My family is well-known amongst the Indian community in Torrance for our annual *Holi* party. Every March, we host almost a hundred people in our backyard for a day full of fun, color, and good food. My mother spent hours in the kitchen, poring over the stove as the smell of aromatic spices engulfed our whole house. My father set up our backyard with speakers for Bollywood music and tables for the vast amount of food. My sister and I made hundreds of water balloons and set up trays of brightly colored non-toxic powder. My mother invented games for all of us children to play and then we’d have a giant water balloon war. After lunch, we’d bring out the colorful powder and people would take some to put on loved ones. Aunties would affectionately caress my face with the colors. My father would take a whole fistful and ruffle my hair. The little ones would throw the color into the air and giggle as it landed on everyone. It’s the only party where people are expected to dress in old, shabby clothing.

The week before the celebration is one of great anxiety in my household, with guests shuffling around on the list and my mom worrying about the menu. She swears every year that she will never host again, but ends up doing it anyway for all the kids. Our family friends refrain from making plans on March weekends in anticipation of an invitation. Families would meet at our *Holi* party and become fast friends. Even our neighbors would join the celebration, marveling over the flavorful food and loving environment.

*Holi* is aptly known as the “festival of color” and is my favorite Hindu holiday. The two-day festival serves as the celebration of the triumph of good over evil. As I was growing up, my family didn’t celebrate Christmas or Easter like most of my friends did. We would get presents and maybe go to a friend’s holiday party, but there were no Christmas decorations or much holiday spirit. My sister and I often felt a little left out during those times, despite our parents’ best efforts. It wasn’t easy on my immigrant parents either, having to learn all the customs and traditions that they had never seen in India and didn’t feel connected to. *Holi* was the great equalizer. While our backyard celebration was nowhere near the scale of all the festivities that happened up and down the busy streets of Mumbai, it made my parents and all their friends who had grown up in India feel closer to home. For all that my family and I had been influenced by life in America, we also left our mark on our community. With all our family and friends over, it was on those days that I was grateful to be Indian.