



**El Rio**

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El rio es una diosa  
El rio es una palabra  
Una linea atravesando tierra  
Una cicatriz que se niega a sanar  
The river is not a wall but perhaps  
It is the moat of a castle that contains an empire of barbed wire  
The river is our mother  
Mother of mud and bone  
Breeder of coyotes and dead children  
Within her waters I am a stone  
Una piedra suave y deslizada que se hunde hasta el fondo  
Un fondo oscuro y lodoso  
Que existe entre países, entre suspiros y carcajadas  
I sink in the silt of failed crossings  
Where thousands of interrupted lives lay dormant  
So close to the other side  
We can hear the whisper of trucks on the big highway  
The thrum of traffic  
The crackle of power lines  
A symphony of hedge trimmers wailing mournfully  
Over the staccato clang of a dishwasher rinsing plates  
And all of this belonging to that world beyond the river  
With its evangelical religion and old world policias  
Descended from slave-catchers  
With broken glass in their eyes  
And “In God We Trust” stickers on the bumpers of their patrol cars  
Ni siquiera saben que somos hermanos de la misma familia inesperada  
Hijos del continente Americano  
And our home, all of it, is an orphanage for dreams who’ve lost their dreamers  
Watch them sink, obliterated by muddy water  
Engulfed in the rain-swollen sleep of our mother  
The river is a word  
El río es una palabra escrita en el viento  
Silent, formed with parched lips  
And dry throats

A penitent prayer—but to dream is no sin  
El río es una palabra sagrada  
A holy word that means *thirst* when there is only dust for us to drink