

## My Town, Germantown

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This is my town, Germantown.  
I will strut up and down the Great Road.  
I will touch the hem of history; pull on its raggedy coat tails.  
This place belongs to me too -  
the past and the now.  
It's my pot running over -  
my bubbling stew.

Some only see littered streets,  
political jockeying and division,  
chalk drawn on trolley tracks, demarcation.  
Some see dilapidated buildings and dereliction,  
see the muck and mire of personal agendas,  
see the war of words -  
of pay grade and hourly wage,  
of east and west,  
of old conflicts we can't lay to rest.

This is my town.  
I see progress on every corner.  
I'm tapping my foot to a new tune -  
a rally cry that lives in the mouths of babes  
and warms the bellies of our elders,  
a new song called hope, called vibrancy,  
called *by any means necessary*  
we will grow this community.

This is my town.  
I am the roar of drums beckoning  
on a random summer morning.  
I'm am the slaps and claps of the djembe  
seeping out of Maplewood Mall -  
a familiar beat thumping,  
telling me I'm home.

I am the sea of steppers,  
adorned in red and black,  
shiny boots and buttons  
stomping down the cobblestones -  
braids flying,  
arms in precision,  
hips and knees rotating -  
telling me I'm home.

I am a porch on Magnolia Street;  
bathed in warm sudsy water,  
broom swishing down my back,  
cleansing away stains,  
polishing my wear and the tear -  
neighbors sitting to rest a spell.  
I hold the rituals and the celebrations,  
the lessons and contemplations;  
children giggling,  
glasses clinking,  
barbecue searing on the grill -  
telling me I'm home.

This place belongs to me too.  
The past and the now,  
it's my pot running over -  
my bubbling stew.  
I aim to stir it with spoons that dig real deep;  
all the way to the Lanape, to Crefield, to Africa  
and scoop out the spice and sauce,  
the fight and fervor,  
the fierceness and the forgotten,  
the dirge and chants,  
the hymns and moans,  
the marrow and the bones  
of ancestors  
and feel their ancient breath goose bumping my skin  
and hear their tireless voices  
telling me I'm home.

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