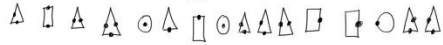
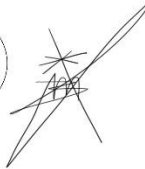


The Forgotten Past



Written & Illustrated by
Eliel Izhar Morales Muñoz



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Foreword

I was delighted when I was asked to write this foreword, not only is Eliel Morales, someone who I have known for many years, but he is a person who is able to communicate his perspective of the world through his unique style of *clothing*. I did not know Eliel as a child, but this book exemplifies how his *garments*, and different outfits represents some of his family values. Although his family were not rich enough, there was still an importance of *appearance, quality* and the way they *dressed* themselves.

Eliel now, always finds a way to put together an eye-catching outfit. He takes something old, and reimagines it by adding something more unique, and creative, such as the language he invented. Eliel used to doodle on his *garments* for fun, but now he incorporates his art into every *garment* he owns, which makes it unique and turns it into a one of one *garment*.

The *clothing* he chooses each day shows a piece of who he is. Eliel's style shows the versatility of his creativity and the depths of his own imagination, regardless if he stands alone. Working with what he got, Eliel is someone who can take the least of situations and turn it something extraordinary.

S.C. R

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Prologue

Throughout my life, my parents did not have a lot of disposable income. My parents went from day to day providing the basic needs of life. We had the basic components of *clothing*, shelter, and food. Not a single day went by that my family did not have those three components of survival.

The luxury to travel to another country during the holidays was merely just pure fantasies. Our family did not get to travel to Paris, but we were fortunate enough to explore the wonders of our home city, New York. Our version of luxurious travel is shopping in Manhattan.

Our family lived on Sutphin Boulevard, located in Jamaica, Queens for twenty-four years. Our basic needs for food were a few blocks away and the necessity for clothing was in the Queens Center Mall. With the low disposable income in our household, our *shopping habits* and ability to buy whatever we wanted were very limited.

Since our *buying choices* were very limited throughout most of my life, my parents were not able to document my early childhood as a child. The digital photographs taken as a child were too expensive to reproduce into tangible photos. This idea transferred unto me during my earlier technological age.

Throughout my life, I only had android devices, and every time my phone storage would fill up, I would be forced to delete all my existing photos in order to have more storage. This same idea has been repeated throughout my life. Even though we did not have a lot of disposable income, we were still able to enjoy life to the fullest.

Dedicated to

My family and future family.

The 1990's

The Night before Christmas

One chilly, Sunday morning, in a December in 1996, my parents, Irsan and, Rosa Morales decided to attend a church service that included a small children's play for the Christmas holiday. The children performed certain parts of the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. They performed a story in the Gospel of Luke called, "The Birth of Christ".

Since it was a chilly day, my mother *clothed* me in an off-white white cotton polo shirt with colored prints of dinosaurs on it. She *dressed* me in a small cotton jean pants with a spandex blend to perfectly wrap around my legs for comfort and protection. My mother did not have a lot of money, so she always *dressed* me as fashionably as she possibly could.

After the church service was complete, the children were supposed to start, but there was a complication. The baby who was assigned to play as baby Jesus, got sick and was not able to play the part. In such last notice, the church needed to find another small baby to replace the role as baby Jesus. All the babies during the Christmas service were all too big and could not fit the *costume* to play the role.

The *costume design* for baby Jesus only included a white wool blanket, and it was big enough to *wrap* around my whole body to cover my outfit. After the play, when I was being unraveled, most of the newlyweds saw my baby outfit and complemented my mother's choice of *clothing*.



The Cry Baby

When I was six months old on March of 1997, my mother, Rosa, was invited to her stepsisters Sweet Sixteen birthday party.

For the occasion, my mother *dressed* me in a small sky-blue, cotton T-shirt; they were paired with blue denim baggy jeans and light-blue sneakers. The elastic waistband of the jeans held together my pants without having a belt. As a child, my legs were short, so they caused my pants go down and show my diapers a lot. My mother was glad to have found a pair of baby jeans that would not fall. However, she was not too happy with my behavior that night.

As a baby, I would always start to cry for the simplest reasons or sometimes, for no reason at all. I would cry uncontrollably, and no one knew why. The scenario of me hysterically crying has been a recurring scene during my early days as a baby.

Most people in the party thought my mother did not feed me, or I needed to replace my diapers. My mother eventually left because she tried her best to calm me down, but I only got worse.

My mother said, I cried so much; I put myself to sleep on the way home. My parents were both relieved that night; they had an excuse to leave the party and I slept throughout the whole train ride home.



Father and Son

When I was eleven months, my parents realized why I cried so much. My father contributed to several tears being shed during my childhood, in both cheerful and painful ways.

My father works in construction, mainly as a painter and doing plaster. My father, Irsan, would always be arriving home from his daily nine to five shift schedule, all *sweaty* and *dirty*. By that time, I would already be *clean, showered, dressed*, and ready to go to bed. My nightwear would be composed of different baby union suits. My mother said, this white cotton union suit with colorful airplane prints on it, used to be one of my favorites. The softness of the polyester-cotton blended fabric and the vibrant colored prints caught my mother's attention when she saw it on sale in a store on Jamaica Avenue.

However, my father would normally *shave* his whole beard in order to look presentable, so that would mean the *texture of his skin* would always be rough because his beard would grow back.

My father loved to grab me, hug me, play around with me and sometimes even make me fly; however, each time he tried to get close to try and kiss me, his *rough face* would feel like sandpaper. So, every time my father would come home, and want to show me love, I'd always try to hide under my mom's long skirt to try and hide from him.



The Big Ol' Boots

When I was eleven months, my mother Rosa started to do housekeeping around Queens. This means that my mother would be the one out of the house, and my father would be the one staying home and taking care of me.

One day my father saw me enter my mother's bedroom and go inside her closet. My mother would organize all her *clothing* by color and shoes by sizes. Majority of the time, my father would see me mix and match different skirts and different bras. My father would later try and fix everything before my mother came home.

My favorite item from my mothers' closet was her black rain rubber boots. The glossy black leather boots had a leather strap on the side and had a golden glossy button to hold everything together.

My two legs could have fit in one of the over-sized boot, which gave me a level of comfort that bought warmth and security. Most of the times when I ran errands within the household, like to take out the trash with my mother, I would already be wearing those black rain boots.

Something about these shiny, black boots with the golden glossy button was more attractive than any toy I had during the time. My parents would observe me play with most of my toys with my mothers' boots on. It was like, her boots were part of my early childhood, because before I started to play with my toys, my parents saw me go for my mothers' boot first, before playing with my toys.



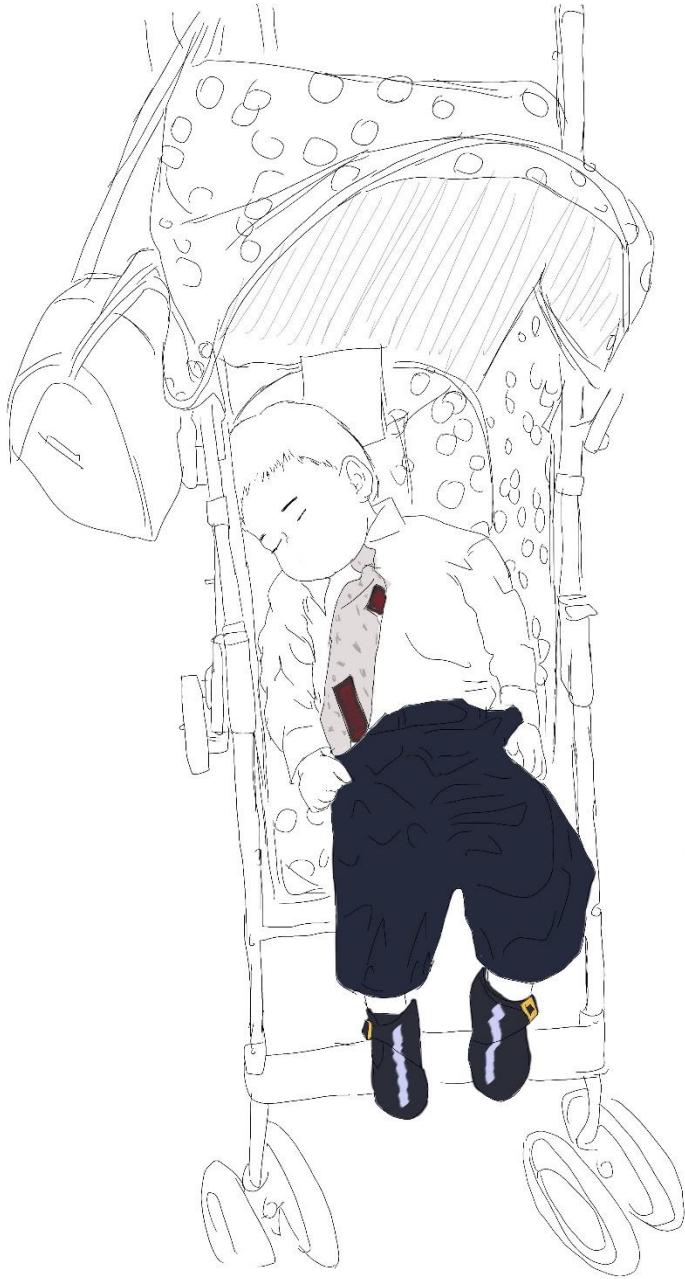
Birthday Night Fever

During my first birthday party, I caught the case of the chickenpox. My mother and father spent a few days planning an average sized birthday party containing twenty to twenty-five guests.

My mother *dressed* me with a pearl white cotton oxford shirt, smoky mountain grey nylon tie with a print design that had, “Out West”, surrounded by a sketched design of a hand all around. My mother bought the top pieces by a store near Rego Park, and the navy-blue cotton blended wool dress pants with small black leather dress shoes was bought in Jamaica Avenue. My mother had me ready, looking like I was going to church. However, suddenly, a fever overtook me, and the fever knocked me out and put me to a deep sleep.

My mother spent a few days planning the event, and she was looking forward for me to enjoying my first birthday party. She took less than an hour getting me *dressed*, because I was not an active child who couldn't stay in one place, yet. Normally, as my mother would *clothe* me, I would cry and move my little arms and legs, making it difficult to *dress* me at times.

The last thing my mother did was put me inside of a baby carriage, that had space polka-dot prints on it, make it look like a spaceship. My mother hung up balloons everywhere and slowly, people started to enjoy the rest of the night as I fell asleep.



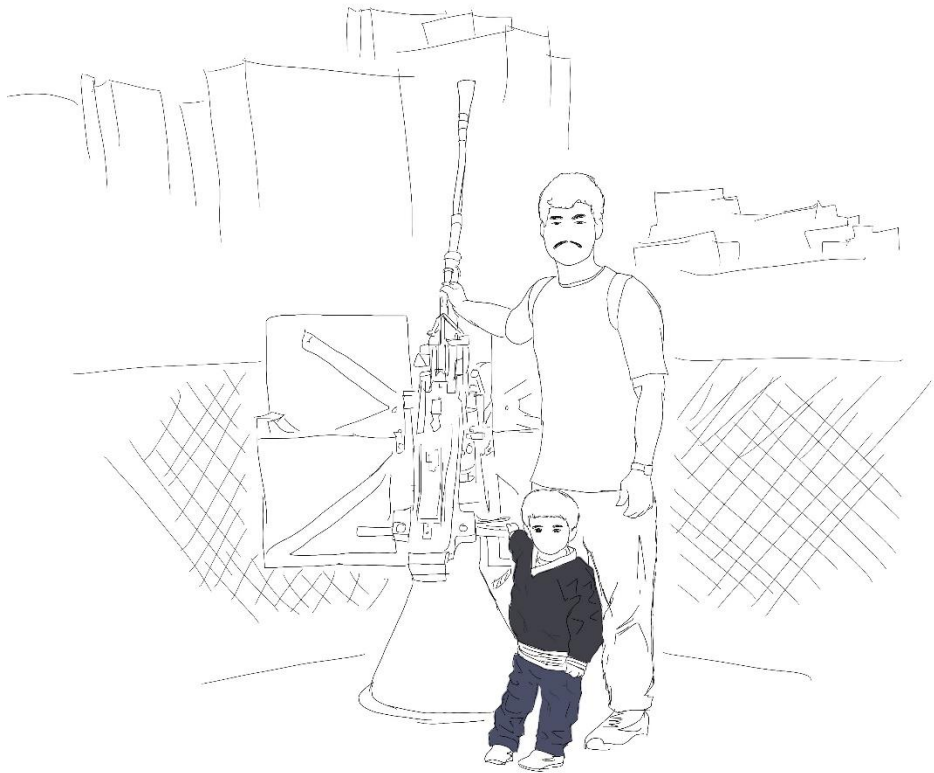
The Cosmic Rebirth

After I turned one, my family took a trip to go visit the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum.

Usually I would be crying the second I left the house or cause some sort of scene in public with my crying, but this time I didn't cry once. There were a lot of Navel planes, weapons and different sights.

By this time, I would have started crying because it was chilly, however my mother *dressed* me to prepare for the weather climate. I had a dark navy-blue polyester bomber jacket, dark blue denim jeans with white Puma shoes. The warmth that the polyester boomer long-sleeve provided, protected me from the chilly winds of the harbor. The bomber-jacket was inspired by the air-piolets uniform. My parents mentioned the *fabric* being less expensive and how it felt like a thick layer of plastic on top, that thick layer temporarily kept me warm.

My parents remember my face being in *awe* when I entered the museum. All the showcases reminded me of the Museum of Flight located in Seattle, Washington. They reminded me of the Museum of Flight because there were so many *historic* planes and new planes that I thought were not manufactured anymore. The Museum trip sparked my *natural curiosity* to explore, and the love for the cosmos were born.



The Church Outcast

When I was two years old, my family started to go to church less. The church would have daily debates of the different interpretations of the word of God.

Whenever the church would start their service, they would place the people's children in a room in the back of the church. This was an initiative for children to make friends and play with each other, while being supervised.

However, since I was a hyperactive child, being so curious and active brought on many pitfalls. I would find myself in devious situations. I would either break or lose something and everyone would blame me. This was a regular occurrence, even when my family did not go to church. Other children from the church would accuse me of causing trouble even when I wasn't there.

The last day I went to church, my mother *dressed* me with a red-ruby and off-white cotton t-shirt, with a burgundy over-sized plaid, jeans and black shoes. The shoes were memorable, because I was so active, I was too lazy to keep tying my shoes, so I begged my mother to have the shoes with the *straps* on them, instead of *laces*.

My mother remembered going to several stores to find the right shoe for the right price. She found it on a sale in PayLess on Sutphin Boulevard and the quality of the shoes *lasted* for a long time, a year max.



The 2000's

The Family Support System

When I was seven years old, my mother Rosa and little sister Hadasa went to the Bronx Zoo. By this time, the only type of animals I have witnessed were pigeons and squirrels. Every other animal I only saw and learned about through TV or schoolbooks.

My mom used to take us out while my father was working. Around this time, my father was going through chemotherapy for his Lymphoma. One day I saw my father go completely *bald*, and as a kid, I did not know exactly why or how. He hid this information from all the neighbors and even his own family very well.

I did not want my father to feel alone or left out in whatever he was going through, so I *modified my head by shaving it bald*. This was the first *body modification* that I decided to do without the consent of my mother.

I remember my first few months of fifth grade being bullied about my *shaved head*. I let one of their comments get to me and I slowly started to forget why I shaved my head in the first place.

I did it because I loved my father and ever since then, I never allowed anyone else to taint my mind with any *self-doubt* or *insecurity*.



Normal Family Issues

Majority of the time whenever my mother would take out my sisters, Hadasa and Abisai, and I, it would be chaotic. More times than not, we would not cooperate with my mother and give her headaches.

I remember when I was twelve years old and my mother took us to the Metropolitan Museum to learn parts of history about the world. It was a cold museum, so I was wearing a denim jacket, two layers of t-shirts, sweatpants and white polyester shoes. The shoes were most likely Puma, due to the athletic aesthetic and emerald red on the side of the shoe.

I was being annoying with my sisters Hadasa and Abisai, that my mother had to pull me to the side and tell me to stop. My mother tried taking photos of us, but we couldn't stay still. With the stress of trying to take a good photo, and tourist rushing my mother so they can get a few photos, my mother gave her final warning.

My little sister Abisai could not keep a good smile for the picture, because she was eating at least two pieces of gum. My mother asked Abisai to throw out the gum, and when she did, it landed on my jacket. My mother was able to get the gum off, but I felt a bit sad.

I started to observe everyone else's *clothing*, and for some reason I thought everybody had better clothing than me. I knew the *garments* I was wearing that day was leisure wear, but everyone else around the Metropolitan Museum had fancier *garments*.



Awareness Behind Bars

One of my mother's longtime friend was our neighbor during the early years of my life. I remember one of her sons coming to America and studying in high school.

Some years has passed, and the son turned out to be unmotivated and just wanted to socialize. He found himself in a situation in which he left his girlfriend pregnant. The major issue was that she was a minor by a year old. The girl's family pressed charges and he went to prison.

I remember visiting jail one cold November for the first time. As I entered, I was being searched from *head to toe* before going inside to meet the inmates. It was chilly inside, so my red champion sweater kept me warm the whole time.

Being inside jail and observing the prisoner *uniforms* at first hand, made me appreciate my life and what I am *free to wear*. I didn't care if I was wearing the same non-branded sweater over and over. I *wore* that sweater because my mother *bought* it for me and always *kept it clean*.

Observing the inmates jail uniforms and comparing my own *outfit*, separates me from being a *prisoner* to a *free citizen*. Since then, I have been very grateful to have the freedom of *dress*.



Epilogue

Throughout most of my early childhood, the basic needs for survival and emotional support never went missing. I enjoy my life and how everything is set up because of the way my parents never focused on materialistic things.

Aside from obtaining materialistic things, my parents taught me the importance of family, respect, and doing the right thing. Not only did my parents did not have a lot of disposable income for designer *clothing*, they also did not have enough to invest in any expensive entertainment.

The reason why I still wear the same *clothing* over but in different combination is because of my parents. My parents were never cheap, they just knew how to properly invest their hard-earned money into something that will last for a long time.

Through various *body modifications* and *supplements*, I have learned through experience on how people can treat me based off my *appearance* and how it can affect my psychological state.

About the Author



His name is Eliel Izhar Morales Muñoz, and he was born in Jamaica, Queens. He graduated from the Borough of Manhattan Community College with a Liberal Arts degree in 2017. He continues his educational career by transferring to the New York City College of Technology in pursue of his bachelors in the Business & Technology of Fashion.

Eliel is known to be creative in the Arts and Music. His interest in fashion originated from his passion for Art. He explores the realm of surrealism and symbolism art through his own language he invented and natural wonders of the world. The love for Art has naturally developed a sense of personal *aesthetics* and symmetry in his style. He incorporates his Art through all forms of mediums including Social Media, paint on canvas, and customization on clothing.

He is an individual who spreads the wonder of curiosity and inspires individuals to create their creative paths in life. He inspires others through his Art and Language he invented.

