Mapping Home

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I asked my brother to draw home.
A young boy raised in the rocky mountains
drawing many “blobs” on a white sheet of paper…
only to find islands strewn across a vast ocean.

Bird’s eye view, almost too far to touch
asking… where do I come from?
how do I speak my language?
who am I?

but still… knowing… home resides
in the vast ocean, not the mountain trees
I answered, “We know home it is”…

Our large noses placed squarely on our faces
passed through our grandfather
seen in family across generations

Our curly and unruly hair
shaped like the ocean waves
Our ancestors navigated for centuries

Our grandparents refusing to speak english
emphasizing the importance
of learning and using our mother tongue

Our prayers to the ancestors for guidance
when we’re filled with fear, but also,
gratitude for the restoration of our souls

Our names carrying the livelihood
of those who came before us.
We are the continuation of their legacy & dreams…

by the connection of home… the vast oceans…
We confront, liberate, and persevere
for those who came before, those today,
and those whose future we fight for every day.

"E lele le Tola, ae ma’au i le vai"
Sāmoan proverb

"The Tola bird flies far, but will
always return back to the water."