

Leaving My Past For Wonder, Beauty & Messiness

[BY ILDA DASHI](#)

My whole life collapsed...doors closed...chapters disappeared...words dispersed in empty pages, forming foreign languages that I could not recognize anymore. My life's book annihilated its existence into nothing.

I *became dust* for a while. An invisible flame that some strange gods composed consumed me from within, as they ripped one by one the layers of my old skin in sacred, ancient rituals orchestrated by an otherworldly drum.

Suddenly I realised my past was gone, so I collected the remains in a box and threw it away like old books. I grieved...I cried, I wept, I rolled myself on the cold floor staring at the colorless ceiling of my room for hours.

Then, when tears got dry and my mind came back...I went out, found a lake and threw the ashes of my past in it. I cried again, I mourned...I yelled to the dancing emptiness between my eyebrows, then I left.

I could smell the fragrance of my past still following me like a ghost in the air until its shadow got lost, and I found my feet slipping away into the stares of a plane with a ticket in my hands that read "to New York".

I don't know yet if I chose New York or New York chose me to start building a new life into a new frequency out of a new

me...October 7th, 2017, just five days after my 35th birthday. I landed at JFK airport in New York with a tourist visa in my hand and anxiety in my stomach. I knew that this time around, I was divorcing from my country of origin with no fight or cries. We both signed the papers of "goodbye" and parted ways in silence.

The JFK airport feels silent to me even in midst of crowds as I gently approach the officer, a handsome black man who asks me calmly, "Why are you in New York?"

Before my mouth is ready to articulate the accurate words as a reply to his question, I slip my hand inside my back bag and slowly pull my first self-published book and give it to him as I whisper in shyness the words: "Well, you see I am in New York because I am a writer and the USA inspires me to keep writing..."

The officer then gives me a compassionate-smiley gaze and after reading the front page of my book he meditatively says, "I see...please keep writing."

So here I am, in the middle of New York, alone, family left behind and with no friends yet. With no map to navigate the life here but with a fierce inspiration that refuses to be tamed or silenced and that screams out of my throat like a bullet, demanding to be thrown out in this new world through words that I pour in the air as wishes – and that come back to me as an echo of a new reality.

I have no papers or documents to legally live or work here yet, but I met with a lawyer and I am working as a cashier or server in restaurants day and night to make enough money to pay the lawyer, who is promising to win the case he is about to open for me so I can legally live here.

This is not a so-called “American dream” for me...it is much more than that. It is a new life being born from the ashes like the Phoenix...and I am lucky to start it off in New York City.

And, I am happy here, you know? I rented a cheap room which I share with a roommate, who is also an immigrant from another corner of the world. I go to a gas station every morning and I prepare my own favorite hazelnut-roasted dark coffee, my favorite American kind of coffee. And I go to libraries whenever I have time. I sit and I watch people – I watch myself. I get on the buses, then on the trains and on the ferry, to explore this new city of wonder, beauty, and mess.

I don't watch TV, I don't read the news. I'm not interested in politics yet I am sensitive enough to feel the vibes of the current American government. As an immigrant, I don't always feel secure, but I trust in the heart of this city and its benevolent beauty that I will find my way here slowly...one step at a time, like many other immigrants have done before me.

New York speaks a language not everyone can understand, but me and New York have a long way to go together because I am being built again, with it, in it...and because of this city of water, seagulls, and words.

I am the new Phoenix in New York City.

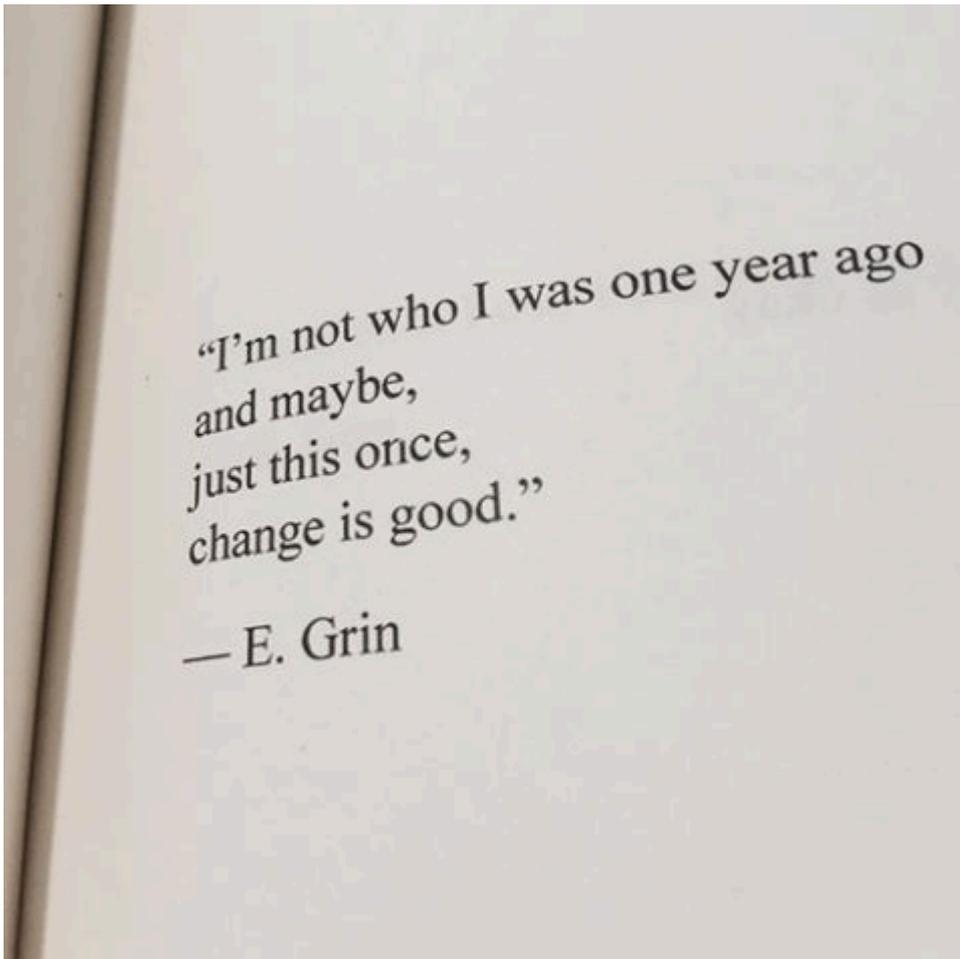
For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals with Soul](#) .

Sip a little more:

*Undo Conditioning – Letting Something Greater
Than Me Take The Driver Seat*

*Dear Future Lover – When We Meet, Penetrate Me
This Deeply*

*She Gives Her Flesh, Stars & Soul To The Man Who
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