# Corn-Yellow Light

**from** ***Out of the Sierra: A Story of Rarámuri Resistance***

VICTORIA BLANCO

When Martina asked her daughter that evening how her first day went, Lupita shrugged and refused to say more. Martina glanced at Lupita as she chopped tomatoes and onions for a broth. Her eyes were puffy, and her face was stained with sweat and exhaust. She sat down on the floor and half-heartedly hugged Manolo, who wrapped his arms around her neck. Seeing Lupita so fatigued broke Martina's heart, though she recognized that every girl who went korimeando came home blinking back sleep, skirt hem tinged with exhaust—that was the sacrifice they made to have a little more money. It was her daughter's silence that worried her most. Ever since the day before, when she'd informed Lupita that she needed to start korimeando, the girl had acted as if Martina were a patrona, a woman who had hired her for labor. When Martina tried to show her affection, to let her know she still loved her, Lupita stiffened and averted her eyes. Even when Martina called her chickuli, little mouse, a nickname she had given her daughter back when they lived in the Sierra, Lupita remained emotionless. Martina wasn't sure if Lupita was upset about the way Martina had spoken to her, or about the korimeando itself. She suspected, correctly, that it was both. But she didn't want to address the subject

directly, fearing Lupita would tell her that she didn't want to go out on her own. She remembered the promise she and Luis made to each other: to never let their children become like the others, workers trapped in the forward motion of time, the pressure to earn enough always weighing on them. They would continue to live by korima, they vowed, and trust that Onorúame would provide for them. Yet Martina had subjected Lupita to korimeando, and that made her feel like she was no better than other Rarámuri women who no longer lived by korima.

Martina remembered the way the Sierra had turned brittle and stopped feeding the Rarámuris. If the land was in pain, no one could eat. She had learned these past ten weeks that just like the land, mothers can be depleted. She still wasn't sure why Onorúame let the Rarámuri suffer, but even amid her guilt for having sent Lupita out to korimear, she also felt relief that the burden to earn money was no longer only hers.

Lupita would become accustomed, Martina told herself, especially once she realized that she was eating better. She might not understand now that korimeando on her own helped bring enough food to her family and lighten the physical and mental burden on Martina, but eventually she would. Her anger would soften. She just needed time.

Over the next two weeks, Martina and Lupita continued with their new pattern: Martina left the house at midday to korimear, and Lupita went to the KFC on her own after school. Lupita had softened toward her mother, hugging her back when they met at the end of the day to cook dinner. She still refused to speak about her days korimeando, though, and Martina, not wanting to further damage their relationship, didn't press her. Lupita wanted to put her mother's command behind her and settle into her new routine. Talking about her experiences would only remind her of that terrible first day. She had gradually become more accustomed to the unpredictabilities of korimeando, and she tried not to become overly excited when the mestizos gave her coins, or too disappointed when they gave her nothing at all. Though she still came home exhausted, she feared the mestizos a little less now that she realized that they either gave her some spare change or, most often, ignored her. She intended to continue to post herself at the KFC, where she felt protected. If a mestizo harassed her or tried to pull her into a car, she could scream, and the workers inside would hear her. She figured that someone would help. One day, she thought, she might feel ready to venture into the intersections as Camila and Violeta did, and perhaps collect more coins that way, but she wasn't there yet.

Lupita's korimeando did give the family more money, but only about thirty pesos each day. It was enough for Lupita to buy a bag of beans and a few vegetables. Martina used what she collected to buy a second bag of beans, eggs, and a packet of tortillas. It was enough food to get the family through two days, especially during the week, when Jaime and Lupita ate lunch at school. Still, the amount they would end up with each day was unpredictable, and one or two days a week, Lupita came home with only two Cup Noodles, and Martina with a bag of beans. On those days, Martina didn't eat, even when Lupita insisted; Martina wanted the food to be enough for dinner and breakfast for the children, at least.

As Luis's absence stretched on, Martina thought about him and the others and wondered what could have detained them for so many weeks. But almost immediately, worries about having enough food, paying for utilities, Jaime's drug use, Lupita's safety, and caring for a four-year-old pushed thoughts of Luis out of her mind. *He will come back when the work is done, just as he always does,* Martina reassured herself, then moved on to the moment's most pressing concern.

The only times when Martina usually had a full meal were on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, when she helped cook the children's lunch in the communal kitchen, a single white room with barred windows beside the school, at the back of the asentamiento. On one side of the kitchen, there were two worktables on which the women spread flour and rolled sticky balls of dough into tortillas. A pot of pinto beans boiled on the industrial stove, and in the frying pans white rice simmered in chicken broth. The communal kitchen, where TV news stations sometimes came to film segments about government aid for the Rarámuris, had newer appliances and furniture, a sink, four wooden picnic tables for the schoolchildren, and white tiled floors. The kitchen, chapel, and school were the only buildings in El Oasis with tile, perhaps because the state government had decided that families should be responsible for improvements to their own homes. At the start of each week, government workers arrived with sacks of beans, rice, and white flour, and cans of tomatoes and chicken flavoring. The state government required Rarámuri women to cook the midday meal for the school, and they did so on a rotating basis. After serving the children, the women were welcome to eat as well.

The kitchen was usually a place where the women talked, laughed, discussed the dresses they planned to make, and asked after each other's children. It was a testament to the stress the men's absence was causing them, then, when the mood in the kitchen grew incrementally tense that fall. It wasn't just the wives and

children of the men who counted on their wages to eat; it was also their mothers, sisters, aunts, and cousins. By mid-October, staving off hunger had become the main focus for the dozens of families affected by the absences. Sometimes a woman wondered aloud why the job was taking so long, but her question was usually met with a clipped response about mestizos who extended their projects without any consideration for the families the Rarámuri men left behind. By then, the men had been gone for twelve weeks.

The slightest misstep or provocation could cause the women to argue and cry. Once, Sylvia chastised a younger mother named Natalia for tasking her seven-year-old daughter with taking care of her five-year-old brother, who had been born with brain damage. *The girl deserves a childhood,* she had told an angry Natalia. Factions began to form as other women voiced their opinions, and the community kitchen was filled with animated voices until a teacher came in and told them to quiet down because they were disturbing the lessons.

Martina tried to keep to herself. On days when she worked in the kitchen, she ate a plate of food once the children had filed back to their classrooms and she had finished sweeping crumbs from the picnic tables. But on days when she had to skip meals, she was dizzy by early afternoon. Her headaches became severe enough that she had to lie down at home in the middle of the day. Her wondering about where Luis was turned to impatience and resentment. Why had he and the others put so much strain on the women? They knew how their families counted on them to survive, and yet they remained away, even as the sun's harsh glow faded to a corn yellow.

Sometimes a fissure would open in the forward motion of time, letting in small waves of relief. For the Rarámuri women of El Oasis, it was storytelling while sewing that most often created these fissures. Perhaps the communal kitchen saw tensions rise between the women because the government required them to be there preparing meals. Government mandates were too big an imposition to bear that fall, as the women vacillated between worrying about the men and gathering enough coins to feed themselves and their children. The sewing circles, though, were on their own terms, and they became restorative.

In the light of the harvest sun, the women spent entire afternoons weaving their needles through reams of fabric, stitching paths and mountains onto floral skirts. That month, Martina skipped korimeando about once a week to work on a dress with bright orange lilies against an indigo background. She had chosen the fabric, the cheapest kind at Telas Parisina, one of the chain fabric stores

where Rarámuri women shopped, during a time when she didn't yet know how many extra hours she would have to spend korimeando. The fabric was lighter than Martina would have liked—she preferred cotton with more weight, which couldn't be easily lifted by the wind—but the pattern had been too beautiful to pass up, so she had bought it with the intention of completing it in time to wear for the harvest season.

With such a great need for coins, the women could have sacrificed sewing in order to spend more time korimeando. The morning hours, when the children were in school, saw plenty of traffic in the main intersections and were an opportunity for women to gather coins. Martina sometimes went out after she sent the children to school, returned for them once school let out, then went out again. But as the weeks passed that fall, Martina and other Rarámuri women stopped going korimeando in the mornings and instead worked on dresses. They often sewed in silence, letting the hours unfurl into long mornings and, sometimes, afternoons. Martina didn't plan which days she would dedicate to sewing. She didn't always calculate how much money she would lose by staying home. Instead, she simply picked up her scrap bag, a Soriana shopping bag, and either sat on her front stoop, with Eugenia and María José joining her on theirs, or found a sunny spot in the clearing before the chapel. Stretching the fabric across her lap, Martina's fingers worked the needle to make it move like a snake through grass. Under and out, over and over, the needle guided brightly colored thread around the dress, stitching a sliver of blue fabric into the path she and her family had followed out of the Sierra.

Sewing their stories onto dresses was an act of resistance against cultural death. The Rarámuri women couldn't stave off hunger completely, nor could they will the men to return home. When they felt they might not be able to go on korimeando for much longer—when they were tempted to stay home, lie down on their mattresses, leave their children to fend for themselves—they remembered their people existed outside the suffering of linear time. Now, stitching paths and mountains onto their dresses, the Rarámuri women resisted falling victim to the pressures of capitalist society and instead became the makers of their own stories. They reminded themselves that even if the worst happened—even if they couldn't continue collecting coins to provide for their families—the Rarámuri story would continue. It would continue far beyond their individual lives. That month, dressmaking had become as urgent as korimeando, because it sustained their story at a time when they couldn't anticipate a return to greater stability.

On the days that Martina couldn't bear to go korimeando, she saved food for her children, ignored her own hunger, and sewed and sewed and sewed.

One morning in mid-October, as she sifted through uncooked pinto beans looking for pebbles, Martina began to ruminate again on Luis's absence. Luis had been gone for thirteen weeks by then, seven weeks longer than he had for any of his previous work trips. Each time she wondered why he was taking so long, she remembered what others had said: that most likely, the timeline for the project had been extended. Perhaps because she was alone at home, feeling for the rough edges of rocks among the smooth beans, a task she could do without fully paying attention, and perhaps because Manolo was napping instead of gliding Hot Wheels cars across the floor, Martina found herself growing concerned for Luis. Then, in a rare moment of mental quiet, she again told herself that bad news would have reached her through the network of Rarámuri men who traveled back and forth between the city, the ranches in the desert, and the Sierra. Rarámuri men in one of the other asentamientos would likely have learned of any tragedy, she thought, and they would have made sure word reached her.

Martina had already turned her attention to the afternoon of korimeando ahead of her when someone rapped on her metal door. She got up to open it and found María José on the other side, holding a bowl of roasted corn. Martina let her in, thanking her sister for the korima. María José earned a steady income cleaning a mestiza's house, and while she struggled without Eduardo's contributions, she generally had enough food for her own family. María José would have liked to give Martina more food, but she sensed that her sister didn't want her to know how much she struggled, likely because she wanted to be seen as capable of caring for herself and her children. María José also knew how badly her sister wanted to be a culture bearer in the community. She put pressure on herself to remain strong, sometimes to the point that she forgot that she, too, could be a recipient of korima. Martina wanted to help others, but she didn't want to be helped. María José kept as close an eye on Martina as she could, bringing meals over as discreetly as possible when she sensed that Martina was struggling more than usual.

That day, María José's gift of corn was a pretext for sharing some important news. She wasn't sure how Martina would take it; she had been shocked herself when she heard the plans. Martina could be emotional in her reactions, especially when she was confronted with hard choices. To avoid feeling her distress more keenly, she often delayed looking at her options in a clearheaded way and postponed making a difficult choice about what to do. Sometimes it was a matter

of making the least harmful choice—a lesson María José had long ago accepted, but that her sister was resisting to learn. Martina didn't want to let time become her antagonist by submitting to the pressures of deadlines. She was willing to delay making hard choices, even when the least-bad choice would improve her life significantly. To Martina, the trade-off between giving up circular time for a few material improvements wasn't usually worth it. Martina's decision to keep Lupita from korimeando for so long was a good example, María José thought. Her frustrations with Martina were already crowding her head as she prepared to deliver her news. If only Martina could give in a little to the mestizos' way of doing things, she would save herself the agony of indecisiveness.

*Lucero wants to go to the police to report that the men haven't returned,* she said. *She wants the police to search for them in the Sierra.*

Martina stopped sifting beans. The police—the same police who charged Luis a quota of his earnings each payday for simply walking home from the bus stop? The same police who bribed girls for sexual favors in exchange for a few pesos?

Martina hadn't thought much about what to do if Luis's absence continued to stretch on. It seemed to her that the only choice they had was to keep korimeando and wait for the men's return. The thought of sending the police to the Sierra to search for them seemed absurd, given the way they treated Rarámuri men. Why would they help the community now simply because Lucero asked them to? Martina told all of this to María José. Her sister listened patiently, not at all surprised by her opposition.

Then it struck Martina that the men weren't supposed to be in the Sierra at all. The morning Don Cruz had pulled up to the entrance of El Oasis, he had said he wanted to hire eleven men to build a cattle fence around his ranch in the desert. *Why the Sierra?* she asked.

*That's where they take men to plant bad crops,* answered María José, referring to marijuana and poppies. She let this bit of news sink in, watching as Martina came to the realization she herself had come to only an hour before, when Lucero had shared her plan.

*Lucero thinks that's what Don Cruz really wanted them for,* María José said. *They've been gone for too long. She doesn't think he'll release them until the drugs are harvested and there's no risk of the federal army finding and burning the fields.*

On the nightly news, Martina often heard reports of the federal army targeting drug fields in the Sierra, under the direction of President Calderón. Once they found the drug fields, the federal troops set fire to the drug crops,

burning tens of thousands of dollars' worth of crops. It was common for cartel groups to defend their drug crops by opening gunfire on the federal army. Though the reports focused on the deaths of troops and cartel members, Martina knew that Rarámuri people were likely hiding in the forests nearby, afraid of getting caught in the cross fire. She also assumed, correctly, that the cartels were continuing to enslave Rarámuri men. She hadn't worried about this happening to Luis, since his jobs had only ever taken him to the ranches in the desert. She understood that working in the Sierra put the men's lives in far greater danger.

She was filled with fear for Luis and anger with herself, just as María José had worried she would be. It now seemed that she had been reckless in spending weeks pushing Luis's safety to the back of her mind. Why hadn't someone—why hadn't she—considered this possibility sooner? Don Cruz could be depriving the men of food and water, or it could be that they were caught in a cross fire between Don Cruz's men and the federal army. Perhaps the men were starving as they worked, or perhaps they were shot dead by cartel members or the federal army.

*We should search for them ourselves,* Martina said, her tone urgent. María José gave her sister a skeptical look.

*Where would we begin?* María José asked.

*We would spread out across the Sierra. We know the paths and the hiding places better than the police.*

Martina had a point, María José thought: the Rarámuri people knew the Sierra better than anyone else. For once, she let her sister's emotions override her own process of careful calculation.

*Lucero wants us all in front of the chapel when the sun is going down, so we can talk,* María José said. *Tell them what you're telling me, Martina.*

Lucero stood near the chapel as the sun bathed the asentamiento in warm afternoon light. It was the same harvest light that shone in the Sierra, a light that conjured handwoven baskets filled with corn, squash, and beans. It was the light of plenty, the light of security.

Word about Lucero's plan and the meeting had quickly spread throughout the community as María José and others went door to door to inform other families. Reactions were mixed, and community members had already begun to argue among themselves. Leaving behind their washing and cooking, about fifty people, most of them women, formed a circle in the clearing in front of the chapel. The circle, a symbol of consensus and korima, was the only formation in

which Rarámuris conducted important meetings. Though the state government had tried to instill the practice of voting in the community—it was faster—the Rarámuri continued to prioritize unanimity. Cooperation was a way to keep community members engaged and close-knit. Voting, which relied on a majority win, left some in the position of having lost.

Lucero wore a yellow frock with three rows of white mountains on the skirt, an elaborate design that signaled to the community she was taking her role as interim siríame seriously. When she spoke, her voice was clear and steady.

*Many of us have husbands, brothers, uncles, and friends among the group that left in the summer. No one has heard from them since then, and they've been gone for much longer than they said they would. I think it's time we go to the police. I don't know if the men are in the desert or the Sierra; I only know they've been gone too long, and the police need to help us find them,* she said.

She stepped back to take her place in the circle, a signal that she was done speaking and that someone else should now come forward to express her views.

There were several seconds of silence as the community allowed her words to fill the space.

*It's the harvest season,* said María José, who didn't want to counter Lucero directly. *Another rancher may have hired them to pick apples.*

All afternoon, María José had wavered. Martina's suggestion had initially moved her, but throughout the afternoon, she had talked with others and found their opinions more measured. She had concluded that even if the men were being detained to harvest drug crops, the community shouldn't worry too much, since it was likely the men would be returned. María José thought she understood how mestizos' minds worked: they measured how much money and time people could earn them and based every decision on those calculations. By that logic, it didn't make sense to her that Don Cruz would kill the men; he needed them to finish whatever labor he'd hired them for. She reminded the group that the men were often kept on to start new projects.

*But not for this long,* Lucero immediately responded. It was the first moment a hint of fear had entered the conversation. During community meetings, everyone allowed a few seconds of silence between voices, as a sign of respect for the wisdom of each individual. It wasn't that they couldn't express their emotions during the meetings; rather, each attendee tried to remember that their individual concerns were less important than the well-being of the community. It was crucial that no one person take up more space than any other during a meeting. That's why hearing

Lucero's quick reply, with its defensive undertone, felt almost like slicing a finger while chopping vegetables. Martina cringed internally. She had arrived resolved to speak, but only once others had received a chance to express themselves.

Eugenia allowed nearly a full minute to pass before she spoke. She said she thought the men had been gone for too long and that the community should search themselves, since they would put more effort in than the police. She delivered her words calmly, and the balance of the meeting felt restored. Silence.

A middle-aged man named José Luis spoke next. He also often took construction jobs. There was no reason for the police to harm the men, he said, to counter Eugenia's argument. He believed they would be best equipped to find the men and bring them home safely, since they had recently had some success in curtailing drug trafficking in the state.

Perhaps because of the pressure to make a decision, even if it was the wrong one, Martina grew hot with panic. In the hours leading up to the meeting, she had been filled with remorse. She recognized her inaction in the face of the men's disappearance as the same stubborn response she had shown in the Sierra years before, when she refused to leave despite Luis's attempts to convince her of imminent dangers. Only her uncle's death had revealed to Martina the risks her attitude posed. If she had waited much longer, Manolo may not have survived the winter. Now, as they deliberated, the men's lives could very well be in danger. She didn't want to make the same mistake this time.

*We should find them ourselves,* Martina declared, surprising even herself as she heard her voice sound through the circle. *If the police find them, there will be a shoot-out. Rarámuris die when mestizos take out their guns, no matter which side they're on,* she said. She tried to keep her voice steady, though the words felt as if they were coming from someone else.

Martina's willingness to state outright the threat of violence against the men spurred a discussion that lasted well over two hours. As the afternoon dimmed, the streetlights cast a fluorescent glow over the circle and the white chapel. Though half the group agreed with Martina, few were willing to go to the Sierra themselves, the logistics of the trip being too complicated to orchestrate with limited money and urgent daily responsibilities at home. Most of the mothers couldn't leave behind children who were struggling with paint-thinner addiction. The men who remained were needed to bring in income so families, and often neighbors, could eat. And then there were the challenges of the search itself. How would the women get to the Sierra? What would they eat on their journey?

What would they tell people who asked why they had returned? And what would they do if they actually found the men? The community reviewed their options again and again, each time arriving at the same conclusion: trusting the police would be dangerous, yet leaving El Oasis themselves might not yield results and would endanger the children left behind.

Lucero stayed mostly quiet during those two hours, not wanting to repeat her earlier mistake. She had learned from her brother that a strong siríame needed to preserve the process of reaching consensus. Sometimes that meant stepping back and letting the community carry on with discussion for as long as was necessary: the wisdom of the community was greater even than the siríame's. The role required humility and respect for their culture, which is why many people had proposed José take it on. Lucero had imagined herself taking her brother's place one day, and she saw this community meeting as crucial not only for making a decision about the men, but also for her to show that she, too, could guide her community with grace and wisdom.

Yet as she listened to community members going back and forth, Lucero couldn't help but feel that the men and their families would never have been in this situation had the community lived by korima. If only they had focused more on sharing what they had, dancing yumari, and being considerate toward one another, they wouldn't be in the position of having to ask the mestizo police for help. Lucero felt Onorúame wasn't protecting the missing men because the community had grown too distant from korima.

Her peoples' origin story had taught Lucero that balances existed for a reason. If a Rarámuri person died, it was believed that Onorúame carried them to the next world, where they continued living. Death of the body was never a finality; it was a return to equilibrium. Perhaps Onorúame was trying to restore some sort of balance by keeping the Rarámuri men away. Perhaps he wanted the Rarámuris of El Oasis to use this hardship to come together in prayer. As she followed this line of thought, Lucero realized that involving the mestizo police wouldn't restore balance but only further disrupt their community. Yet going to the Sierra to look for the men on their own was risky for all the reasons that had emerged in the last two hours. Lucero became more and more convinced that there was a solution Onorúame wanted them to find.

The taut desert air relaxed into a cool breeze. The colder months were coming, Lucero thought absentmindedly. Soon it would be time to prepare for the feast day of the Virgen de Guadalupe, December 12. The moment she remembered

the Virgen de Guadalupe, the mother of Onorúame, Lucero realized what the community needed to do.

*In five weeks is the feast day of the Virgen de Guadalupe,* she began. *If we wait until then, we can ask the Virgen to bring the men back, and she will,* Lucero said. *We only need to dance for her and work together to buy her a cow, and she'll help us.*

Rarámuris and mestizos alike believed the Virgen was more generous on her feast day, because she was pleased with the food and dances made in her honor. The Rarámuris would ask the Virgen to provide for them, sacrifice a cow, and dance matachines for her. Like the land, she was a mother who wanted to be close to the Rarámuris, and who was willing to perform miracles for them as long as she felt loved. As Lucero spoke of the Virgen's feast day, the other community members realized that it was coming just when they needed it most.

When quiet rain showers came to the desert, the kind that filled the city with the scent of freshly turned soil, Martina thought the Virgen must have made Onorúame happy. She was his mother, after all, and mothers knew how to get their children to smile. If Onorúame withheld rain, or allowed hunger and abuse by mestizos of the Rarámuris, the Virgen could fix it by talking with her son, perhaps on a stroll through the quiet woods. She could convince him of anything with her motherly instinct, coaxing him into doing right.

Since deciding to send Lupita out to korimear—the first major decision she had made on her own, and a break from consensus-based decision-making—Martina had found a certain feeling of relief in knowing that she could at least attempt to fix her problems directly. Relief was a feeling that Martina hadn't known before leaving the Sierra. To live by her origin story had always brought her a sense of fulfillment, and of closeness to her community, to the land, and to Onorúame. But living strictly by korima, whether in the Sierra or the city, didn't make life easier, not in the short term, at least. The sense of relief she felt now that Lupita was sharing in the burden of collecting coins was a revelation to Martina. She didn't have to do as korima required; she could make adjustments based on her individual needs. The individualistic nature of this thought process was uncomfortable; Martina felt that she was acting selfishly. But the sense of relief was stronger; it was like water washing over her on a hot day.

She had always believed that the origin story told her to fulfill her duty to korima, and Onorúame would provide the rest. But now, as she stitched paths out of the Sierra onto her dresses, Martina was coming to suspect that Onorúame wanted the Rarámuris to be the makers of their own stories, the solvers of their

own problems. This belief was similar to Lucero's, only Martina saw it leading in a different direction. To her, going to the Sierra to search for the men remained the best solution. The thought of Luis suffering during the next five weeks pained her. There was no telling whether the Virgen would succeed in convincing Onorúame to help. So far, she hadn't convinced him to bring the rain clouds to the Sierra.

Martina remained silent as others in the community began to voice their approval of Lucero's plan. Despite her fear and her reluctance to agree, Martina marveled at the way the circle had allowed them to converse and arrive at what was clearly becoming the consensus. There was an inevitability in the act of closing a loop that had always brought peace to Martina. When she sat in the sewing circle, completing a dress, she felt that even the small mistakes—imperfect stitches, uneven triangles—were beautiful, because they had led her around the entire skirt. The decisions they arrived at during community meetings felt the same way. She had always wanted to restore imbalances, to take the cooperative path. It was harder now, though, because she knew too well the dangers of linear time, how the passing of just a few hours could mean the difference between life and death. To the Rarámuri people, death was not something to be feared, since the border between life and death was not rigid. Death was simply a passage into life in the sky with Onorúame. The souls of the dead could return to visit with their living relatives and friends once a year, when they were called to the altar built for them by their loved ones. Death came at the right time, usually when a person had reached an elderly age. The possibility of violent death was one of the main reasons Rarámuri people avoided contact with mestizos in the Sierra. Mestizos killed when they felt their ambitions to get rich were threatened. The Rarámuris recognized that they were at odds with their capitalist time, always in a race to get rich before they died. Since coming to the city, the pressures of linear time made Martina feel that death could arrive through violence. She didn't want Luis and the other Rarámuri men to die at the hands of mestizos. She wanted them to experience death as Rarámuri people were meant to experience it: as a passage into a more peaceful existence.

Even though Martina still felt hesitant, even though she herself would have chosen a different path, she decided to place her trust in the community's wisdom.

*Let's ask for the Virgen's help,* said Martina. Lucero, pleased, smiled at her, and Martina smiled back.