a good son. Grasp their finger, and when you do, do not let go. Don't —		
	Let go	

		If there was a way I could pay the price—
The price of your life—		
		I would.
<i>(crying)</i> I am sorry, my son, that you were born to me. If I could be the one in the river I would be. If my death promised you life, I would drown myself in your beautiful name. But a life suppressed by the whip, controlled by the pharaoh, I have to—		
	Let go.	
		If I could take this journey for you, my son. If I could leave and wander the desert until the day I die I would for you. I would trade my life for yours. O, my Moses.
<i>(hopeless)</i> Oh River carry my son. I cannot hold him any longer. The Lord has abandoned my dear child. So dear River, carry my son, to a better place. Rock him to sleep before you thrash him about. Anything, as long as he may live. Oh River... Oh God...		
		<i>(despondent)</i> My son, sent off—
To the depths of this river—		
		To the expanse of this world—
So that you can have a better life—		
		Better than the one I could provide for you. <i>(pause)</i> Remember that. That this is for you.
Will you know that I love you?		

		How can I live knowing that my heart is gone?
	I'll never see you again.	
		You must forget me, mi hijo. You must forget this place and this life. I pray God will keep you, but I can't anymore.
For either of us to live, you must die. This life is dead to you. Go on, and the river will carry you to a new life.		
	A life without me.	
<i>(calm in the midst of despair)</i> God brought me here. This is where we, me and my Moses, were meant to part. But why must I decided between the river and the sword? These waters snaking into a void, a place I don't know. Oh River carry this cargo, this precious cargo, to his new home.		
		<i>(dejectedly)</i> I don't know if I can go on. You must. On to the life I have dreamed for you. But I, without you, am nothing. Without me you have the chance to live a life! But without you I am already dead.
	<i>(long pause)</i>	
	Goodbye.	
My beloved.		
		My angel.
This is not the life I wanted for you. This, abandoning you, is my		



ultimate sin. When we meet in heaven I hope you can forgive me.		
		<i>(passionately)</i> Stop wasting your time here, go! Forget this place, forget your family, forget me. Just go, run! Run!
		Mi hijo, Te quiero.
B'ni ani ohevet otkha.		
	My son, I love you.	