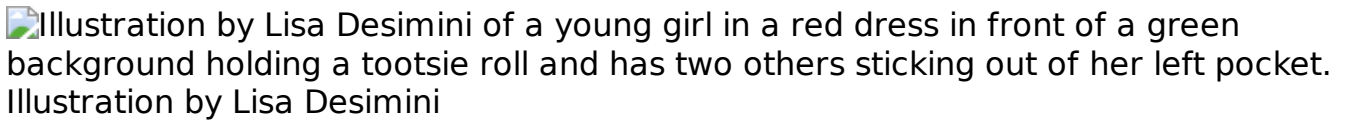


By Suma Subramaniam

I come from a country so far away
that you may have visited only in your dreams.
My face does not bear the pale color of my palms.
I don't speak your language at home.
I don't even sound like you.
If you come to my house, you'll see my family:
my mother in a sari,
my father wearing a sacred thread around his body,
and me, eating a plate of spicy biryani
instead of a burger or pizza
at the dinner table.
If you, for a moment, shed your filter,
you will also see my pockets filled with Tootsie Rolls,
waiting to be shared with you.

 Illustration by Lisa Desimini of a young girl in a red dress in front of a green background holding a tootsie roll and has two others sticking out of her left pocket.
Illustration by Lisa Desimini

Source: *Poetry* (March 2021)