

An Ode to My Mother

By Sheila Johnson

Native Daughter emerged from red earth rich with sacred ancestral DNA; no room for naivety.

Bones made for survival of the fittest joined with insecure, clinging flesh.

Lone-moving, baring feet on uncharted ground fit for hooved mammals from our indigenous land.

Sibling free, mother-full, father yonder hiding from white hunters while you mourned with young tears turned to aged salt and ash.

Longed for your father's arms to cradle a polio-ridden frame that held a picture of perfection at its best.

Spoke to him through the eyes of Aunty who read your penned words of life and love until her death.

You, a princess, never received your crown; earned the headgear of the queen you are.

Found a prince of protection and peace who stroked your wounds and knit together reality and fantasy.

The longitude of war untied your mind, shook your body, and sent three little angels home before they knew your face.

God's unconditional love granted you three more who will love you forever.

Warrior woman of glory, you fought with vocal swords and shields clad with sweat and tears.

You were a tapestry woven with threads of courage; colored with struggle and strength.

I found your soul in the humming of the machine and the stitching of the cloth; every garment made perfect.

I saw your tears dry with the falling of the multitude of fiber scraps and threads of every color.

I felt your peace rise above the dark bipolar clouds when your work of art was completed.

What you created is now a lost art. The loss of art of sewing saved your life, and is saving mine.

Thank you Queen Mother for giving me a look into your soul. The lost art of sewing has been found and revived.