

#verselove Day 12, Collaborative Poem
2020

Quilted squares sewn together through poetry
Building community with #verselove
We are THREADED from
home is where you make it
family doesn't always mean full blood
high expectations and good manners
a family of short women in a small family in a small town
pack your bags and go to dad's every other weekend
Georgia and immigrant grandparents
the white stucco tract house with green shutters
and seven kids (brimming, entangled, trying to fit into the puzzle)
all ninety years of her tale
preserved in dust and ashes
a mother who follows her heart
gave up a well-paying job to teach
inspiration comes from her
packed with baggage
questioning
answering

We are EMBROIDERED from
Exuding sweet syrup on a summer day
fasting on Yom Kippur
fried chicken, kreplach
moon holding tears to clouds as big as farmer jeans
the branches that scratch and knot
the blossoms that cradle hope
palm fronds don't hide the sun's over welcome
catching lightning bugs in a jar.
the home of Motown sound
Yes, rhythm and blues beats pulsed all around,
the honeysuckle bush down the alley
one side where everything has a place
and everything's in it,
to the other that is full of long-lost surprises
Lantana
Rain-dropped and purple
tangles spreading wildly pink, yellow, and orange
lilac and mulberry bushes
untamed, untrimmed
the helicopter tree in the neighbor's yard,
seeds twisting between my hands
then spiraling through the air

We are CROSS-STITCHED from
breath and spirit
"don't break your arm patting yourself on the back"

an unnecessary reminder
of where we came from
later avoided with bitter resentment
dripping from mute mouths
playing in the rain
dancing and singing
short-tempered and the story-tellers
“dark thirty” and “sit up straight”
the silent treatment and rough-housing
vast engulfing centers of fun for families
rippling waves haunt my body
deep in my dreams
don't let your eyes be bigger than your stomach
and hug your cousin
Be kind, eat good food, tell the truth

We are LACED with
home movies, reel to reel,
stored in tins
that playback Love within
gospel and hymns tunes, solid ground
hard scrabble and word Scrabble
icecream truck and,
"Hey, watermelon man!"
keep trying and deep-frying
camping trips and freckles,
A deck of cards in one hand; a beer in the other
from Carpenters' songs,
contralto reverberating our walls,
“Rainy Days and Mondays” popping and crackling on vinyl
poetry, chalk, protests, and music
ink staining my dominant writing hand
bunny-eared pages in poetry books
music note doodles on my math homework
page-turned and word-written into journeys in
plastic photo albums under the stairs
so many memories packed in shoeboxes,
stashed away are large photo albums with pages and pages of time
collectible bells encompassing family memories
encrusted in dust, but still standing tall
crowding the surface
reminding onlookers of where we are from
From love

Click on the image or [here](#) to view the interactive map, the literal locations of where we are currently writing.

