

“Hridaya, Atma, Asthitva”:
My Heart, My Soul, My Being

The idea of home was once subjective to me. It was as simple as a quilt. When I felt content, it was where I could be myself with the people I spent my life with. When I was nerdy, home was a residence inhabited by a family unit. When I felt philosophical, it was where my parents made a life for their children.

During childhood, I believed home was Cupertino only, a simple braid of thread. Home reminded me of the scent of flatbread weaving through the windows, carrying a burnt but pleasant flavor. Home was where my dad came to every day.

We visited India one summer. Everything changed. I had an extended family to remember. More sheets of fabric were being sewed onto my quilt. I realize why my parents value heritage. Such a feeling of warmth & contentment only comes from a homeland. & for us, that homeland is in India.

I remember my grandmother giving me a lecture. “You are very lucky to have a home in America.”

When I came back, I was in a dilemma. Where was my home? Was it California? Or was it where my roots originated from, where my blood lived?

I coined myself as ABCD: American Born Confused Desi. It fit perfectly. My quilt was a disarray of knots & tangled string. I was nine, & had visited India once more. I wanted to call it a day & forget about it. It wasn't that important to know where home was.

Except, it was *crucial*. My heart realized that once we moved from Cupertino to Pleasanton in 2021. The sense of home in Cupertino was still there. The thread which connected me to India pulsed brighter than ever. It never faded.

I knew that home was not just one place. Home was a macrame of string, wool, thread, & knots that existed inside me & beyond me. I knew my heart was still strung to Cupertino, & my soul was attached to India since childhood. I knew that my being would tie one more thread to add Pleasanton into the fabric of connections. I knew that one day, someone else would have the same predicament, & I would say, “Home is within & around you. The only difference is whether you can go inside or not right then.”

Instead of my simple quilt, I am surprised to see a massive blanket. In one corner I see my mother's hometown, the roads lined with stitches of street food. In the center I see my previous home, the big pomegranate tree sewn into the backyard. There is a large space at the bottom, where I will sew in memories of Pleasanton.

My home is where I live, but it is also where I trace my bloodline, & where my inner self finds comfort. My home is where my heart, my soul, my being belongs to. My heart is in Cupertino. My soul belongs in India. My being is in Pleasanton.

That's what home is.