

# My Four Houses

by Maimouna Diop





Hi, my name is Maimouna Diop. I am a 14 year old Senegalese child and my life as a Senegalese child was

pretty great, but I faced many difficulties during my childhood and I am here to share my story.





I was born in South Africa and moved to my mom and dad's home country (Senegal) when they got divorced 3 years after I was born. When I moved to Senegal I lived with my great grandmother next to a farm.



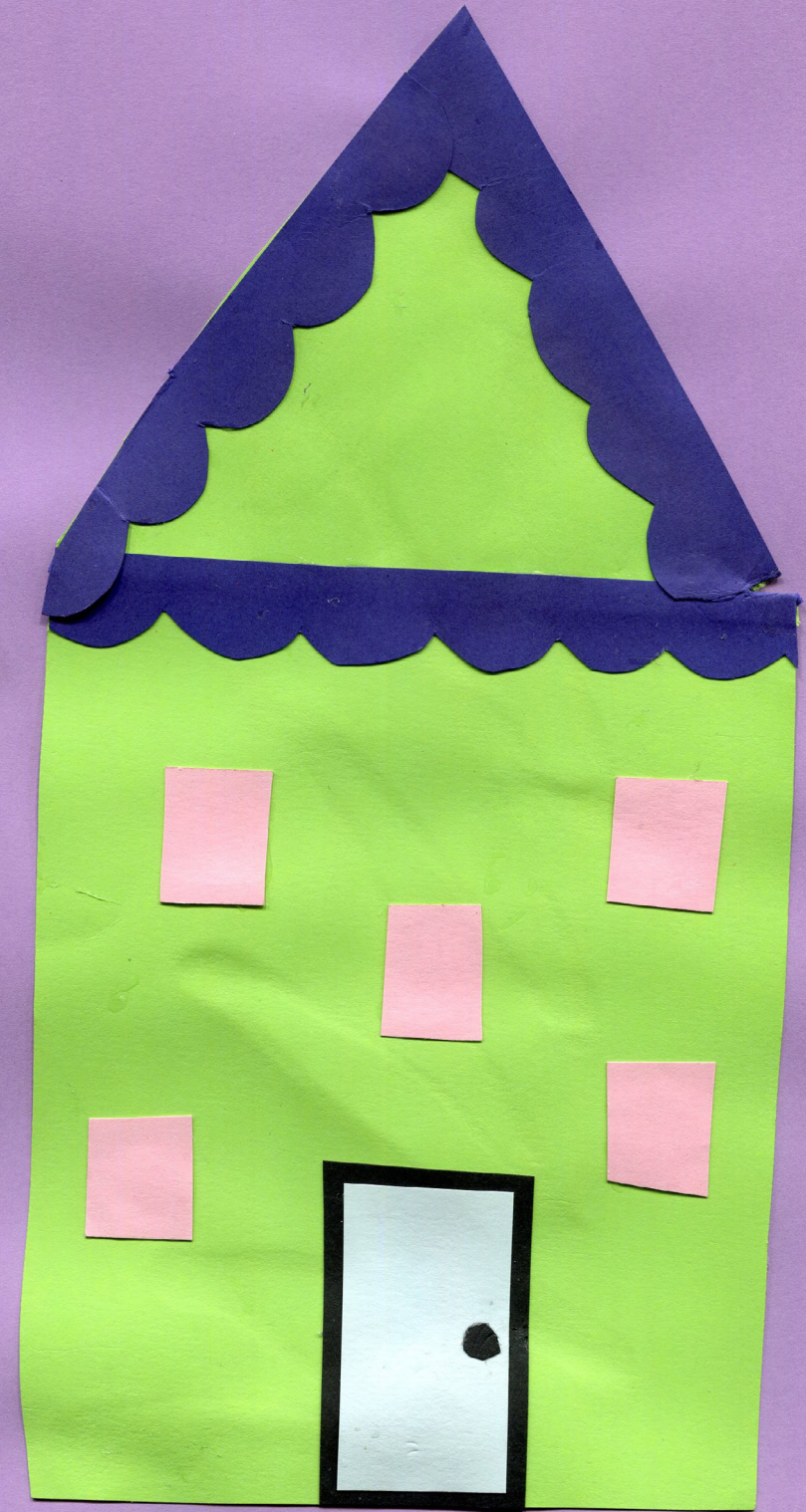




My mom opened up a salon 10 minutes away from my house and school. Where I lived had a lot of floods which made it harder for my family to get where they needed to be, so my mom used to stay at her salon most of the time and sometimes I would stay with her at the salon.



Years after, my mom left Senegal to go to America to help my grandmother that was in America and search for a better life. My mom had to make the choice of me staying with my dad or her friends. My mom chose her friend because my dad is a business owner and travels a lot so I wouldn't have a good education. My mom trusted her friend a lot since they were friends for a long time so she trusted me with her. Even though I had some good memories in there, many bad things started to happen, including my sickness and not being able to eat well. I wasn't doing good there so I changed houses, and stayed at my aunt's house for 2 years.





During these 2 years I went to a new school since my old house and school was too far away. I stayed with my aunt, her husband, and her 2 kids. Me and her two kids got along like siblings, always argued, hurt each other a lot. A funny moment there was when her oldest daughter and I got into an argument and it got so heated that we threw our ipad at each other, of course the blame went on me but it's okay, I got revenge somehow.





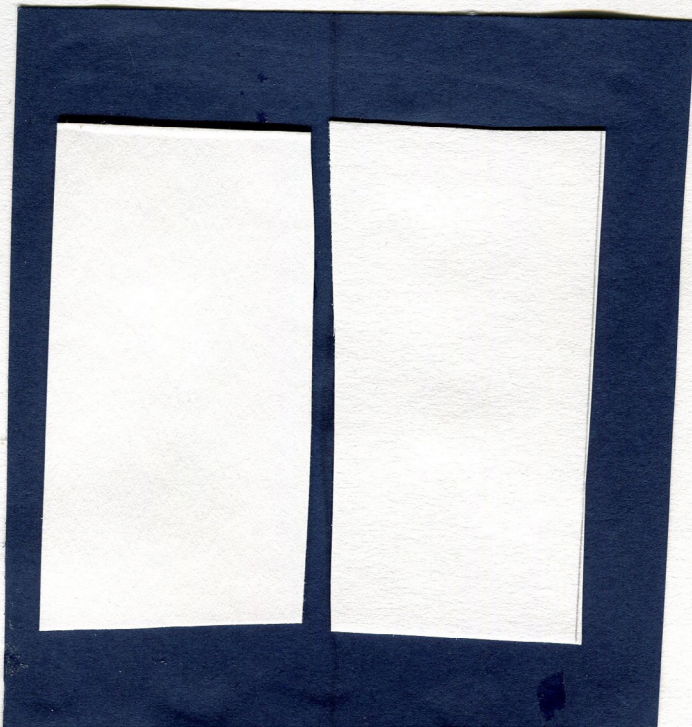


Designer

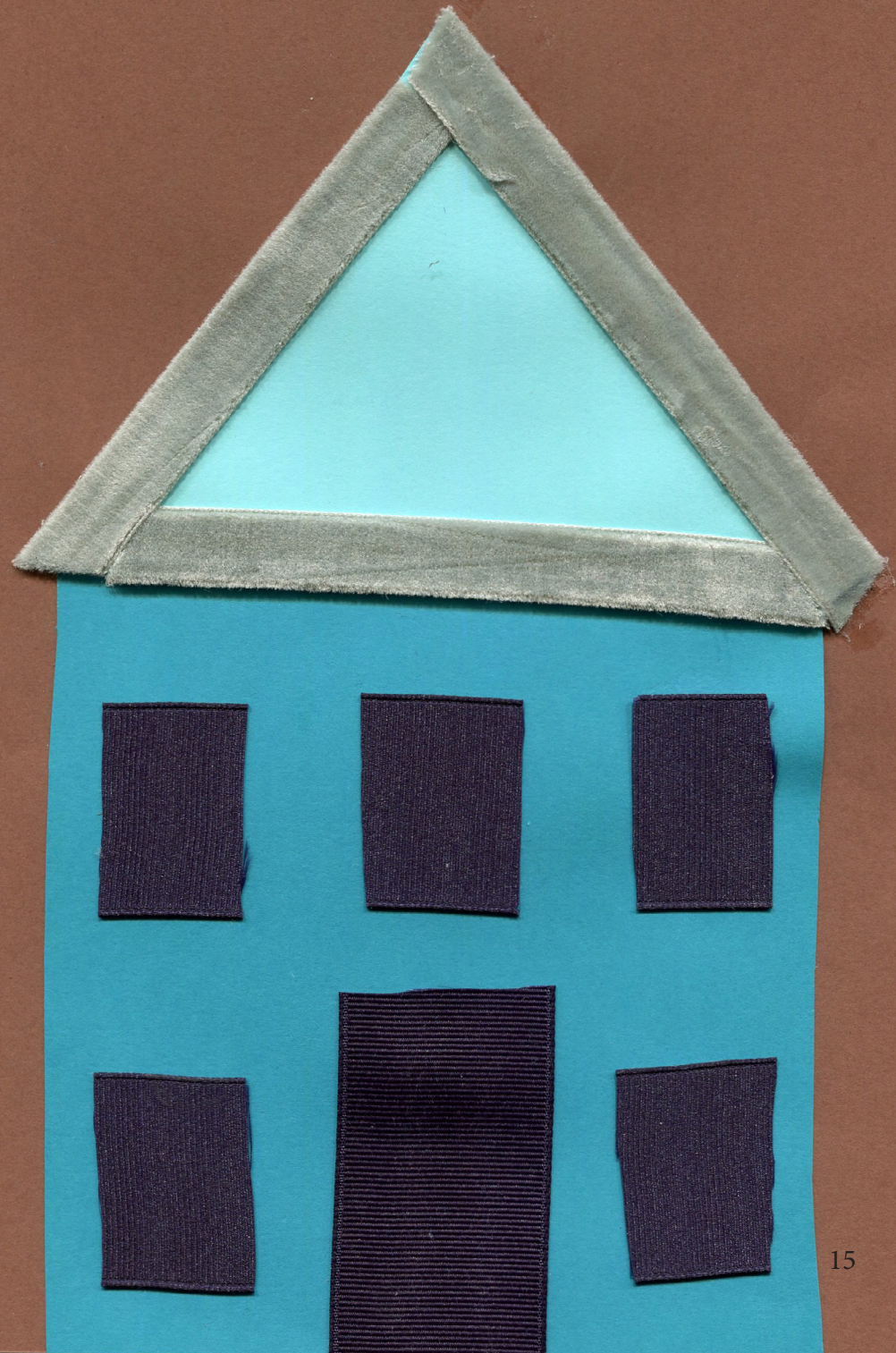
While living with my aunt I went to her work place a lot, she is a designer that makes traditional Senegalese clothes. Staying with her and watching her design created my dream of being a fashion designer.



A few months before I left my aunt's house I was in the hospital for 1 week, then 2 months later my mom came to visit me for what was supposed to be 2 months.



While my mom was visiting I went to visit my stepdad's family house. It had 4 kids in total not including me, a girl my age, 2 baby boys and 1 baby girl.

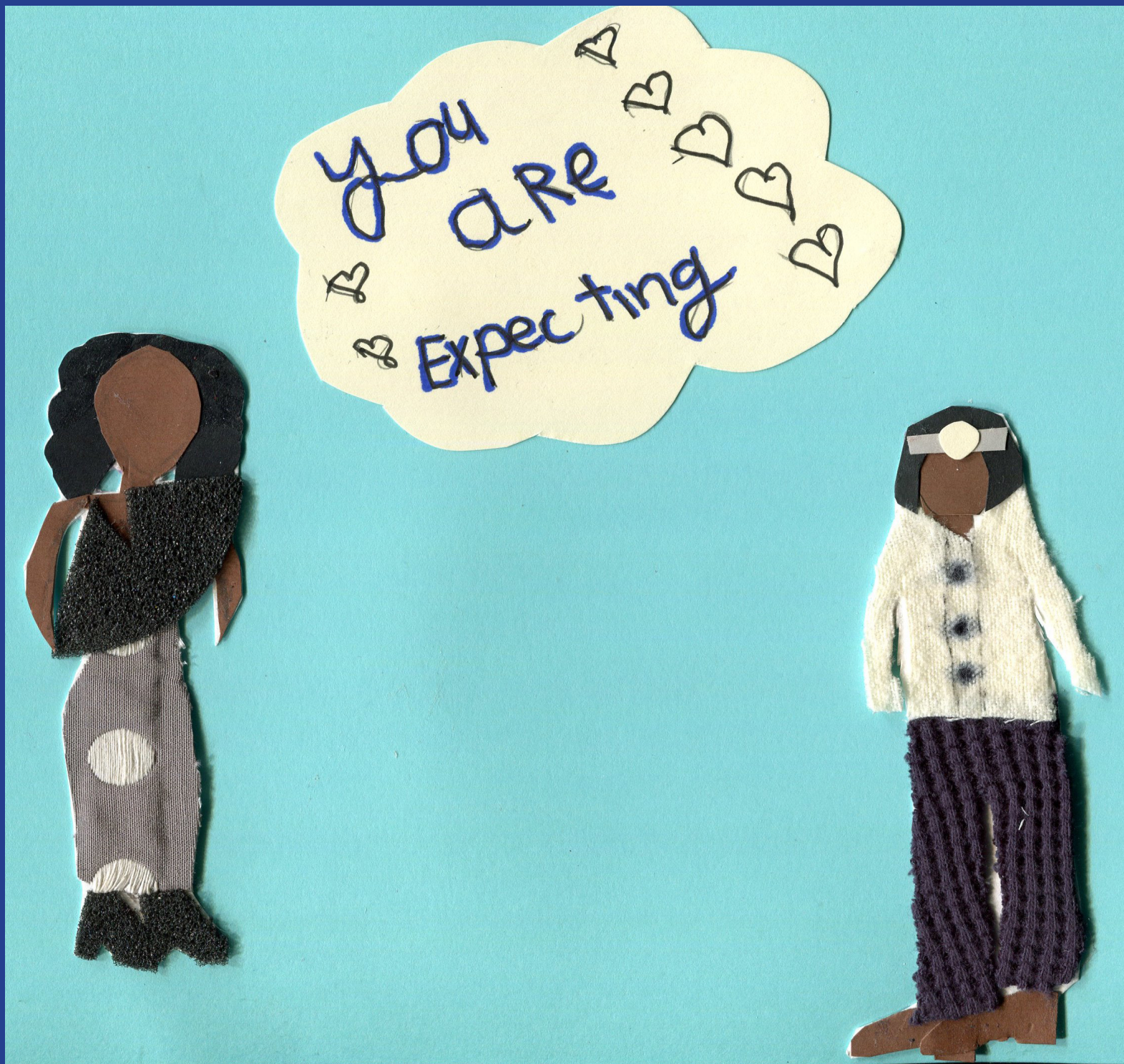




We went to my stepfather's family's house at least 4 times a week, while being there my mom got sick and we didn't know what was wrong with her. My step grandma thought someone did some witchy stuff on her because a few days later she was robbed while we weren't home. It's crazy now that I think about it because my laptop was visible in the living room but they only took my mom's jewelry which was very expensive but later we found the robber was one of my moms friends. But my mom didn't feel safe anymore so she and I and my stepdad stayed at his family's house.

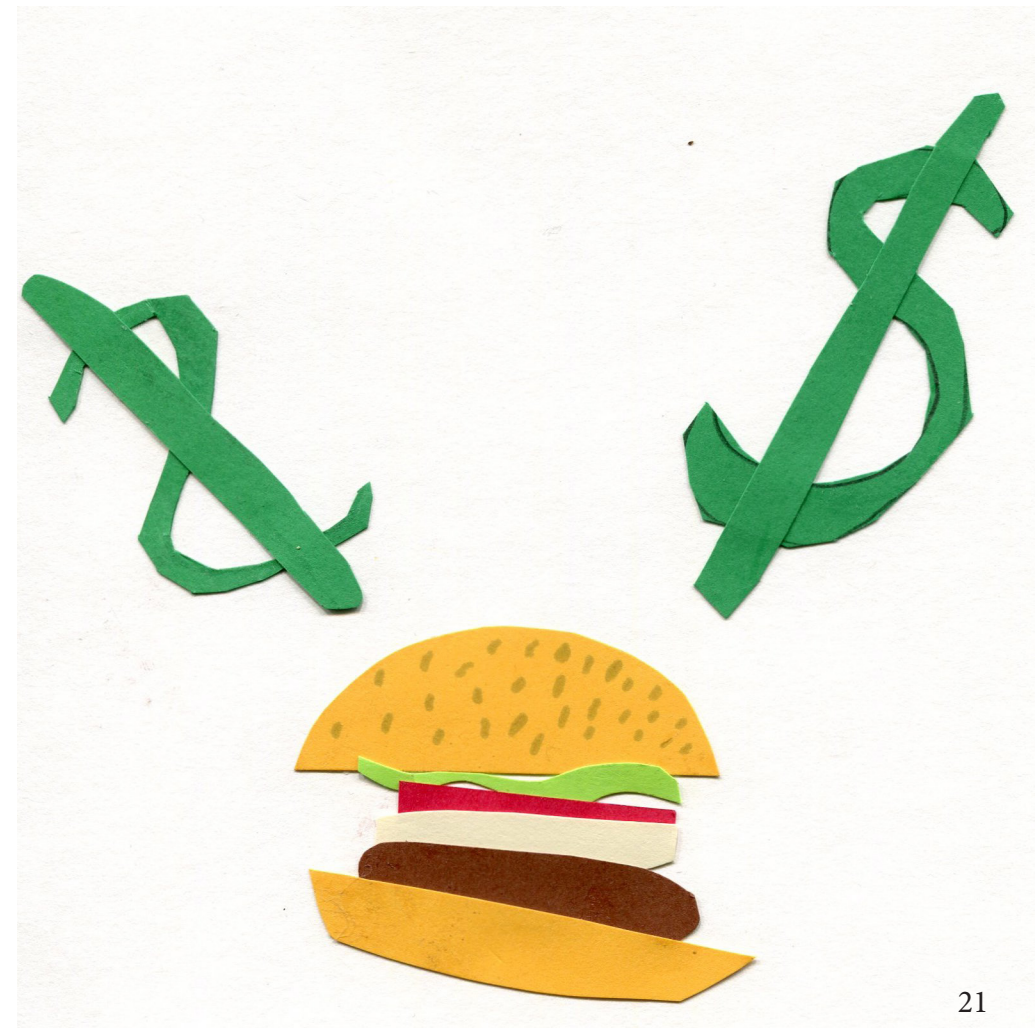
Her sickness got worse, she started throwing up and getting dizzy so we got a doctor to look at her and we found she was pregnant with my little sister, Princess. So sadly her trip was ended 1 month early because my grandma (my mom's mom) was worried.





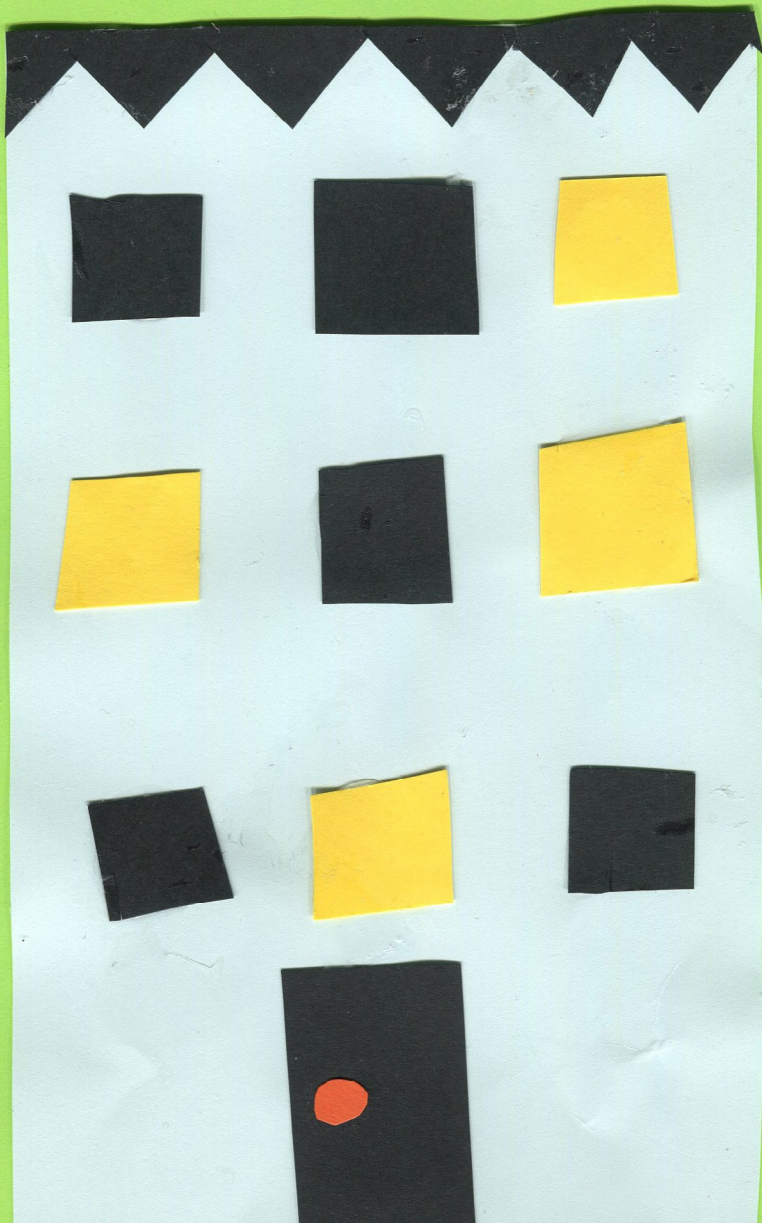


I ended up moving to my 3rd house which was my stepdad's family house. My stepdad's sister took care of me, took me to school everyday, basically my second mom. During that time I got along with all the kids there, one of them became my best friend. We did a lot of things together, made messes together, got yelled at together, and more. During my stay I helped around the house for money so I could buy burgers outside my school, I also learned how to cook there. I think I liked this house better. Even though it's not perfect, it taught me a lot of things to help me in the future.





My 4th house was my grandmother's house. I didn't spend much time, there, just 2 months before I went to America with her. Living was fun, I got to meet my mom's side of the family, got close with my cousin, and you know, just spending time with grandma and stepgrandfather. After 7 years being in Senegal, I left to be with my mom in America and continue my education there.



I came to America when I was 9 years old.

Switching from Senegal to Cincinnati was very hard, from the traveling to just adjusting to being in a whole new continent. But facing difficulties in Senegal along with the different lessons I learned in all the houses taught me how to adjust to different surroundings and helped me in my new journey in America.



