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Loose Thread

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Loose Thread

Rida Fatima

I come from a line of women who sew together families.
Women who thread a lineage of migration through the sharp
needle of a sword.
Women with swollen bellies who stitch the oceans into their
breast pockets.

Nanni, who was ripped from her motherland in the partition,
then robbed of her mother tongue in immigration,
but had a smile like the crescent moon and silk hair that
paved the road
to seam together all six of her children.

Ami, who runs her skilled fingers through my hair
with coconut oil and yogurt and eggs and Aloe Vera
and the list never ends;

but nor does her love, nor does her strength.
She hems courage and confidence into my ragged edges.
She's lived a life of selfless sacrifice but tells me never to compromise—
especially for a man.

Baji, a big-boned beauty who holds me in the softest embrace.
Who irons out the wrinkles, who can solve all the issues without
any credit.
Whose faith withstands the burdens and backlash and any bitch
that tries it.
Her conviction strong enough to carry us through any wreckage.

And I, trying desperately to hand stitch this poem
into the fabric of a college-ruled notebook,
cannot get diaspora to fit through the eye of any needle or pen.