

Reading Material

A Letter to God by G.L Fuentes

The story, "A Letter to God" by G.L. Fuentes depicts unwavering faith of a farmer in God. It begins with a farmer, named Lencho expecting for a rain shower to nourish his field of corn. He is confident that his harvest is going to yield him huge profits just like it does every year. To his utmost excitement, rainfall did happen but sooner, it turned into a hailstorm destroying his entire crop field. The damage posed a threat to the family's survival as their entire livelihood was dependent on the year's produce. Although disheartened, the family had robust belief in the almighty.

Lencho, despite having worked day and night at the field, knew how to write and thus, decided to write a letter to God explaining his situation and asking for help. He went to town to post his letter addressed "To God". The letter on being noticed by the postmaster, at first amused him, but then motivated him want to do something for the farmer so as to keep his immense belief intact. He contributes from his salary and collects money from his colleagues and friends who willingly contributed for an act of charity. To his dismay, he could only collect 70 pesos which he wrapped in an envelope to make it seem like a reply from the deity

On having found the letter, the writer (Lencho) is not at all shocked, but instead, he gets angry on finding that the amount is less than what he

had expected. He again writes a letter to God conveying his disappointment and distrust in the employees of the post office who he thought had stolen the remaining amount. Although, his wishes get fulfilled partially, if not completely, he is ungrateful in the end and questions the honesty and modesty of the post-masters who actually helped him with money (anonymously) in the name of god.

Lesson & Explanation

THE house - the only one in the entire valley - sat on the crest of a low hill. From this height one could see the river and the field of ripe corn dotted with the flowers that always promised a good harvest. The only thing the earth needed was a downpour or at least a shower.

Throughout the morning Lencho - who knew his fields intimately - had done nothing else but see the sky towards the north-east.

Lencho, the farmer, lived on the only house that was there on the top of a hill. The hill was low-heighted. From there, a river and a ready-to-harvest corn field were visible. The field belonged to Lencho and he had the utmost confidence that the harvest would reap great profits. The only thing that he awaited was rainfall. In this hope, he spent an entire morning gazing at the sky in the north-east direction from where a drizzle was expected to shower on his field.

"Now we're really going to get some water, woman. The woman who was preparing supper, replied, "Yes, God willing". The older boys were working in the field, while the smaller ones were playing near the house until the woman called to them all, "Come for dinner. It was during the meal that, just as Lencho had predicted, big drops of rain began to fall. In the north-east huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching. The air was fresh and sweet. The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body, and when he returned

he exclaimed, "These aren't raindrops falling from the sky, they are new coins. The big drops are ten cent pieces and the little ones are fives."

The man, while looking at the sky, confidently tells his wife that they are going to have a rain-shower to which the lady replies by saying, only if everything happens as they hope and expect. Their elder children were working at the field and the younger ones were playing near the house when Lencho's wife calls everyone for dinner. It is during that time, drops of rain begin to fall, hereby proving the farmer's prediction to be true. The wind was pleasant and clouds could be seen approaching from the north-east sky. Lencho goes out of the house to take pleasure in feeling the droplets on his body. He refers to the drizzle as coins, large droplets being equivalent to ten cents and the smaller ones, five cents. He says so because these raindrops would ensure a good crop which would eventually get them a lot of money.

With a satisfied expression he regarded the field of ripe corn with its flowers, draped in a curtain of rain. But suddenly a strong wind began to blow and along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall. These truly did resemble new silver coins. The boys, exposing themselves to the rain, ran out to collect the frozen pearls.

On seeing everything go as expected, Lencho reflected upon the field and the flowers covered with droplets which seemed as if they were wrapped in a curtain. Unexpectedly, strong wind started blowing, leading to a hailstorm. Satirically, the writer refers to these pellets of frozen rain as "new silver coins. The innocent boys became playful and went out in the rain to play and collect these hailstones which looked like "frozen pearls".

"It's really getting bad now," exclaimed the man. "I hope it passes quickly. It did not pass quickly. For an hour the hail rained on the house, the garden, the hillside, the cornfield, on the whole valley. The field was white, as if covered with salt. The farmer now starts worrying and hopes that the storm gets over quickly, which, to his utmost disappointment, didn't. The hailstones covered the entire valley including the house, garden, hillside, and the cornfield. It made everything look so white that it seemed as if it was covered in salt.

Not a leaf remained on the trees. The corn was totally destroyed. The flowers were gone from the plants. Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. When the storm had passed, he stood in the middle of the field and said to his sons, "A plague of locusts would have left more than this. The hail has left nothing. This year we will have no corn." That night was a sorrowful one. "All our work, for nothing. There's no one who can help us"."We'll all go hungry this year."

Lencho became stressed and disappointed as everything went against the plan. The trees had shed their leaves, corns were smashed and the flowers had also fallen from their plants. While standing in the withered fields, he conveyed his dismay and sorrow to his sons by commenting that the effect of the storm proved to be worse than that of crop-destroying insects. All their hard work had gone in vain. He felt helpless as no corn had been left and feared, that they might have to starve this time.

But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God. "Don't be so upset, even though this seems like a total loss. Remember, no one dies of

hunger." "That's what they say: no one dies of hunger. Even after everything had gone southwards (gone wrong), the family still had hope in their hearts of hearts. They had faith in the almighty even after nothing was left. They gave each other support and recalled a saying which assures that no one ever dies of starvation.

All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Lencho was an ox of a man, working like an animal in the fields, but still he knew how to write. The following Sunday, at daybreak, he began to write a letter which he himself would carry to town and place in the mail. It was nothing less than a letter to God.

Lencho spent his entire night thinking of the only option left and that was to seek the help of God, who, he had been informed, has its eyes and ears everywhere. He thought of writing a letter to God conveying his grievances. Despite spending all these years working at the farm, he still knew how to write. He started writing on the Sunday morning and thought of mailing it himself by going to the town.

"God, he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year. I need a hundred pesos in order to sow my field again and to live until the crop comes, because the hailstorm...." He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside and, still troubled, went to town. At the post office, he placed a stamp on the letter and dropped it into the mailbox. In his letter to god, he communicated his poverty-stricken situation and mentioned that he needed 100 pesos to regenerate the crops along with surviving until they are ready to harvest. On the envelope, He wrote,

"To God, Then, at the post office, placed stamp on the letter and dropped it in the mailbox.

One of the employees, who was a postman and also helped at the post office, went to his boss laughing heartily and showed him the letter to God. Never in his career as a postman had he known that address. The postmaster - a fat, amiable fellow - also broke out laughing, but almost immediately he turned serious and, tapping the letter on his desk, commented, "What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter. Starting up a correspondence with God!"

A postman, who was also an employee of the post office, noticed Lencho's letter and showed it to the postmaster. They both felt amused, but the postmaster, fat and friendly, immediately developed a sense of seriousness. He was astounded at the amount of faith Lencho has in God and wished he had the same. So, in order not to shake the writer's faith in God, the postmaster came up with an idea: answer the letter. But when he opened it, it was evident that to answer it he needed something more than goodwill, ink and paper. But he stuck to his resolution: he asked for money from his employees, he himself gave part of his salary, and several friends of his were obliged to give something'for an act of charity'.

With good intentions, the postmaster read the letter and thought of replying to it so as to keep the writer's belief intact. But the writer expected the reply in a different way that could not be fulfilled with pen, paper and morals. The farmer had demanded for 100 pesos. The postmaster along with his colleagues and a few friends, who were more than willing to donate for a good cause, collected a pool of money to

help Lencho. It was impossible for him to gather together the hundred pesos, so he was able to send the farmer only a little more than half. He put the money in an envelope addressed to Lencho and with it a letter containing only a single word as a signature: God

Despite his best efforts, he was only able to collect an amount not more than half of what was required. He then addressed it to Lencho along with a letter which was undersigned by God. The following Sunday Lencho came a bit earlier than usual to ask if there was a letter for him. It was the postman himself who handed the letter to him while the postmaster, experiencing the contentment of a man who has performed a good deed, looked on from his office. Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money; such was his confidence but he became angry when he counted the money. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.

Immediately, Lencho went up to the window to ask for paper and ink. On the public writing-table, he started to write, with much wrinkling of his brow, caused by the effort he had to make to express his ideas. When he finished, he went to the window to buy a stamp which he licked and then affixed to the envelope with a blow of his fist. The moment the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said: "God: Of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much. But don't send it to me through the mail because the post office employees are a bunch of crooks. Lencho."

On being disappointed, he started looking for ink and paper to write to God again. While writing, his eyebrows got curled out of the concentration with which he was drafting a new request. On completing, he affixed it

with a stamp. As soon as he dropped it into the mailbox, the postmaster took it out to read it. Lencho complained that he had only received 70 pesos and he is really in need of the remaining amount. He doubted the integrity and honesty of the post office employees and suggested that the money should not be sent via post because he doubted that the staff at the post office must have stolen the missing amount.