

# Inside My Emotional Wardrobe

written and illustrated by  
Wendy Tupacyupanqui



*In dedication to the influential people in my life*

my grandmother,

my grandfather,

my mother,

my father



## Table of Contents

---

The small mammal .....	Page 1
Cholita .....	Page 3
Black Cat .....	Page 5
Rosey tail .....	Page 10
Q. Vocational Senior Trip .....	Page 12
Substitution .....	Page 14
First Interview.....	Page 17
Clickety-Clack .....	Page 19
Granpapa .....	Page 22
So long black.....	Page 24
Split in two. ....	Page 26
5:00 a.m .....	Page 28

## Preface

The purpose of my book is to focus in the relationship between the clothing I wore and the memories that cling to it. Through out my childhood, teen and young adulthood many memories have latched on to accessories, costumes and full outfits. Each and every story gives the reader a glimpse of the emotional relationship I have when I coming across the garment, photographs, videos and even my hidden diary. Having realized the many connections one can make like a particular shirt and pants was used on one of the first stages of adulating.

The assignment given me the opportunity to incorporate cultural ideals into my writing to emphasize on the importance of each garment. As a Latina turning sixteen is a milestone that your entire family shares and is significantly important. A Sweet sixteen dress isn't just a piece of fabric its the meaning behind it that matters, if anyone asks a Latina women if they still have their dress you're more than likely to have a yes. I still have mine stored safely in the closet, no matter how thick and space it consumes its never to be thrown out.

As a child and teen growing up I hated the clothing my mother will purchase for me. One particular purchase has haunted my baby picture albums till this day. Every single time I come across the picture I cant help but question my mother WHY! Its something that my mom cant fully justify so my assumptions are that she wanted to protect me. A simple costume was purchased for a bigger reason not for looks, not to be proud of, but to be kept safe from the environment. Dress is mainly used as a protection or barrier against the environment e.i. a pair of shoes is protection for your feet, sunglasses is a protection for your eyes. With all my might I believe my costume was used for a greater cause than just

Tupacyupanqui

---

embarrass me.

I still have much more to experience, much more clothing that will forever stick with me. All my thoughts and pure feelings are marked into every outfit I wore. Memories imprinted on clothing, like the first day my little four year old heart hated. This book made me realize the memories that have blurred though the years, memories that I hide away with all my might because of the emotions attached to them. Starting with my very first feel of hate, to now twenty year old who's wardrobe is mainly black.

2000 - 2009

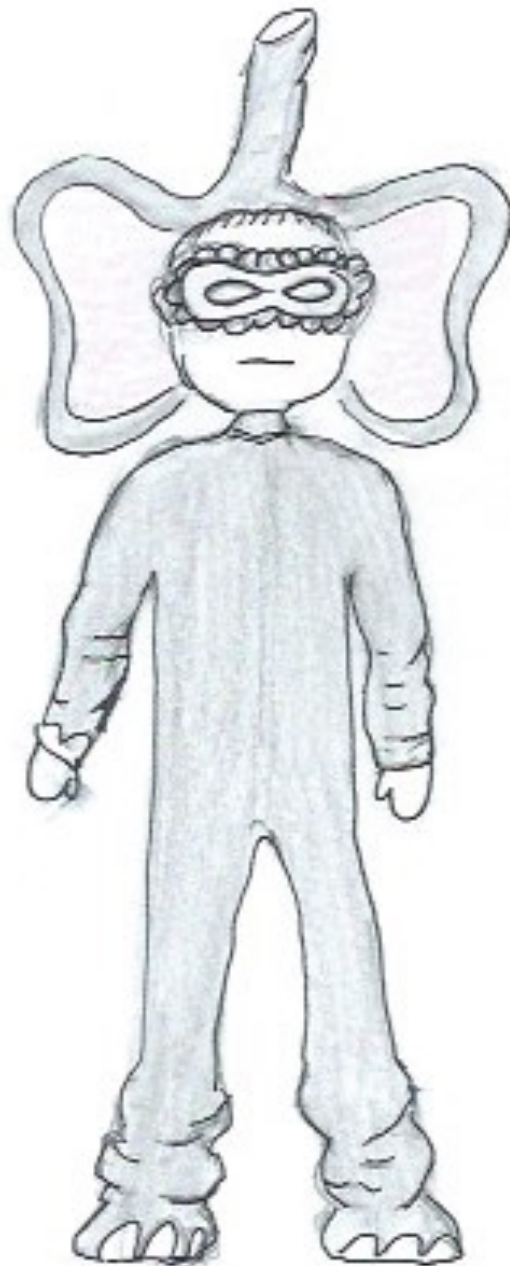
## The small mammal

When I was four years old I attended Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, 104th street, Queens New York. Mr. Claribaldi had told us all to come dressed in our Halloween costumes for our class party. Mom, of course, picked out my costume. Mom always has the last word on everything. Everyone in my class except me had normal costumes.

A normal costume to me were the Power Rangers, Pokemon, or the Power-puff Girls. They were all characters from shows that were very popular to watch in the late 1990's and early 2000's. For the entire day, the frown upon my face highlighted the displeasure of the costume I wore. I wore a sparkly white eye mask with a silver satin ribbon around the borders which covered my embarrassed expression. My mask was girly and beautiful, but still it did not go at all with what I was wearing.

I was an elephant for halloween that year, an elephant with a sparkly mask. My costume was soft to the touch; it was polyester velour, also known as velvet. It fit slightly big on me. The fabric wrinkled down on my feet like an elephants skin. I kept pulling my sleeves up multiple times. The costume was a jumpsuit with a zipper in the back. I can still remember that cursed zipper so well. It almost made me have an "accident" since it was so hard to unzip when I needed to use the restroom. It had an attached headpiece that contained the big pink elephant ears, small white tusks and worst of all a stuffed trunk. The trunk would not cooperate with me every time I moved my head the trunk would fall just a little to either the left or the right. It added an extra layer of awkwardness to my day.

Although I hated my costume with my four year old heart there was one good thing out of it. My elephant costume kept me warm on my way home during that cold October day. The headpiece kept me so snug the whole walk back home. To this day, I wonder if mom was just trying to keep me warm the entire time. I nominated myself worst costume.





---

## Cholita

Until I reached the age of twelve, my grandmother would force me to dress as a cholita every Christmas. Every year we went to Church of Saint Teresa, 45th St, Woodside to reunite with family friends from Ecuador. My grandmother would sign me up to join a group of ten performers to dance on the church auditorium stage. My family is Catholic and Christmas meant much more than just the presents, it was more about the birth of Jesus the Christ. In the performance people would reenact the birth of Jesus Christ and the gifting of the three kings. My family immigrated is from Ecuador. Back in Ecuador people will finish the reenactment off with a cultural dance.

Cholita stands for mixed breed or civilized Indian. Cholitas dress up in their custom outfits that consist of multiple accessories and layering of clothing. For the Christmas event I wore the entire traditional outfit: a tan bowler hat, fake gold earrings (because I would most likely lose them), a shawl that carried my baby doll, and two layers of skirts. The skirt is the most important part of the outfit; it is known to us as pollera, it is tied high at the waist to give out a rounded backside. I wore two pollers, a green underneath and a satin red layered on top. Both skirts had flower embellishments circled around the bottom. My top was white, with ruffled short sleeves, small beads forming a flower around the neck line. We perform Sanjuanito, danceable music used in the festivities of the mestizo and indigenous cultures.

December of 2009 was the last year I ever performed. The older I got, the more I wanted to look cute instead of traditional.

I haven't attended a Christmas party for a few years now. I have slowly drifted away from my families' cultural customs and celebrations. My grandmother, till this day shows me pictures where I am smiling while dressed up as a cholita. I can tell by the way her eyes get a shiny finish as she gets lost reminiscing, she misses those days.



## Black Cat

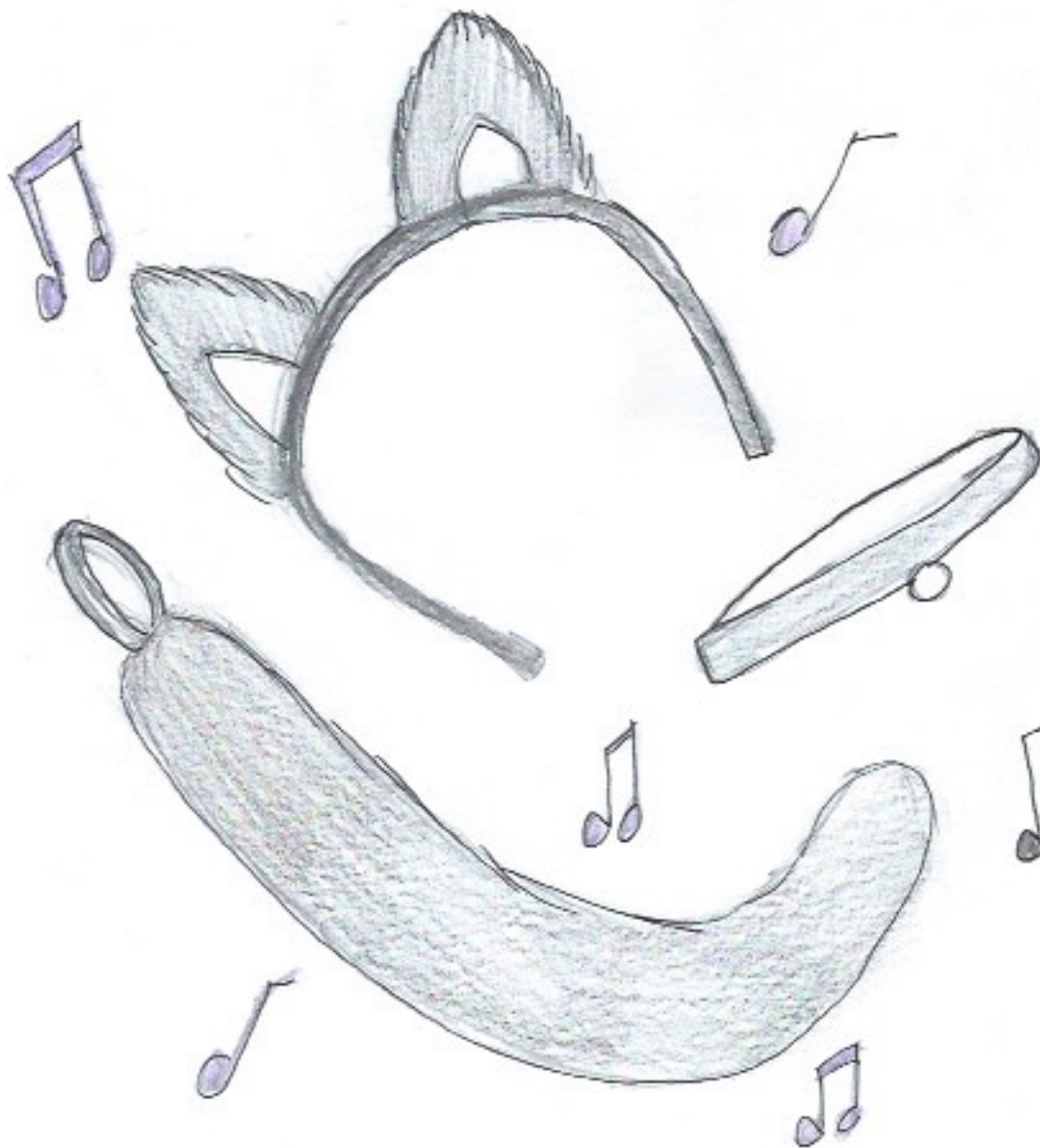
In eight grade my best friend Abigail and I decided to go to our middle school Halloween dance. This was a big deal to us. It was the first time our parents gave us permission to go out alone to a party. Although it was just a school party, we felt grown up walking alone in the evening. Abigail has been my best friends since Kindergarten and we were both very quiet and shy. That senior year, we decide to get out our shell and give this dance a shot.

We bought matching black cat accessory sets that included the ears, a black chocker and a long tail. Our school uniform already consisted of black pants, so the bottoms were easy. We each wore black v-neck long sleeve cotton top and a belt to attach the tail with. I wore my leather black and purple spiked studded belt. In middle school, I went by that "Goth" stage, so that is where the spikes studs on my belt come from. My whole wardrobe was mostly black. All the popular kids owned a belt which came in endless color combinations. I finished my outfit with a pair of black authentic style Vans sneakers. Abigail and I did each others makeup with a black eyeliner. We improvised so much that night; we simply drew a black nose, whiskers and colored in our upper and lower waterline.

It was 7:30 pm, Abigail and I wasted most of our time just roaming around looking at people dance. We made multiple trips to the snack table to grab soda and chips and back to the column we were standing by. I was drinking a Pepsi soda while listening to Abigail comment on the way some students were dancing way too close.

I felt a tap on my right shoulder and once I turned around to see a boy with black framed glasses. He wasn't wearing a costume just regular black jeans, a black shirt and Nike sneakers. It was the first time I was asked to dance by a boy, not sure what overpowered me to say yes. As I walked to the dance floor, I turned around to see Abigail with a surprised expression on her face. I was nervous because I still had not learned how to dance, nor would I feel comfortable dancing in front of other students.

My palms felt sweaty, and I instantly regretted saying yes! I felt as if my whiskers were smudging with the multiple times I moved my bangs away from my face, We danced to "Please Don't Stop The Music" by Rihanna. We got closer to each other to the point that I smelled the gel on his hair. We were swaying side to side and barley had eye contact, while small talk about what academy we belonged to. I was from Cornell Academy and he was from Harvard. Our academies were rivals when it came to competing in academic grades. I was relieved when the song finished. Then we said goodbye and parted ways. Once I arrived home I stayed up past bedtime thinking about the dance all night wondering if he thought I was a lousy dancer or if my sweating smelled. Two weeks later I got a friend request on MySpace.com, it was him Christian Alonso.



2010 - 2014

---

## Flory Tail

I never considered myself to be a girly girl. I grew up around male cousins and we would play sports. My cousins had no mercy for me being a girl. I felt as if I were one of the boys. I lived with my father for a few years and everyday he would take me to my grandparent's house. There I would spend most of my afternoon playing with my cousins. The older I got, the more I drifted apart from playing. At the age of thirteen, I had started menstruating and wasn't allowed to be "one of the boys". Grandmother started teaching me women duties such as learning how to cook, and clean.

I have seen all of my aunts and older cousins have a "Sweet sixteen" birthday party. My family would come together to see the sweet sixteen videos and albums once they arrived. It was a huge deal for me as the youngest girl in the family to have one too. I wasn't a huge fan of all the dancing, the huge dresses. It just all seemed too stressful and expensive. Dad loved the idea of not having a party and just saving money, but all the women in my family opposed to the idea. A few months before my sixteenth birthday, my aunts and cousins helped me prepare.

I wasn't even sure what color I wanted everything to be. Pink was the last color I expected to wear. I fell in love with a blush gown. The top was strapless, designed with a sweet heart cut, decorated with pearls and small white rhinestones. The bottom of my dress was designed to look like roses that cover the entire bottom all the way to the end of the tail of my gown. It was made out of organza material. Organza is a lightweight material, a sheer fabric made of silk. I wore a cage crinoline around my waist to give the bottom silhouette volume, and a corset to help



with my posture, and modify my body shape.

That night will forever be remembered and cherish. I went to Dumbo, Brooklyn to take pictures, and as I stepped out of the limousine, a little girl tugged on her mother's jacket and said "Mommy look, look she's a princess." I felt like a princess for that night and the endless compliments and attention I was given, woke up the "girly girl" side of me.





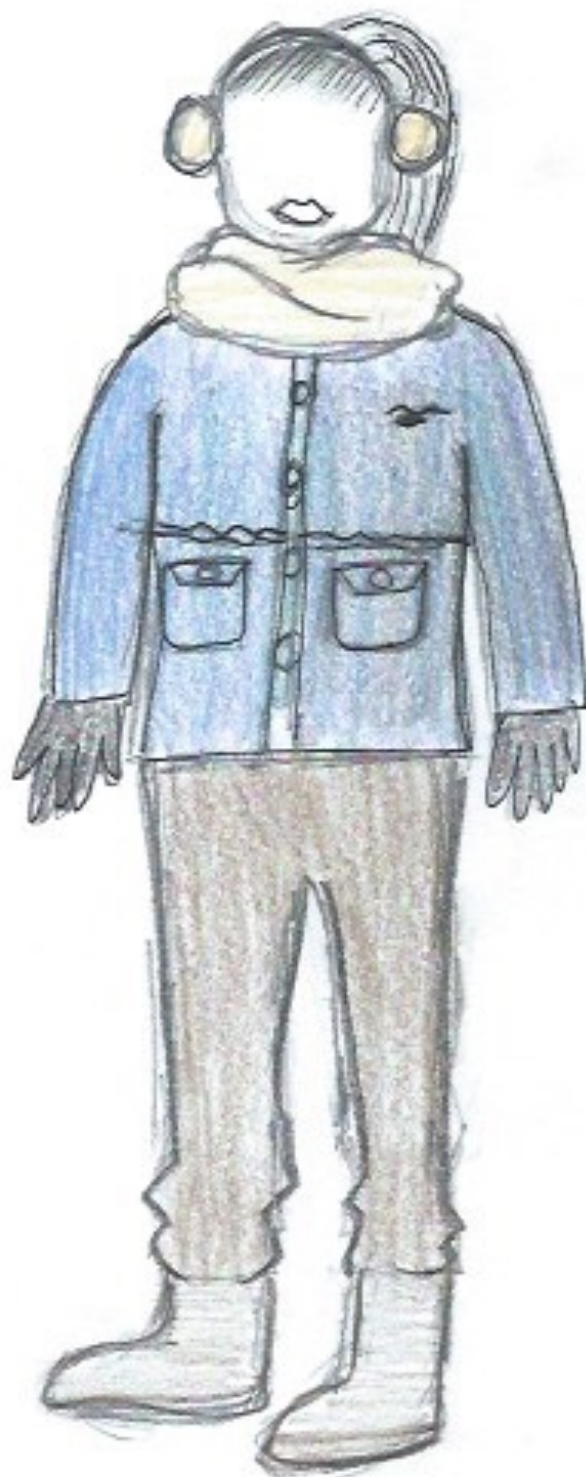
---

## Senior trip

In 2014, Queens Vocational High School students went on the school Senior trip for two days, three nights filled with activities. Being able to dorm with your friends was a great way to relax from school. I was excited to spend the nights with my girlfriends since my parents never let me sleep over my friends house. I roomed with Abigail, Eylin and one other friend. The senior trip was held in March, super early into the year. Because the resort had multiple high schools reserved, we either took the trip early into the year or really late. The school preferred not to interfere with our finals thinking it can cause a distraction. Since it was still cold, I packed winter clothing because there was a hike involved the next morning we arrived.

I unpacked my duffle bag and took out multiple shirts and long sleeves. It was time to layer up in a tank top, a shirt and thermo on top. For bottoms, I wore black leggings under my sweatpants, two layers of socks to protect my toes. I didn't have proper footwear. The only boots I could think of to keep me warm were my UGG boots, which, by the end of the hike, were all water damaged. I wore a heavy navy Hollister jacket that had a furry headpiece attached to keep my head warm, and I would put my hands inside two side pockets to keep warm. For extra protection, I took my beige thick wool scarf, UGG earmuffs, and a pair of gloves. I was fully set for my first hike.

My UGG boots had no type of grip, so when walking along the hike trail, I would slip on the slopes. The entire trip I held on to Abigail because I wanted to avoid an embarrassing fall. I was warm the entire time, that I can't complain. At the end of that adventurous hike, we all built a bonfire, toasted some snores and sang through out the starry night.



## Substitution

Dad never took prom serious, he didn't want to invest money on a dress, the hair, nor the ride. As soon as senior year started I told my dad to save up for the senior trip, senior dues and prom. I guess he was getting annoyed that he kept spending money. I had picked out a prom dress months in advance. I had a whole vision of how I wanted to look for prom, but my vision didn't come true.

My dream dress was a mermaid dress, in 2014 transparent jeweled dresses were in style. Celebrities such as Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian's were wearing it in red carpets even while performing. The dress I wanted was a spaghetti strap sweet heart mermaid dress, the spaghetti strapped crossed in the back like an "x" giving extra support on the breast. The dress was long with glittery and beaded embellishment that covered the breast and bottom like a miniskirt cover and the rest of the dress was transparent with few glittery beads that gave it a sparkle look. I dreamed of my father buying me the dress, it cost about \$300 dollars and dad wasn't budging. I was very upset i even went on to contacted people that were trying to sell it second hand. I found this one girl but she had tailored it to fit her hight she was five feet, and once i tried the dress on thee length didn't touch the floor. The dress was was a no go.

All my other friends got the dress they wanted, I felt upset. I was running out of time, a month before from I searched online for a dress that was less that \$100, daddy gave me a budget and I had to work with it. While searching online I found an eggplant colored strapless dress, the bust had a sharp "v" indent in the middle and the fabric was ruche that made it interesting. A think satin strip of fabric was tight just a bit above to hops that gave an illusion of a smaller waist. The long dress was very simple, had no beading, not transparent at all, nor was it tight.

---

I received the dress and it fit perfect although the it was too long. I went to get it tailored and at the last minute I got an idea of getting a slip cut in it. I picked up my dress the same day of prom from the tailors, it was either a make or break, I was fortunate enough that it came out exactly how I wanted it to. Although my prom dress was nothing how I wished for it was still beautiful. I received so many compliments and not one at the party had one like it, almost every girl had the transparent glittery beaded dress that night. I was actually pleased with not buying the popular dress that night, I liked being one of the few different dressed.

DREAM DRESS



ACTUALLY WORE

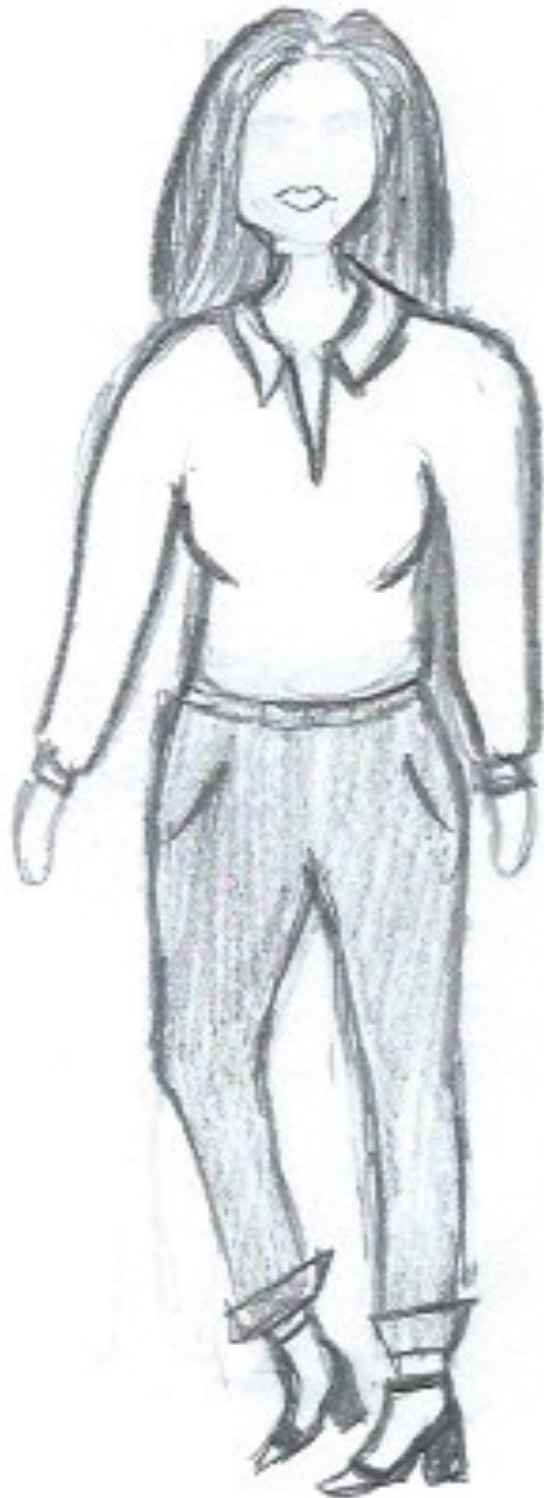


## First interview

As soon as I turned eighteen I started looking for a job, my mother always turned down my working paper applications by not providing her signature of approval. I applied to countless retail stores online giving in my improved resume. I received an email from Century 21 Department store for an interview as a sales associate the only one out of the many I sent. My mother wasn't happy about it but I was determined to show her how responsible and mature I am.

I spend days thinking of an interview outfit, looking through Google, magazine even YouTube videos. I needed all the recommendations of do's and don'ts in an interview. My final outfit did not just represent my style but made my mother realize I was maturing, I wasn't getting a job for money but to learn and grow from the experience. I felt completely confident and ready to wow the hirer.

I wore a white collared blouse with loose bottom for comfort. The blouse was v-neck that stopped by mid chest giving off a fashionable but modest look. I wore black dress pants with side pockets that gave me an option to hold a small card wallet, and cellphone. The bottom of the pants were cuffed an inch above my ankle which gave me freedom to wear my black strap mid heels. I arrived with my black folder with my resume and certifications, really simple and straight forward. My interview went great that day, I got offered a position as a visual associate. The hirer noticed that my resume included an endorsed diploma in Photoshop, InDesign, and Graphic Arts. Since getting hired for visual it gave me an opportunity to learn more about marketing and advertising. I was fortunate to be given an opportunity to join a team that has taught me so much.





## Clickety-clack

Senior year of high school I lost myself while hanging with the “wrong” crowd. It was the second round of applications that the high school spoke to the students about. I never pictured myself applying for college to late into the year. I was very close to not attending college. I had people tell me that I should take a break and then go after a year, or that college wasn’t important enough. I think I was getting influenced by what they were feeling. I started researching colleges around New York City, I stumbled across New York City College of Technology located on 300 Jay Street, Metro-tech. I was really thrilled to get an acceptance letter back, it felt as if I just saved my whole future by chance. Once I graduated connections with the high school “friends.” I focused on being alone and becoming more responsible, taking control of my future.

Before starting my first semester my mother took me school shopping. Mom bought me a pair of Steve Madden black suede ankle booties. The boots had three inch heels, they were perfect to wear on the first day of school. The first day of class I wore denim jeans, a white loose cotton t-shirt and my boots. The boots made a clickety-clack noise on the hallways, which was not on my favor because my intentions weren’t to make people believe a professor was coming by. I wore my boots with a number of different outfits. The boots soon became my favorite, after multiple uses it became comfortable. Sadly I had worn out my shoes so much I had to replace the back heel twice, my suede wasn’t black anymore but patches of grey. I knew it was time to let go.





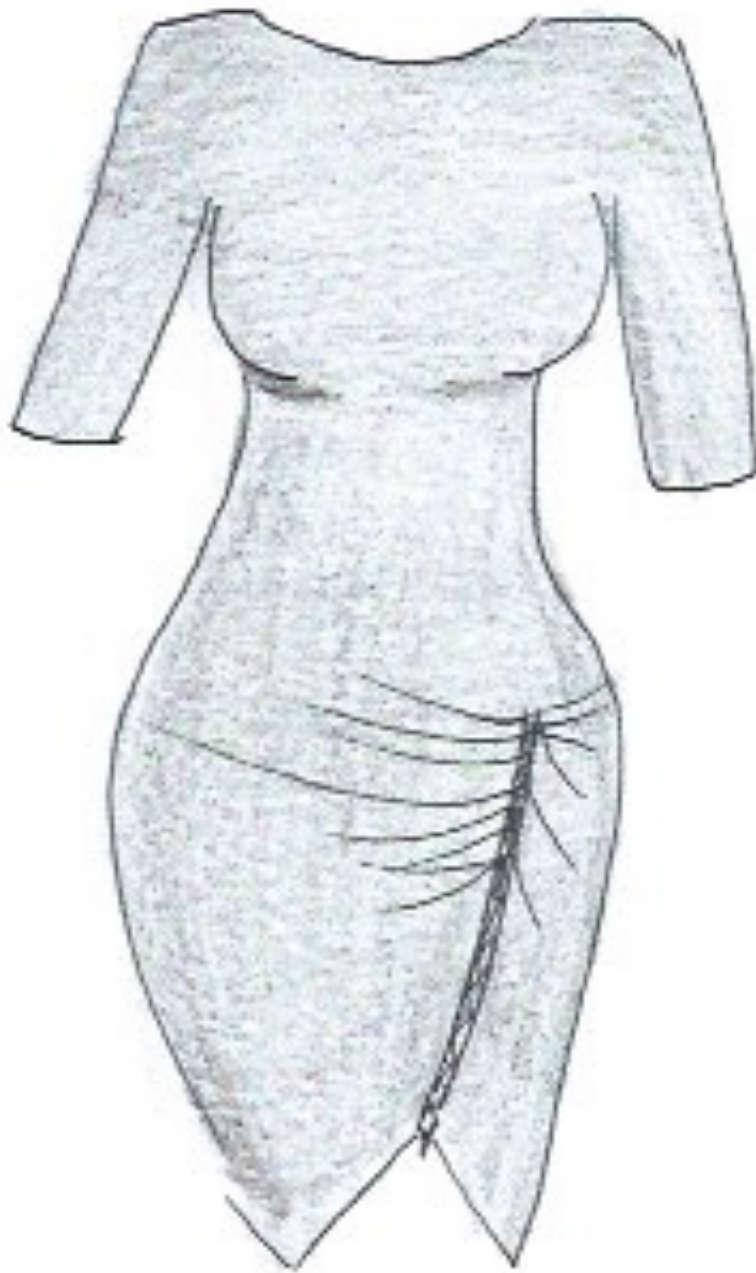
2015 - 2017

## Granpapa

I left my grandfathers side a few hours before his passing, dad called me at 2:00 a.m. on April 28, 2015. My grandfather was diagnosed with cancer January of the same year. A soon as I got the phone call my heart shattered, no pain can compare to you losing a father figure. All the boy heartaches seemed nothing anymore. Grandpapa's death wasn't meant to feel sudden but still took our family time to even believe it happened. It was too surreal.

When I was younger I would spend most of my days with my grandparents. My grandpapa loved volleyball, he would always set up volley ball nets every Sunday in the summer time. My grandfathers favorite place was Flushing Meadow park in Queens, New York. The last time I spoke to grandpapa he spoke to me about going to a walk in the park, he reassured me he will get better. Through out the last months of his life he would never lose hop, he was always cheerful, and he would always tell us his favorite jokes. Grandpapa has taught me to be happy even when the worse can happen, to still light up through the darkness.

Two days after his passing we held a funeral. I had no energy to decide what to wear, nor did I want to go look for it. My mother went out to purchase a dress for me to wear. She got me a dress from EXPRESS; it is a polyester spandex wrap dress that was easy to slip into, with three quarter sleeves, and a asymmetrical zipper on the left. Although the dress was really flattering it just serves for one purpose now, to remind me of one of the most difficult days of my life. My mom chose to keep it since it was only worn once. I stumbled upon it this year 2017, it simply gave me goosebumps and a sad memory.



## So long black

My natural hair color is black. I dyed my hair when I was seventeen years old. My look needed to change I felt like my black hair emphasized on my pale face, I looked sick most of the time. My mom also contributed by telling me if made my face look rounder. So I decided it was time for a change, I did not know exactly what color to dye it.

I spent weeks looking through magazines, and googling "2016 hair trends." Ombré hairstyle came up multiple times, it was introduced in 2015 but very few were giving it a try. After a few months into the new year many celebrities were dying their hair ombré. Ombré, is a hair color technique that color is placed only at the tips of your hair, very much like grown out sun kissed hair.

The hair stylist Edith I went to graduated from my High school, she has an endorses diploma on cosmetology. She wanted to practice the technique and I wanted to change my hair color. I trusted her with my first hair color, the whole hair process took about four hours. Since my natural roots are black Edith changed my base color to a dark brown, then she proceeded to bleaching my ends. At the end of the bleach process my whole hair was with aluminum foil. I sat for an hour under a heated seat to then taken to condition my hair to prevent damage. The holy grail of bleached hair is the purple shampoo. I was slathered with a lot of it to tone out the yellow. Edith ended by blowdrying and curling my hair, the end results left me speechless. Although the hair color is beautiful it's required to go back every three months for maintenance.

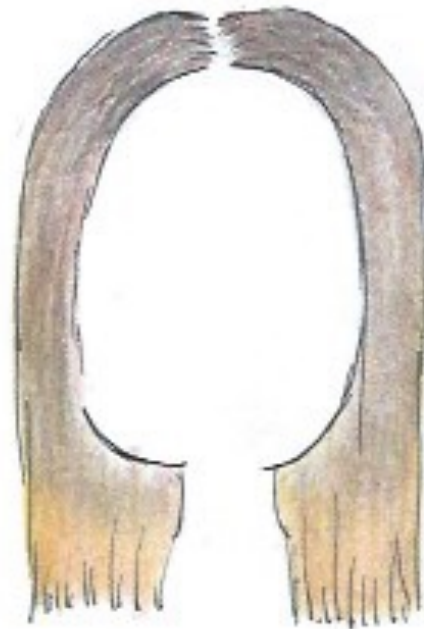
I was so satisfied with my new hair, I felt different more confident. I still have the same hairstyle for about four years. It's still surprising to me that the Ombré color is still on top in the fashion

industry. The more years that have gone by the more colors the ombré was introduced in. I don't see myself changing my hair color anytime soon.

BEFORE



AFTER





## Split in two

My parents divorced when I was two years old, I am their only child together. I was raised by my grandparents from my fathers side. My father and mother would always be working. I was shared from very little, my mother will have me weekdays and my dad weekends. The sharing went on for many years. Eventually my mother got remarried and had Kemberly in 2000 and Javin in 2014. My father remarried as well, he had one child Alan born in 2003. I am the eldest of my three sibling. I have always tried my best to be there for both my parents and siblings when possible.

Every year my parents will choose what holiday they wanted to spend with me, they would bargain and interchange holidays. Having to deal with holidays was the most stressful because I would still missed my other half of the family too. The older I got the more organized I set up holidays. For New Years 2017 I really wanted to share with both my parents. I had to pick out a dress that would set in with both parties perfectly. My mother would usually tell me to dress sexy, according to her I cover up to much. For my fathers party my family would always pick a theme or color to wear that night, gold and black was the color theme. So I purchased a spaghetti strap, v-neck slip dress, with a slit on the left side. I was very satisfied with being able to please both sides of my family. That night I counted down New Years with my mother drank our glass of champagne and cheered. At 12:30 I was already on a cab on my way to my father, I spent the rest of the night there celebrating a new beginning and sharing it with both my parents. I was exhausted that night for jumping from one party to another but it was worth it.





---

## 5:00 A.M.

On September 2017, I started a new job I was now working in the visual team for Victoria Secret in 34th street, Herald Square. This new job brought new challenges, one of those were morning shifts that starts at 6am on the dot. The company is really huge on attendance, I know commute to work at 5am. I take the subway, and all New Yorkers know the MTA are always unexpected. I've been hired for about three weeks now, and till this day I am awkwardly stared at. I follow a dress code of all black casual clothing. Having to take the train at 5:00am has opened my view on the hard working people we don't recognize.

The first time I took the train I was wearing a black blazer, a blouse, flat shoes and dress pants, thats my look majority of the time. My only accessory was my small beige purse, the shape is my favorite, square with rounded edges and two leather stripes that fall right in the center. Every morning I do my makeup, working in an environment of high customer traffic, and where mostly females work have influenced me to at least not look like I just rolled out of bed. My hair is always done, most of the time I straighten it, other days I have a low sleek bun.

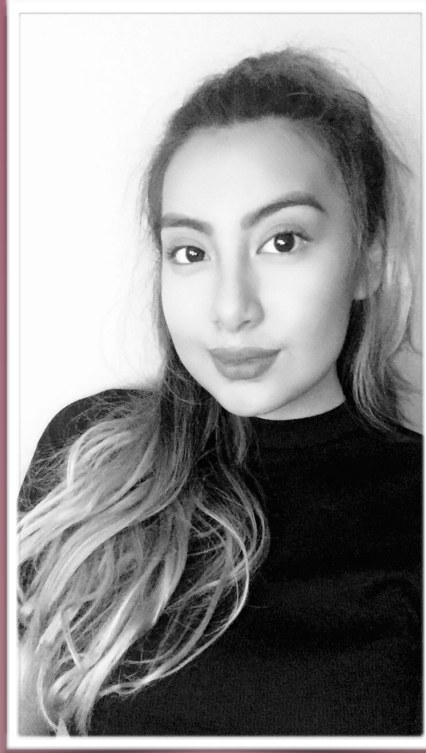
As soon as I entered to cart I was so surprised to see how many people are up for work, it is about the same amount you see at rush hour at 3:00pm. I was the odd ball that day taking the train, I was stared at almost the entire ride. I think most people were wondering what is it that a casual dressed young women, with a full makeup was headed to. I caught men staring and once I looked at them they quickly looked away, women were looking at me up and down.

---

Most men taking the subway are electricians, wearing their blue denim jeans, protective footwear, their helmets attached to the tool bag or backpack. Then you see the employees that are actually coming back from their night shift in La Guardia Airport wearing their company logo in their jackets. As well as restaurant employees that talk to their friends about their morning prep. The majority are men but I do see a small percentage of women that go to work at this time, they mainly do maintenance in offices or work in a factory. One thing for sure is that we all look tired.

I admire every person in the train for waking up so early in the morning, it takes a lot to take up the responsibility many don't want. Most of the people in the train sleep throughout the entire train ride. Once they plug in their earphones it's nap time. Others use their phones to watch videos or hear really loud music to stay awake and not miss their stops. Others fall asleep while standing up, we all have a dreamy expression where we just glaze to nothingness. We are all there for the same purpose whether it's to support their family or for themselves. New York is truly the city that never sleeps.





Wendy Tupacyupanqui grew up in Queens with her grandparents Celinda and Manuel while her parents worked. Wendy attended New York City of Technology, she majored in Fashion Marketing. She works as a visual merchandiser a job she is pleased to have because she expresses her artistic views. Her uniform consist of wearing black, her favorite color. It works perfectly fine since black is her favorite color, you can never go bad with wearing black.