

## Childlike

As a child, I was but anxiety and doubts.  
I walked through the valley of insecurities and fears.  
Though I fought and resisted, therapy helped me acknowledge my demons.  
By chance and necessity, I left the only home I knew for an unknown world.

I migrated to the City of Angels, the greatest melting pot of shades, creeds and traditions.  
I survived high school despite labels and low expectations.  
I was welcomed by strangers who became friends and then family.  
I experienced the healing power of acceptance.  
I learned how to give and receive grace.

I was adopted by a new land, making a life in this beautiful urban jungle.  
I became part of this complex metropolis of incomparable riches and disparities.  
I realized that every day we have the opportunity to rise above misconceptions, stigma, shame and self-doubt. I finally understood my purpose in this town covered by the thick smog of traffic and labors.

I was given opportunities to overcome in this city of consciousness and ideals.  
Although tomorrow is uncertain, I am no longer defined by struggles or shortcomings.  
Now I'm a peacemaker. I'm my brothers' keeper. I'm a helping hand as a volunteer.  
I'm a motivator and a provider.  
I am a believer in a better future.

I am no longer shackled by the illusion of normalcy or the allure of the unlived life.  
I now fight for my dreams. I'm here and now.  
I can be different and make a difference.  
I can share what I have learned and continue to learn.

As I wrestle my depression, I rise.  
As I write about growth, joy and pain, I rise.  
I rise to embrace all that life can be.  
I rise so I can lift others who struggle just like you and me.

Through serving others, I have found healing.  
With eyes wide open and a heart full of hope, I can at last embody all that I have learned.  
Like a child, I know think of my future with excitement and wonder.  
I will keep moving forward.  
And when the days feel longer and duller; when the tide feels stronger, this I know:  
Even if I stumble, I will rise.