

I'm Sorry, English Is Not My First Language

Irene Blanco



Irene Blanco (she/her) is from Spain. She felt fascinated with written words, even before she knew how to read them. After going to the library every Friday of her childhood, she became a librarian. She arrived in New York City on March 12, 2020, and now she wonders how to use words in English across zooms, paperwork, and masks. She is a student in the creative writing class at the ESU Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center in New York City.

I looked up *equivocarse* in the dictionary
because I make so many mistakes
in this city, in this language,
that I want to be sure how to err correctly.

I need the vocabulary to go wrong
to slip up with everything
the grammar to trip up and
forget about the illusion of perfection.

Embracing the flaws
being vulnerable is the lesson
accepting that nothing is more perfect
than my daily imperfection.

AFTER YOU READ: Based on the context, what do you think *equivocarse* means? What does “slip up” and “trip up” mean? What is the main idea of this poem? What do you think about it? Share a time you had to “forget about the illusion of perfection” or “embrace the flaws.”