



DROPLETS OF RAIN ARE FORMING ON THE WINDOW IN Honoria Lopes's kitchen, where she sits, guiding a needle through a piece of wheat-colored linen. Portuguese music filters in from the living room, where her husband, Teodoro, is sitting. The Lopeses live in Providence.

Honoria's work lies in a pile on the kitchen table – a pastel-striped pair of baby's pants, a green-and-white-checked jumper with a pleat in front, an undershirt with mother-of-pearl buttons and crocheting at the edges. "It's always summer in Cape Verde," says Honoria's niece, who has come over to translate. "Her neighbor in Cape Verde had a grandchild; my aunt will send these presents back with the baby's father."

Honoria loops a few more stitches through the linen, trims the edges, then stands up, brushing the thread from her long red skirt. She steps out into the hall,

flips on the light, and goes down-cellar, to her sewing machine. She points out three shopping bags full of more stuff to send to Cape Verde – leather shoes in one bag, rice, corn oil, and beans in another. There's a can of coffee, some noodle soup, mushrooms, soap. There are also two swaths of satin – one white, for a slip, the other blue, for a blouse, both to be sewn in Cape Verde.

"They're not rich there," says Honoria's niece. "They don't have a lot of extra money to buy things."

Honoria packs up the presents and sits down at her sewing machine to finish the baby's pants; she threads the needle, then sets to hemming. In front of her hangs

a banner from Cape Verde, black felt with scenes from this island country off the coast of Africa. A painted sun shines over a mountain range, and a woman in a white bikini lounges with a book by a swimming pool. Four young couples hold each other and smile as they dance.

## *Our Times*

PHOTO AND TEXT BY  
MARY BETH MEEHAN