

2 Years

If you had told me two years ago I would write a poem such as this, I'd laugh or scoff. Coming in I was positive this was it, the end, my swan song. In conversation with family, friends, correctional officers, and staff; I have expressed my wholehearted belief that there is no bouncing back from this and that I had failed at life. What has allowed this shift in thinking was the steadfast love of family, insistent reminders of strangers, and assurance of those who reside inside with me that it feels that way, but feelings are not facts.

This poem is for everyone inside who is pushing forward, striving for better, and visualizing a version of themselves that is not limited by a label. Ultimately, this poem is for myself. A reminder at any given time that **this is not the end.**

730 days later, I'm still here

Still going

Still growing

Still holding onto hope

Knowing where my help comes from

I've been up

I've been down

Through it all I have found

A peace, a love, a joy

That tethers & propels me forward

The peace of God

The love of family

The joy in knowing this is not the end

Just a chance to begin again

- *Nova*