

## Home Grown

Poem by Bonnie Olson

Thank God, the Black community raised me  
Gave me a steel-rod backbone  
A strength so deep, so steady  
Can't nothing destroy my Spirit.

Tough Yesler Terrace kids  
A wise old woman with spotless floors  
Giving guidance to a motherless child  
About how to use suffering as fertilizer

Thank God, the Filipino community nurtured me  
Filled my belly with lumpia and chicken adobo  
Warmed my veins with the blood-glue  
Of love and family devotion

Church of Immaculate Conception  
Rituals and tradition in old majestic splendor  
Gilded gold altars of angels  
Lighting the dark alleys of parental addiction

Thank God, the Irish nuns embraced me  
Educated me with noble principles  
Elevating my thoughts to a wide world  
Giving me an escape route

An old Irish nun, standing up to Mother Superior  
To keep this tattered ten year old  
Though no adult paid tuition  
Or showed their face inside the school walls

Gracias Dios, the Latino community schooled me  
Fused my head and heart with the fire of revolution  
History and economic analysis  
Married poetry and music

A Beacon Hill school building takeover  
Marches for Indian fishing rights and union jobs  
Trips to Cuba and Nicaragua Libre  
Blazing my cause in a grand design

Thank the Great Spirit, Native Americans grounded me  
Planted my feet in the Earth Herself  
Put my ego in its proper place  
Beneath Eagle, Orca, and Grandmother Cedar

Kayak journeys to misty wooded islands  
Orca dream visits and my own whale rattle  
Sweat lodges purging my pores  
Of ancient fears past and future

Who am I?  
A person raised in a particular place  
Home grown in Seattle  
This sacred land of Chief Sealth

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