

Celebration of the Jewish Immigrant Experience

Tina Heller Kavit

This is a love letter to the strong Jewish women in my life, that carried on the Jewish traditions, from their original homeland to America. First and foremost, I would like to celebrate my Mom, Ethel Moore Heller, a first generation American, whom I cherished so much. She always found the strength, even after working long hours, to make Matzah Ball Soup and Brisket for Holiday meals. Sitting around in the kitchen table, the heart and soul of the house, kibbitzing and enjoying traditional Jewish foods are my fondest memories. Holiday meals were so special to my family.

To my Richmond Bubbie (grandmother), Minnie Moore, who emigrated from Russia, and lived with my parents, my brother, sisters and I. Although she lost her sight in middle age, she didn't lose her ability to raise us in a Jewish home, filled with Yiddishkite (Jewish Culture), love for family and Jewish foods.

To my New York Bubbie (grandmother), Gussie Heller, who emigrated from Germany, of course bringing her treasured wooden dough bowl and rolling pin, with her to America. She summoned up the strength, with arthritic hands, to make Shabbos Challah for the Jewish holidays.

May they rest in peace. These strong Jewish women defined Jewish culture, and imbued my family to love, respect and value Jewish traditions. Their legacy lives on, from generation, to generation. And so, I celebrate the Jewish immigrant experience, and cherish my family, of strong Jewish women.