

"I'm from dirty distorted streets and rats wit no feet and kats wit gold teeth and sleep wit no rest kuz 3 shots to da chest make it complicated ta slumber in dis insomniacs dream, I'm from da rotten apple where bois ride strapped fo, ready fo war, can't take no mo, jus makin' it by gotta stay high jus ta deal wit every day life builden up strife to da brims of my soul and i grow cold like a winters day in Wash. Heights wit no lights or heat can't even hear my heart beat, I'm from 1,2, no 3,4 pshhh... too many ta count kuz papa wuz a rollin stone and where eva he laid his hat he piped his seed givin' me 5, 6, 7, 8 no wait yaw fa got bout me... I'm from brick city where trap bois stay on dat grimy and gritty, ain't nothin pretty bout bein gully all bout da skully and bloody life, wit death kissin' ya head bringen you into da world posin' as ya midwife now you're livin by hindsight and dey say "Dis is da life" I'm from Bedstuy and Flatbush were dey blow kush and rock tims and cop rims and lose limbs ta settle disputes no tellin' da truth kuz only "Slick tounes" get you where you wanna be but see dat aint me i got high expectations and now i'm patiently waitin' fa dem to arrive." -Stasia Jones

As a child it was very difficult to establish a sense of home and settlement. We moved a numerous amount of times and it became very difficult to evolve in the process. It started with just moving within the city, then it turned to state wide, different states and eventually the whole other side of the country. It was a really big deal when we moved from Brooklyn, New York to Patterson, New Jersey because of the different scene, environment and people. This was the fifth time that we had moved so I thought it would be simple and easy because I'm used to it but it turned out to be one of the biggest changes in my life.

I remember the first day we drove across the border to Patterson. It was dusty and dingy, like the hick town of New Jersey. We hit the corner and made our way to our street. It was the most horrifying block I have ever seen in my life, with decaying buildings and infested streets. People judged you out of incoherence, by your appearance, or the objects that you owned riding hatch back, tied down to the back of a station wagon. I thought to myself "oh, Dios why me?" as we pulled up to our dusky, polluted, littered shack of an apartment, which was right across the street from a stripper joint and up the steps from the grocery store called Giovanni's which had the nastiest, most out-dated food and supplies ever. As we made our way through the alley to the stairs I began to smell the most pungent, grotesque, and disgusting smell I have ever taken in and I knew right then and there that this would be an experience that I would never forget. After four flights of steps we arrived at our apartment. It was supposed to read "25A"; instead it was an upside down and broken sign of pain and agony, that hung on the doorway to the obliteration of all happiness that once sparkled in my life.

When this move occurred I was very young. For the longest time I couldn't cope with it, but the older I grew the more prone to adapting I became. I was able to take a situation and make it coexist with my already existing life. Moving away from my father and living with my mom and eight brothers made me more independent, self-reliant, and responsible for my own life. Growing up as a young Puerto Rican and African-American female in Brooklyn it was very hard to find much opportunity, but I was always determined to pursue higher aspirations for myself throughout my life.