

I am from the neighborhood tribe,  
Of fia fias, stick ball, and time trials on bikes.  
I am from barefoot beaches, a Red Cross volunteer.  
From Sunday drives and broken down cars,  
I am from big kids watching little kids,  
braving cattle, delivering papers, adventuring and free.  
I never noticed the United Nations of my neighborhood, but they are me.

I am from 50 ways to stretch a meal,  
from Ivory soap and Breck shampoo baths.  
I am from Timmie's stories of Sheiks and Geishas,  
Sunday scrabble, and weekly letters to Mom and Gov.  
I am from picnics and holidays,  
with loud, opinionated, animated, engaged,  
enough is enough, can we just agree to disagree siblings.  
I am from family rich in love and responsibility.

I am from my mom's Catholic church,  
of grape boycotts, sanctuary sales, and welcoming gays.  
I am from, "Heaven helps those who help themselves,"  
from, "We aren't put in this world to do just for ourselves."  
The Jesuit's sermons transformed to praxis through relationships,  
in juvenile prisons, in heartbreaking stories and backbreaking work,  
in learning to read without books and across languages.  
Where I am from has brought me to,  
My own spiritual community of social justice.

I am from love, protection and faith

A solid foundation for a healthy restlessness and rebellion.

I am from 16 years in the same house, to sixteen years in motion.

From a world shifted by seeing the it through others eyes,  
sent on a mission to unlearn the lies my elders told to shield me.

I am from hitchhiking Louisiana, teaching English in Mexico, canyoneering  
with gang girls in Texas and hauling sand in Matondoni on the Dhow.

I sought sun, and people, and learning, and action.

But I am from drizzle, sleet, mist, showers,  
and raining cats and dogs from October to June.

And I have come home.

To invest the lessons I learned in motion,

To support the newcomers in a community I once knew well.

The world has come to me,

and I hope to return the love, commitment and hope that was given to me by  
members of the world community.