



Receive Our Memories: The Letters of Luz Moreno, 1950-1952

José Orozco

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Receive our Memories is a rare study of an epistolary relationship for individuals whose migration from Mexico has been looked at en masse, but not from such a personal and human angle. The heart of the book consists of eighty translated and edited versions of letters from Luz Moreno, a poor, uneducated Mexican sharecropper, to his daughter, a recent émigré to California, in the 1950s. These are contextualized and framed in light of immigration and labor history, the histories of Mexico and the United States in this period, and family history.

Although Moreno's letters include many of the affective concerns and quotidian subject matter that are the heart and soul of most immigrant correspondence, they also reveal his deep attachment to a wider world that he has never seen. They include extensive discussions on the political events of his day (the Cold War, the Korean War, the atomic bomb, the conflict between Truman and MacArthur), ruminations on culture and religion (the role of Catholicism in the modern world, the dangers of Protestantism to Mexican immigrants to the United States), and extensive deliberations on the philosophical questions that would naturally preoccupy the mind of an elderly and sick man: Is life worth living? What is death? Will I be rewarded or punished in death? What does it mean to live a moral life?

The thoughtfulness of Moreno's meditations and quantity of letters he penned, provide historians with the rare privilege of reading a part of the Mexican national narrative that, as Mexican author Elena Poniatowska notes, is usually "written daily, and daily erased."

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