

CSU CHANNEL ISLANDS

To My Absent Father

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To My Absent Father,

I don't know much about you. I don't know what year you were born in or your birthday. I don't know your favorite color or your favorite animal. I don't know how many jobs you've had. I don't know if you've ever ridden a bicycle, what your first car was, or what your favorite car is. I don't know how you came from Mexico to the United States. I don't know how your music career started or ended. I don't know anything of medical importance on your side of the family either.

I can answer all these questions so easily when it comes to my mom. She was born on April 17th 1967; she likes frogs, and the color green. Her first car was a mustang Shelby. To my surprise she even knows how to ride a bicycle. I know she got pregnant in high school which resulted in the birth of my older brother Danny. I know she got her GED, but never attended college. From what she's told me she's had a total of six jobs, the four I can remember are: a bread maker (for like a week), a waitress, and a receptionist for an eye doctor. I know she's worked for Pacific Coast and Cardio Vascular Surgeons which was recently bought by Palo Alto Medical Foundation as Vascular Services Supervisor.

I can answer a lot for my mom, but for you I can't. In a page or a page and a half I can write about what I know about you. Another page on your parents; granted I'll have to ask my mom for their names.

Part of me thinks I'm being selfish for wanting to know all these answers. For wanting to know the smallest things about you. I mean there are thousands of people whose father left and never looked back or visited. Who are curious, but will never get answers to their unspoken questions. Sometimes I even envy them for never having met or known their fathers.

Before I go on let me tell you a bit about myself because I doubt you know any of this. I was born on November 3rd, 1991 in Palo Alto, CA. My mom had a list of names to choose from. I originally was going to be Amanda, but my Uncle who's close to my mom chose Katherine Alexandria. My full name is Katherine Alexandria Robles. Your last name, Moreno, is only on my birth certificate, not on my social and I've never used it for anything. I have a step-dad named Paco, an older half-brother Danny, my older sister Yesenia (your first born), and my younger half siblings Bianca, Paquito, and Gaby. I graduated from Sequoia High School at the age of seventeen on June 5th 2009 (Yesenia's 21st birthday) and I attend CSU Channel Islands.

My intention for writing this isn't to be mean or make you hate yourself. If anything it's more for me than for you. Sometimes people need to get everything out there, to get it out of their system, you know? If you do ever read this, I apologize for any bad words that I may use.

I remember growing up you would come once maybe twice a year (though twice was an odd occurrence) to visit me and Yesenia. I swear your visits were about five minutes long, but they could have been thirty minutes to an hour long. You would have your blue 1990's styled jeans on, a collared dress shirt, shoes, and a jean jacket. Your hair being black and curly would be uncombed; it was almost like a mullet. You just didn't shave the sides off or let it grow past your neck. You must have been in your mid to late twenties or early thirties. You would hug me and Yesenia, talk to us about school or what we were doing at the time you arrived, because you didn't know much about us. You were practically a stranger. You would talk to my mom quietly about who knows what while Yesenia and I weren't paying much attention. I'm sure you always asked her how she was. Then you would leave, we wouldn't see you until the next year. I was nine or ten when you stopped coming.

I'd like to think I didn't care much about you not coming to see us anymore. However, I know I did and I know it hurt me even though I acted as if it didn't. And for the most part it probably didn't affect me as much as it would someone else. Since you weren't a permanent fixture in my life; quite frankly, I was fine without you in it. It's not like I really needed you. It's just that I wanted you. I wanted you.

You know how in TV the dad pushes their child on the bike and promises not to let go, but they do anyway. Then later the child is riding a two wheeled all on their own. I had that, just not with you. My older brother Danny and Yesenia taught me how to ride a bike. I remember it clearly. We were outside of the triplex and going around this huge 8 ft. by 13 ft. bush thing surrounded by a layer of bricks that separated the bush from the sidewalk. These bushes were smack dab in the middle between both triplex buildings. I didn't have a helmet, knee pads, or elbow pads. It was just me and the bike. Danny and Yesenia pushed it and let go. I remember crashing into the building or falling on the ground. I fell at one point and hit my head on a brick. I didn't have any cuts or scrapes yet, but I wanted to give up. In my mind I was perfectly fine with riding my plastic Barney tricycle. I didn't need to learn to ride a bike. Danny wouldn't let me though and we went on doing it all over again. By the next hour I was riding a two wheeled bike, a bit wobbly, but riding it none the less.

I wanted you to be the one to push me on my bike and let go after constantly telling me you wouldn't. You weren't there though and I learned how without you. I was scared about riding that two wheeled thing, but I ended up loving it. I could go faster on it and I loved the way the wind blew in my face. I felt like I could conquer the world after learning how to ride a bike. Wouldn't you have wanted to be the one to make me feel invincible? Wouldn't you have wanted to be the one to teach me?

There was this other time where my step-dad Paco was fixing up my mom's red Nissan truck. He had the hood propped up and his hands were inside the belly of the car messing around with stuff. He was wearing blue jeans, tennis shoes, and a white shirt that had some grease stains on it. I could see the scar on his upper left shoulder where he had a tattoo removed in Mexico. I must have been at least seven at the time.

"What are you doing?" I remember asking.

"I'm fixing your mom's truck. It won't start," he answered back, but in Spanish because Paco doesn't speak much English being from Vera Cruz and all.

"Why?"

"Because it...stopped working, it broke," he answered.

"Oooh, can I help?" I asked. Paco nodded and I handed him some tools that he needed. As Paco fiddled around with things I looked into the tool box and grabbed a wrench. Paco walked around and sat inside the truck. I placed the wrench next to a nut on the inside frame of the truck away from all the wires and engine. I fixed the wrench so it gripped the nut tightly. I turned it a bit (the nut was not moving). I then banged on it a bit.

"Don't put your hands inside, I'm starting the car," Paco warned and I nodded. He attempted to turn the car on, but all we heard was it wheezing.

"I can fix it," I said. With the wrench I banged on the nut thinking that it was the reason the truck wasn't working. I banged and banged. Then the truck sputtered to life. Paco cheered happily inside the truck and came out.

"I fixed it," I stated happily and he smiled at me.

"Yup, you did," he said and patted my back.

That day I felt like a genius. I thought I was the best mechanic in the world. I had this idea that if I could fix a car I could fix anything. Of course looking back I didn't actually fix the car. Paco probably didn't have the heart to tell me that I didn't do anything to it at all. The point is though that like any parent or any father, he let me believe I did. He let me stand by his side and "help" fix my mom's truck. I relished that moment. I was on top of the world.

My Tio, Pepe, took me and Yesenia camping for our first time. I can't remember the name of the lake, but we went for Fourth of July weekend. I had never been camping before and it was literally this whole other world. We were away from the freeways, towering buildings, and noise. It was quiet and there was just this big body of water. I mean I've seen the bay water, but this one was different because instead of having a bridge going over it, it was just surrounded by nature. I had never been anywhere so quiet before in my life. It was peaceful and I had this body of water to splash around in. My Tio Pepe gave me that; he gave me this experience by taking me and Yesenia.

My Tio, Poncho, who was in the army when he was younger, taught me how to play baseball. I played on for the Junior Giants league, but he was my coach for Little League baseball. I was also on the Giants team for that. This bald stubborn Uncle was my coach and he was hard on me and I hated disappointing him. I could never hit a home run during a game, but in practice I hit them like nothing. Baseball came so naturally for me almost like breathing. I remember wondering when my mom would show up for a game because they started around the time she'd get off of work. I never once thought of you coming to any of my games. I would have invited you to one if I knew there was a high probability that you'd show up. However we both know you wouldn't come.

I remember this one game I was up to bat and I had swung. I didn't hit the ball so it was my first strike, but the bat slipped out of my hands and hit the fence. I didn't even know I had released it. I was really happy I hadn't hit the catcher. I walked back to get the bat and swung on the side before going back to the home plate. I situated myself and got comfortable so I could relax. I nodded to my other coach Jav (coaches throw the ball in Instructionals) and he threw the ball. I didn't swing, but I jumped to the side and glared at him because he almost hit me.

“Stop, trying to hurt my kid, Jav!” my mom had yelled at him.

“Sorry, Sorry. You okay?” he asked me and I nodded. I went back to the plate and got ready. The ball was clear as day to me and I swung. The bat vibrated from the impact. I just watched the ball. It was up in the air and all I could think of was that I actually didn't hit a grounder this time. I ran, but it was pop fly so I was out. I hadn't cared that much about getting out. I was just happy that I finally hit the ball and it went in the air to the outfield. I don't think I had ever felt so great my entire life until that brief moment. My mom was there to see it, so was my grandma, Yesenia, and my younger siblings. Little League was my third trophy. In little league baseball everyone in Instructionals and peewee gets a trophy. They don't count how many games you win at all. The players do and we won that game.

Before baseball, I played Soccer and Street Hockey in school; It was PAL/SAL (Police Activities League/ Sheriff's Activities League) . I wasn't really good in soccer; I don't remember ever scoring a goal. We did win third place though in the school district. I have a trophy for it too. I was all over the place in Soccer. Some days I played defense, others I was a midfielder or a forward. I was never the goalie though, probably because I made it abundantly clear to the coach that I was not going to try and catch a ball going at a high speed just so it can hit me in the face.

In Hockey I played defense. I was great at it, I never let a person score a goal or get past me. People knew that too so I was double teamed near the end of the season. There were two teams for my school, Garfield Lightning and Garfield Gators. I was on Lightning and I was happy about it too. We played Fair Oaks Cobras in the championship, they won. Fair Oaks got first place and my team got second. My coach, who was also my favorite teacher, said I was the best defenseman he had. His name was Mr. Evans and he was a cool teacher. He taught me a lot of things and made me see things differently. My mom is grateful to him though because he pushed me academically and showed me what was out there in the world. That there was more than just the ghetto, more than just this town and what I saw daily. He had fascinated me with his stories of meeting President Clinton's daughter, of going to Stanford, and his dream of wanting to be president of the United States. He taught me that it was okay to dream and to dream big, which is important.

He was more like a mentor and a great friend who showed me that there were different paths I could take in life. For a long time before I had him as a teacher, I thought the only jobs I could ever get were working at Mickey D's, El Gruillense, La Panaderia, Cooking, and Cleaning, fixing cars, or being a receptionist at the front desk. I believed you had to be a special kind of person to go to college. There didn't seem to be a logical way to leave the ghetto neighborhood where gangsters roamed the streets. I always thought that if you were raised there you stayed there. I didn't know you could work your way up at all. I really didn't know much at all until Mr. Evans opened my mind.

My family and I moved from the ghetto to another part of town which was quieter, nicer, and not ghetto, we moved to Ruby Street. The ghetto was Little Mexico and I didn't think it was bad at the time. I figured gangs were in every neighborhood, but I was wrong. That year we

moved to Ruby Street was when you came by after you had stopped coming over. I was eleven; the family and some of Yesenia's friends were over at the house because we were celebrating her fifteenth birthday. She didn't have a Quinceñera or a big party. It was just a small barbeque. You still came though; you congratulated her, you were happy and you gave her birthday money. I knew you were leaving soon too. You weren't staying at the party. You were there for maybe fifteen minutes, and then you were gone. You said hi to me, I hugged you, and then you left. It was a short visit. It wasn't anything special to me. If anything it surprised me because you came out of the blue.

Sometimes I wonder, if she had had a Quinceñera, if you would have come to the party. If you would have done the father daughter dance with her. If you would have done the shoe ceremony where you take off her flats or tennis shoes and replace them with high heels. Would you have been the man to do all that or would she have not wanted you to come at all? Maybe our older brother would have done all that, or one of my uncles.

Did you ever think about any of this stuff? Did you ever picture yourself at one of our Quinceñera's? Or maybe watching us graduate high school? I used to have 'what if' moments. You know when you think about how something would have played out, if something would have happened. Like, what if you had stayed with my mom, how would my life have been like? Would we have lived in a nice house in a nice neighborhood? Would you have been teaching me and Yesenia how to play the guitar at a young age? Would you have taught us to be rock stars like you? I don't know the answer to any of these and I don't let my mind linger on the thoughts because it doesn't matter they're just what ifs after all.

Growing up I had two main fears. You see our lives have a tendency to be cut short. People die every day at any age. My biggest fear from when I was thirteen to when I was

seventeen was that my mom would leave me, that she'd die; somehow Yesenia would be fine because she's three years older than me and has a say or was an adult. I only had my mom. My younger siblings had Paco who would take responsibility for "his" kids, which I am not (it's just the way he is). But I had my aunts and uncles, Danny, and Yesenia. Yet, would Child Services let me stay with any of them? You see if a parent dies a child goes to their next of kin or other parent (sometimes). You don't have custody of me, but would child services just give me to you? And if my family fought in court would a judge still hand me over to you? I mean it's not like you actually gave two shits about me or Yesenia growing up, but would the courts see that. I didn't want to be separated from my family, from my home, my school, my friends, and everything that I know.

I didn't want to be forced to live with you. I didn't want to give up speaking English all day everyday just because you and your family speak Spanish twenty four seven. I hate speaking Spanish and I don't even Habla Lo correctly. I wasn't going to put up with you, not if I had a say. And if I didn't have a say, I had a plan. The plan was easy and simple. I would skip school and run away. I would just run and never look back. I'd only stop when I was finally home at one of my aunt's or uncle's house, because home was and would always be with them. If my mom died, I'd make sure that every fiber in my body made it known to everyone who looked at me that I sure as hell was not going with you.

This fear killed me, I hated it, and thankfully it never happened. Back then your family scared me, not because of how they act or anything. But because I don't know who they are or how they act. If my mom died and I had to live with you I'd be forced to live in this world so different from the one I was raised in. I'd be a person going into unknown territory.

I did meet your family though once. It was at your parents' vow renewal when I was thirteen. Our hairstylist Patty (who is friends with your brother) told my mom. Then your brother told my mom and invited us. I remember being so scared that I'd meet your wife. I don't know why I was scared, but I was scared of meeting her and seeing your other children. From what I've heard your wife doesn't like me or Yesenia. Thankfully, none of them were there though. It was just you, your brothers, their wives and children. Even some friends like Patty. It was so awkward. Everyone was just like 'Oh My God look at you two, you're so grown'. My thoughts went something like this: 'Well, Duh that's what happens over time, you grow'. I think rude sarcastic thoughts were a way of dealing with being so out of place. I also just molded myself to be one entity with Yesenia so that we weren't separated. I remember later on, one of your sisters came towards us in the living room and said drunkenly:

"You know I love you guys right, family is family and if you ever feel like you need to talk or just want to hang out, you're always welcome here. I know your mom doesn't like us, but she shouldn't keep you away," she slurred out. She said some more stuff, but I was too scared to pay attention. I remember pulling Yesenia and trying to get away from this woman. That was the line, she passed the line and I was no longer comfortable at that party. I was so happy when she left. I vowed to never go to any of your families' parties again after that. When my mom came over to pick us up she spoke to one of your brothers. We then left and I remember her saying how your sister, the drunken one, always hated her and how she's such a fake. How all of your sisters hate her for supposedly keeping us away from you. She never kept us away, you stayed away from us.

I didn't see you again after that and I didn't really care either. I was used to not seeing you at all by then. I didn't question where you were or what you were doing. I never asked much

about you and if I did it was more about your band Los Dinos than you. Then one day after you had spoken with Yesenia for a while you asked a question to her; you asked the simplest question that most people would say yes to given the chance.

“Would you two like to go out to dinner with me?”

Yesenia said yes, of course she would, she has no problem. She couldn't speak for me though anymore. I wasn't in middle school or elementary school. I was a senior in high school. I didn't have an answer for you at all. It wasn't just any kind of dinner. Yesenia had mentioned to you that I had just turned seventeen, most likely because you didn't know how old I was. You called it a “birthday celebration dinner”. I had to think about it. It took about a week and a half to make my decision. I really didn't want to go, I mean I really wanted to say 'No', but it wasn't just me that was going. It would have been so easy to say 'No' if it was just me and you, but there was Yesenia. She wanted to go, so I said yes, for her.

Yesenia told you what my favorite restaurant was too, Olive Garden. It was only my favorite restaurant at the time because I had only been to it twice before and I love Italian food. You two set a date and time. All I had to do was get dressed. I really wanted to be in comfort clothes for it, you know Jeans and a T-shirt, but no I couldn't wear that. I had to wear some stupid dress and flats. It was ridiculous, I probably looked ridiculous.

On November 17th, 2008, fourteen days after my seventeenth birthday you picked us up around seven in your silver Toyota crossover thing. You were late by twenty minutes. You were supposed to pick us up at six thirty. I remember thinking that you forgot. Literally everyone in the house was waiting in the kitchen for you to show up; my older brother, my mom, my grandma, and my step-dad. My younger siblings were in the living room.

“If he's not here in five minutes I'm not going,” I remember saying.

“He’s coming,” Yesenia stated. I think she wanted to believe you were coming more than me. Lucky for you, you showed up or you would have had to put it with an angry phone call from my mom.

Everyone knew I was nervous about going. I kept quiet in the car, and at Olive Garden I kept going to the bathroom thinking I was going to throw up. I was so nervous I couldn’t eat much of my food. I had to take deep breathes to calm myself down. Why was I nervous, I had no idea. I just know that I had never spent that much time with you ever in my entire life. Car rides to grandma and grandpa’s house in Sacramento don’t count considering the fact that I was asleep most of the time. That dinner though, it was beyond awkward. You kept asking how school was and what we were doing outside of school.

"Do you play any sports?" You asked.

"No," I said. I kept the answer simple not going into detail of why I didn't play sports.

When we were leaving Olive Garden, Yesenia told you I was going to my prom. As we were getting into your truck you said:

“You’ll be the prettiest one there.”

It was weird and not normal. Could you even say things like that to me? I mean I understand that you’re my father, but...you know. You can’t just take us out to dinner and say things like that as if nothing ever happened. You asked if I had a boyfriend and you were happy I didn’t. You don’t even get to ask me that either, but you did and you didn’t deserve to know at all, but I gave it to you just so you could stop asking me questions. It was like you were protective of me, like you were my father, and it’s something I wasn’t used to; at least coming

from you. My Uncles I'm used to, My brother Danny and Step-dad I'm used to, but you...No. You can't say something like that to me. You can't ask me something like that. You just can't.

When you dropped us off at home, I hugged you and thanked you. I was so relieved when I stepped inside my house. I changed and then my mom asked how it went. I was starving, so I heated up the entire meal I got at Olive Garden. I had only taken like five small bites of my Five Cheese Ziti Al Forno at the restaurant. It was delicious. I went over the dinner in my head a lot, mainly trying to figure out why I was so nervous. The only answer I had was that it was because I was having dinner with you.

I'm sure some people would jump at the chance to have dinner with their father or be happy to have had them come visit them once a year because at least it's something. It was something. It didn't change you though. You never showed up out of nowhere, you never called me. You were just gone again and I didn't expect anything more from you. Wanting to have dinner with me and Yesenia was a shocker, but I didn't have any expectations. I didn't put you on this pedestal or anything. I didn't do that because I know you and I know you would fail my expectations. You had my entire life; it just took me a long time to realize that.

This dinner surprised me because it didn't make sense in my head. You could take us to dinner, but you couldn't even show up to any of my birthdays. You could take us to dinner, but you couldn't stay longer during your once a year visits. You don't know the pain it caused every time you left. You don't know what it's like to want your dad around for things. I remember wishing you'd show up on my birthday, that by some miracle like in the movies you'd walk through the door as I blew out my candles. You never did though and it was disappointing.

I told you earlier that I'd have to ask my mom some questions in order to know more about you. However you and I both know she hates your guts and has done her best to wipe your

existence from her memory. She thinks you were born in July of 1963 which makes you four years older than my mom which means you're fifty years old; you're over the hill (just sayin'). You have nine siblings: Salvador, Eva, Irma, Maria, Bulmaro, Gerardo, Blanca, and Julissa. I think it was either Bulmaro or Gerardo that was in the band with you. My mom is not one hundred percent sure but she thinks your band Los Dinos de Aguillia was formed here in the United States. I know you played the guitar, maybe even the piano because you're on YouTube. I know your band split up and recently got back together this summer. I heard you on the radio because my grandma called me over to listen. My grandma calls you an Indian because you're from Michoacán, Mexico (I really don't know what that has to do with being an Indian). Your parents' names are Carmen and Marcelino. Your mom has gold teeth and brown ginger hair; I was afraid of her as a kid, she was a bit strict. Unlike your dad who just looked mean, but was nicer than your mom. I know that you were on Univision once because my mom told me that when I was younger. Your band even won some awards. Yesenia and I have a trophy your band got in the garage somewhere. It used to be in our bedroom, but Yesenia moved and I went off to College so it's in the garage now.

I think it's quite sad that I have to ask my mom for information on you. I mean I would ask you, but you don't answer your phone because you think I want money from you. I texted you and you never texted back until yesterday Wednesday, October 9th. You asked me "who is this?" and I had to text back in Spanish "Tu hija, Katie". Don't you have me on caller ID because I have you on it? You're BIOLOGICAL, just like that in all capital letters. You should at least have me as Biological2 or 2 or Celia's Daughter. I would say put me as Daughter Katie, but I don't want your kids looking through your phone and then asking you who I am. I know you've never mentioned us to them. I mean I'm not surprised, I think Yesenia was more surprised when

she found out. She met and started to talk to Urielito your son, our younger brother and he didn't have any idea that you had two kids before him. Yesenia was livid; you had lied to us saying that your kids knew about us when they didn't. I say I wasn't surprised because I didn't expect them to know about me or Yesenia. I mean you didn't want us so why on earth would you tell your kids about us.

I know you didn't want us. I know you left my mom on Mother's Day when she was pregnant with Yesenia because your mom didn't like my mom. She didn't like that she already had a kid, my brother Danny. I remember my mom saying something along the lines of "His parents said if you plan on marrying her propose if not then leave" so you left. You weren't okay with my mom being pregnant with Yesenia. It took you sometime before you even decided you wanted to see her. You got back together with my mom when Yesenia was two. Then my mom got pregnant with me. You left again on your own accord.

We went around to your families though a couple of times. My mom told me she'd drop me and Yesenia off or you'd pick us up. However we never stayed long because I'd cry like no other and you'd take us back or my mom would pick us up. You know babies sense when there with someone that doesn't like them or is in a mood. Maybe I sensed that you didn't like me or want me for that matter. People know where they are not wanted, babies must know too. This theory might just explain why I never felt comfortable around you. Why would anyone be comfortable being around a person that doesn't like them, let alone want them to exist in this world?

I can see it all so clearly. When you'd visit I'd run to you so happy and everything that you came. You had a fake smile though. The only reason you carried me was because I wanted you too and like most adults you didn't have the heart to say no or you did because my mom was

watching. Coming to see us once a year probably wasn't even something you wanted to do. My mom told me that when you came by it was only for a couple of minutes. So I was right, you never visited for an hour or an hour and half, just minutes. You never really came by when I was an infant, a baby. Most likely because you didn't want to put up with crying and dirty diapers.

Your parents, my grandparents wanted to see us growing up which is probably why you put up with us. You took us to Sacramento every summer from the time that I was about five to when I was ten. After that I remember our mom took us once and then my aunt who lived close to them in Modesto did. That summer my aunt took us, was the last time I spent a week at their house during my summer. I remember when your parents would bring us back we'd be lying down in the bed of the trunk. The truck had a shell so we were warm, but we still lay down because it's illegal to have someone in the back. I told my mom this and she was like:

"What? They didn't?"

"Nope, they did. It's the only car they had," I said.

"If I had known I would have driven myself to pick you up. I can't believe them."

It wasn't a big deal to me at the time, actually it was pretty cool to me. It was fun and secretive. Of course I was a kid so the only danger I saw was being pulled over by the cops. Luckily, you didn't have to pick us up because it would have put a dent in your schedule. You probably would have gotten mad about it, but acted okay. I know that you didn't like stopping when you took us, so if I had to go to the bathroom I'd have to hold it. I don't think I ever did though and if I did need to use the bathroom I'd just fall asleep to forget needing to use it.

When I was young, like a baby or toddler young you were married. You married a woman named Delia; her name is nothing like my mom's name (Celia) at all. They don't even rhyme. Well I have to call you stupid now. Not because you married her, but for your horrible

timing decisions. You should have told my mom you were getting divorced from Delia, before you told Delia. You knew that your wife Delia sometimes came over to pick up Yesenia. Yet you told my mom after you told Delia you wanted a divorce. I don't understand how you didn't think that my mom should know beforehand. You called my mom after Delia had already picked up Yesenia. You told my mom,

"Don't let Delia near the kids. Don't let her take them."

It was too late. She had Yesenia in the car with her. My mom called the Police and they put out an APB for Delia. Luckily for you, they found her in Santa Cruz at the boardwalk. She was going to leave Yesenia there, probably hoping that she would get kidnapped or something. Every time I think of this I just think of how it would have never happened if you said something beforehand. Yesenia would have been safe at home with my mom and me. But, Nooo, you had to be stupid and not think at all. You had to turn that day into an episode out of Days of Our Lives or General Hospital. What made you think that you didn't have to tell my mom? I mean you obviously told her, but why after?

I don't understand some of the decisions you make. You say one thing and you do the other. You break promises. You lie, and then you try and make it seem like it's okay, like everything is fine. Well, it isn't. It's not okay, and it's not fine. You can't do things and then stop doing them. You can't make promises and break them.

I don't know how many jobs you've had. I only know you were a guitarist, you worked with the windmills in the hills, and you worked at Stanford Hospital as like a greeter or something. You wheeled people around in wheelchairs there. I know you paid child support a couple of times and you didn't even have to pay a lot. You had to pay five hundred dollars in child support; Two hundred and fifty dollars for each child. You know some people have to pay

a thousand to five thousand and that can be just for one child. You only had to pay five hundred and you did. Then you stopped. You stopped, do you know what we needed that for. We used it for rent, food, clothes, and necessities. Yeah, we managed without the five hundred, but still we could have used it.

Do you know how lucky you are that my mom didn't take you to court or tell on you? Because she could have. She could have told on you and you could've been sent to jail or made to pay the amount you didn't pay in full by a certain date. Child Support Services would have looked at your income and your assets like your house, cars, and other stuff. I had a friend whose dad didn't pay child support so they took one of his dad's cars and gave the money of its worth to his mom. Of course you have to be a certain amount of payments behind before they even think of doing this. It takes a lot of paper work, time, and red tape. Again, you're lucky my mom never told because in one year you would have owed my mom six thousand dollars. Add that to the amount of years you didn't pay child support it would be around thirty-six thousand dollars. You stopped paying around the time I was twelve. To tell you the truth, I didn't see a difference in when you paid and when you didn't. Things were still the same with or without your money.

We may not have needed you, but we could have used you. Not your money, but you in general. You know I wanted to play guitar once, I still kind of do. I love the sound the strings make when you strum your fingers gently on them. My mom asked you if I could have one of yours, but you said no. Imagine, if you were there you could have taught me to play. I wouldn't have to take guitar lesson because I had a dad who knew how to play. I have about twenty three certificates from awards I've gotten throughout elementary to high school. I would have loved to share those with you when I was a kid. I would have sat you down and shown you the ones I had gotten and for what I got them for. I could have used your help when I entered the science fair at

school. For some reason guys always have good science project ideas. You could have taught me how to drive. You could have been the man that calmed me down before High School graduation when I was a nervous wreck. I could have used you. I could have used your help with a lot of things.

Remember when my mom called you because I was graduating High School and going to college. She asked you for the first time in probably a long time to help out. It wasn't for glasses or braces, it was college. You should have just said no like you did for everything else.

“How much does she need? Twenty dollars,” You said to my mom.

“It's college... You know what, you can shove those twenty dollars up your ass,” My mom said.

Twenty dollars is what you were willing to give me to help pay for college. Twenty fucking dollars. Seriously, like what was going through your head when you said that. How much do you think college costs? I know you must have had an idea that twenty dollars would do nothing. I mean not only did you practically say no with twenty dollars, but then you ask my mom if she wants to meet up with you and go out to eat somewhere. Seriously, you need to get a hold on life or something. I thank you for helping later on by giving me eight hundred to pay off the debt I owed to the school and two hundred to take a summer course. You have to realize, you were my last resort. It took everything I had to call you and ask for your help. My entire life it's always been my mom and I never needed your money or your help. I had to suck up my pride and call you. I didn't want to, but I needed your help. Now, don't start thinking that you're amazing because you gave me a thousand dollars for school. My grandma has given me about three to five thousand, my brother has given me seven hundred, I'm sure he's given my mom more (he and my mom just don't tell me), and my mom has given me everything.

And when I say everything, I mean everything. I know you said that when I needed help you'd be there. A part of me wants to believe you, but my mind and heart tell me not to, because you break promises. Like you promised to come to my birthday once. This fantasy grew in my head that you'd arrive right as I was blowing the candles. You never did show up, not to any of them. It hurt a lot and my mom always apologized for you not being around. She's sorry that you never showed up to anything, that you weren't there. I am tired of her apologizing for you though. She shouldn't have to.

It's time that you apologize for everything. It's time you stand up, grow some balls, and admit that you were wrong. It was never my mom that didn't want us around you, it was never her fault. It was yours and it's time that you admit that to yourself and man up to your mistakes. You've made a lot especially when it comes to me and Yesenia. It's not going to take one apology though. It's going to take a lot because you have more than twenty one years of apologizing to do; you have a total of twenty five years of apologizing to do.

You already apologized to me for not being around when I was a kid and I'm not sure if I forgive you or not. It's hard to figure it out, because I can't tell if you're really sorry or not. I can't tell if I can really forgive you for it, because that forgiveness you're asking for is a lot. I hate to admit this, but you tore my heart up. You ripped it apart not being there and every time you left after you visited you stomped on it. Just thinking of you not being around in my life and not even trying gets me angry. I want to throw everything off my desk sometimes or set a car on fire and watch it burn. You're the only person that gets me like this.

My mom used to say, "When [you're] on [your] death bed and [you] ask for forgiveness, [that she is] not going to forgive [you] and when [you] wants to see us before [you] die, [she] won't let [you]. [Yesenia] and [I] won't even go to [your] funeral."

For a long time I agreed with that, but now I'm not so sure if I do. I mean I hardly doubt that I'd get a phone call from anyone in your family saying you have passed away. I also know that your wife, now ex-wife, wouldn't appreciate my and Yesenia's presence at your funeral. I also know that your kids would be surprised to find out they have other siblings at your funeral (Very theatrical I must say, totally happens in movies). If this does ever happen though I don't know if I would cry for you. In truth and I know this hurts, but I probably won't. I'm done crying over you. I'm done getting so angry that I want to throw my phone at the wall over you. I'm just done.

I would love to be able to say I forgive you, but right now I don't know if I can. Maybe one day I will. Maybe one day I'll call you and just say "Hey, I forgive you" and then never call you again. It's going to take a long while for me to forgive you though. I'm sorry if this hurts. I'm sorry if this isn't what you want to hear, but it's the truth. And the truth hurts; I know that all too well.

Your Daughter,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine A. Robles Moreno". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Katherine Alexandria Robles Moreno

PS.

That's the first and last time I'll use your last name. Oh, and Yesenia says, "Grow the fuck up."