

And Now it is My Turn

By an anonymous writer from Central Islip High School

To be honest, I didn't think it would be so difficult to live without mom, but since mom travelled to the United States my brother's life and mine changed completely. My mom left us with our maternal grandmother, but, of course, when dad found out, he fought for our custody, which he won.

We go live with dad who mistreated us with blows so hard they left marks on our bodies. My brother and I go out each night to look at the stars with the hope that mom would come back, but days pass and our hopes diminished continually.

One November 22, dad took us to our maternal grandmother's house. On the way, he put roach killing poison on my head because I had lice. The poison caused such a strong reaction that I started to cry because of the pain in my head.

Everything begins with a four-year-old girl. A girl like any other, she lived with her dad, mom, and brother, whose two years older than her. Her name was [REDACTED]. For as long as I can remember, I only remember blows, mistreatment and abuse in my childhood; well, that is if you can call it a childhood.

What was I like? I remember I was always a happy girl with dreams. One of my dreams was to have a "perfect" family. Ha, ha, ha, but my family was the opposite.

It all started one day like any other, well, it was more one night: I see my dad come home drunk. When I saw him drunk I ran to hide because, well, I was scared, I don't deny it. Dad came home and started arguing with mom. My brother was sleeping, and I, I was just listening to the screams and the sound of each blow my dad landed on my mom. I cried and cried. I came out to see what was happening. I never thought I'd see what I saw: my dad hitting my mom without mercy, and seeing blood run down her face was very hard for me.

My mom decides to travel to the United States to no longer be a victim of my dad's blows.

And now it is my turn...

At the moment we reach the river, I'm watching a lot of people moving, waiting my turn to cross, and seeing 8-year-old children cross, my tears slowly roll down. My hands are freezing and my feet tired. I was very, very scared, and right there, was my baby. I felt a little kick that made me desperately cry; yes, it made me remember how many dangers I had encountered on

this long trip. It made me remember when I left my country, without a clue about what was going to happen. I remembered arriving in Guatemala with so much fear and feeling so tired, feeling pain in my womb; I'm six months pregnant, with so much fear of losing my son, for he was everything to me. How is it possible I decided to travel to this country to give him a better future and that on the way I might lose him? No, it wasn't fair.

All I had left was to trust, to trust only God. I suffered so much on that journey, I almost lost my son. Do you know what that means, to see blood come out of my body knowing I'm pregnant and that my journey was far from over?

I suffered cold and hunger for two days while I was on a trailer that was super cold. There were a lot of people and me. I was scared, crying, yes with hope, but that wasn't all, because later I fell asleep for a moment when all of a sudden the trailer braked and a woman and her baby fell on top of me. My mind only thought, *my son, my son*. At that moment, I lost consciousness. When I came to, I was completely dirty and wet, on the floor of a house; they come and give me a tea to calm my body's bleeding, to prevent me from losing my child.

I was panicked, terrified. I regretted leaving my country. Could it be I had made a bad decision and instead of looking for a better future for my baby I'd found his death? Could it be I did wrong?

But I was already there, in front of the river. There was no reason to feel scared, my baby had given me a little kick and that means he's fine. Why should I give up? I was so close to reaching my objective, I couldn't stay there. And there I was, in front of the biggest fear in my life, in front of a river, with no tears to shed, when they said to me, "It's your turn."

I don't know how to explain the fear I felt, for I thought, *I can't swim*. But God sent a good man who helped me to cross and I finally overcame that fear. And now, look at me here. My baby was born healthy, he's ten months old, he's beautiful, and I love him. He is my blessing because he's who gives me strength day to day. I am not a super mom, but day by day I get better and my love grows, and will continue to grow.