

That day at the Jordan

by [Rachel Ann Russell](#) in the [October 20, 2021](#) issue

It was a one-man show, that wild man dunking each  
man, woman, and child into the river with a blessing,  
which by the time it was our turn  
was brown with mud  
the banks a mess of footprints.

It took hours to reach him.  
My father prayed the whole time,  
swaying with his angst, and my mother,  
responsible for comforting us,  
got a bit tense around her mouth.

Because where were we to sleep if night fell?  
What were we to eat?  
Yet the whole long day, sun high above,  
everyone in line was peaceful and calm.

The water turned out to be warm and  
the dunking man had strong hands,  
he pulled me up, free to go on,  
even if a bit of the mud stayed on my skin.