

The image shows the front cover of a book. The cover is a deep green color with a marbled or fibrous texture. A white ribbon is wrapped around the book, crossing in the center. In the middle of the cover, there is a rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside this box, the word "DIARY" is written in a white, serif, all-caps font. Below it, the text "Written by" is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the box, the names "Giulia, Luana, Matteo and Liliana" are written in a white, cursive script font. The book is bound on the left side, with some stitching visible.

DIARY

Written by

*Giulia, Luana, Matteo and Liliana*

17 October 1902

It's not simple for me to speak about my situation. Well, I'm Maria and I'm 40 years old. My husband Roberto had to leave Italy 10 years ago and went to Boston to look for a job. Now he is a worker in a steel factory and I haven't seen him since the day he went to America. He left with our son Donato, who was 10 at that time. Since then I have been living alone with my other two children, Sofia and Vito, and I have decided to reach Roberto. I can't wait anymore and my guys are ready. I need to see them, I need to see my son. But the thing that scares me the most is that Roberto could have met another woman, married her, had other children, he could have forgotten us or, worse, they could be dead. Here in the village I have heard about a cholera epidemic in America and I'm afraid they are dead because of that.

I'm determined to find them anyway. I have prepared everything for our leaving. I had to sell Donato's baby clothes, the gold watch that my grandfather gave me, my wedding ring and earrings (they were gifts and I used them only on that occasion - they were very expensive). Meantime Roberto has been sending me money from Boston and I have been able to raise the money to buy return tickets (they can send us back to Italy if we don't meet the necessary requirements to live there). That's one of the reasons why I don't think he married again or he wouldn't have sent us money in any case. But my mom always told me "never say never" and I'm still in doubt. I've made the passports and soon we will leave the village to go straight to Naples, where there are ships setting sail for America, North and South. Everybody tells me that life is different in that world because there's work for everyone, everybody can become somebody important, everybody earns food and then they become rich sometimes. They can have a decent house with the bathroom and bedrooms for all the children. It's always been my dream, a big, comfortable house. I'm sure that we could be happy there, all of us.

There's another thing that scares me: the immigrant inspection. They told me it is a place called Ellie or Elise Island. I'm not sure about that. I just know that they will check our health conditions, they will make us some tests in order to see whether we are mentally ill or not (in

the first letter Roberto sent me he said that they test our memory and our knowledge of English - I can't speak a single word of it! Roberto also told me some words like "good morning" or "good night"). It's really easy to become ill during the journey, especially on the ships. I beg God above to spare us illness, otherwise they will send us back to Italy, as I said before, if it's something incurable or if we don't pass those tests. But I'm ready to face everything, just to see my baby again even though he's not a baby anymore! And my Roberto too, of course. I miss him so much and I'm sure that we could all be happy in Boston. The whole family finally reunited in such a rich land called America! In conclusion, I'm scared of the difficulties and risks of the voyage, especially for Vito, the youngest kid. He's always been a bit weak in health and I pray to God for his safety. Sofia is really smart and she can manage everything perfectly. And, as mom said, never say never!

*Maria*



Here it's so difficult... it's a struggle for survival ! On the whole, my dad and I are fine and in some days we will get to Chile, we don't know exactly the place we are bound for, but somebody says we are expected to wait a bit and we are going to be subjected to some tests useful to state whether we are ill or not. There could be the possibility of coming back if we don't pass them.

I always sleep, I can do nothing else, I often cry because I miss my mother and my little siblings, they'll join us when my father starts working...for now I will write to them whenever possible. Here we can't do anything, we are all close to each other and it's always very dark, we have to stay still, and you're lucky if you're able to find your own space where to sit. There's the worst smell on earth... I usually have problems to recognize my dad, I feel alone. I just want to get to my destination as soon as possible, I am hungry, thirsty and tired... they give us nothing to eat, sometimes people at the stations throw bread for children. I don't know what time it is and what day is today, I've completely lost track of time...

See you tonight

Yours, *Liliana*

