

Our daughter Niki was born in 2007. "Niki" (Νίκη in Greek) is translated in English as "victory". Before she was born, I was trying to live my life under my moral compass, always do the right thing. I was thinking, If not trying to do the right thing then nothing in this universe has any meaning. That was my life motto at that time.

When we had the first signs of Niki's regression, I thought to myself, what is this? Is this a punishment? A reward? Is this a lesson? A lesson for who?

And then she was diagnosed with Rett syndrome

So, I tried to dig deep.

I had to learn everything from scratch, about people, about existence, about its mysteries.

Well, we come from Cyprus, a small island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Unfortunately, during the last years, our country is becoming famous due to corruption scandals but i can assure you, there are people in this country who work and study really hard to keep its ancient Greek spirit alive.

Amidst all the struggle and the suffering of my family, i had to go deep into Socrates, the first man in history who was aware of his ignorance: "All I know is that I know nothing". I had to study Plato, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Epicurus, more modern European philosophers, Christian theology.

Then I came across Darwin 's Theory of evolution: Random mutation is one of its four pillars. Wow!

It was 2011. I visited the Louvre in Paris. I faced the statue of Nike of Samothrace "Winged Victory of Samothrace" («Ἄπτερος Νίκη» in Greek, meaning Wingless Victory). I could not explain what I felt. Millions of visitors in awe, in front of her. Of course I knew a lot about her but I could not stop my mind thinking about my daughter and the connection. Same name, no wings.

Then in 2013 I attended the 3rd European Rett Syndrome Conference in Maastricht.

I was asked to make a brief presentation about the situation in my country.

At that time there was almost nothing in Cyprus in terms of specialized treatment.

So I basically told the story about a wingless ancient Greek goddess and that she has the same name with my daughter and Niki means Victory!

That' was it. Almost everyone gave a standing ovation. The parents were so excited and inspired by the story.

And this is my definition of metaphysical. A very strong connection of people through pain and suffering that transcends space and time.

This is my definition of little everyday miracles.

It was then, that I had the idea to write a book about existentialism, inspired mostly by my daughter and our experience. A poetry book. Short, meaningful, interconnected and allegorical stories. The best way, in my opinion, for people to connect and recognize their individual stories.

I was taught that everything is about thinking. So I embarked on one of the greatest journeys of human existence to go into my daughter's mind. I had to translate her smile.

I thought that I could become her voice. I could be a translator of her thoughts, creating our own cloud of happiness. A different kind of happiness, that can transcend this life to any kind of another level of thought or any kind of afterlife. To redefine everything. To convert suffering into happiness. What did the alchemists try to do? Well, I have my philosopher's stone.

After almost ten years of hard work i published my book. A beautiful girl who cannot talk managed to say some extraordinary things. And she managed to be heard all over the world. Loud and clear.

After almost seventeen years of an unbelievable experience with our daughter, excuse me Socrates, I only know one thing. I would not change my life with anything. And I guess, this is one of the best answers.

This is the hundredth and last poem of my book

Without wings

Every time I take a stroll with you
And see you smile
All the poets and philosophers
appear before me.
As the sun turns
to reign beside your smile
within the rose tinted silence
all doubts fade away.

Every time I take a stroll with you
And see you smile
The sun's rays gather
on your face
before fading away.
As if they knew
they must reach you
to bring with them
all the possible beauty
to shine through your gaze.

And, just as I listen to all the melodies
with all the beautiful sentiments
I must be certain
that I bare
all the codes
of communication...

Every time I take a stroll with you
And see you smile
All our ancestors
and all who will follow us
appear before me.
The moment captures time
eternity aims to hide within your thoughts
without considering escape
without an alibi now.
And this ecstatic
and romantic mood of hers...
seems to be orchestrated by
the beating
of your own heart.

Every time I take a stroll with you
And see you smile
an out of this world transcending notion
and a wave of convention
bring all the questions
that solve all the queries.
And fear brings peace to the world
We become the echoing of the waves
you become the metaphysics of words.

And all of a sudden
within the starlight
that prepares
to welcome August
I hear all that
you have always been trying to tell me...
And I carefully collect
all of your smiles.
Because your smiling...
beautifies my past.

Translated by Miranda Jane Stavrou