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## The Power to Fly

Freedom to me means, to be able to do and be anything in the world if I put my mind to it. When I was little my dad taught me how to ride a bike, I later learned how to ride it with only one hand and how to ride one that was bigger than me all by myself. By the age of 6 I learned how to roller-skate on my own in my aunt's backyard. The best feeling in the world is the feeling of flying while having my feet on the ground. When I was 14, I decided to get into sketching because as I was growing up, I would see my brother drawing and painting, so I gave it a shot. I would draw things all over the house like the couch or an apple just anything that I thought I could with what I knew. During my senior year of high school, I took art as an elective class and got inspired to paint and that's when I found my mental escape/ freedom, the same freedom I had as a child, to express my feelings without having to explain them with words.

When I was 6, I taught myself and my cousin how to roller skate, with old skates that belonged to my sister. Without knee pads or helmet we would zoom past each other as fast as we could on concrete. When I was first learning I fell and scraped my knee and elbow so many times but once I got the hang of it, it was the best feeling to be able to move faster than I can run without putting a lot of effort. Being able to go as fast as I could while looking at the sky, feeling like I can fly. As child I had all the freedom in the world, no worries and being able to fly on the ground.

As of two years ago I have challenged my self to get into painting because of my art teacher in high school and my brother that paints as well. Before I got into painting I would just sketch whenever inspiration would hit but when I got into painting it felt as though I could make a more meaningful piece of art with color and texture. Painting is a challenge to me that I haven't fully overcome. I would say I'm ok with sketching and painting I'm not a professional but when I feel inspired the feeling finishing a piece is amazing. It can also be very scary to show people because not everyone is going to understand or like it but its meaningful to me and feels good to free my imagination and my emotions.

I had many challenges with biking, skating, sketching and painting, just like Malcolm X in *Learning to Read*. In *Learning to Read* Malcom X challenged himself to learn the whole dictionary and with that he was able to read more books and understand the context of the books. For me to start a painting it takes a while because I need to figure what I'm going to paint, how I'm going to paint it or what colors to use. I can only try to do what I have pictured in my mind because I never really had an art teacher or professor showing me the different techniques there is with paint, everything I know is just self-taught or from practice. I take pride in knowing that I've taught myself these things with hard work, just like Malcom X in *Learning to Read* "The glow was enough to read by, once my eyes adjusted to it. So when "lights out" came, I would sit on the floor where I could continue reading in that glow" he was able to learn more than he ever thought in prison with the resources and challenges he had.

To conclude when I learned how to roller- skate I had the power to fly, and to be free physically. Now that I'm older I have the power to be free mentally, to express my emotions and my creativity by using paint. Just like Malcom X I practiced, I got back up when I fell, he didn't

let prison stop him from learning and I didn't let scrapes stop me from trying again. I also haven't given up painting just because I never had a teacher to teach me.