



Change 2: Faith Ringgold's More Than 100 Pound Weight Loss Performance Story Quilt

1988

Acrylic on canvas with fabric border

68 inches by 68 inches (172.72 centimeters by 172.72 centimeters)

In 1986 I lost 100 pounds. In 1988 I gained it all back. No! In 1988 I continue to pursue my goal to lose an additional 30 pounds. Change 2 is about trying to lose 30 pounds. The songs and raps I have written on this quilt are a part of the Change 2 performance. I can't sing or dance and 30 pounds might as well be 300, but I'm still trying. That's what it takes to change.

The Change Song

Because I think you are so very nice
I want to offer you some good advice
You may be rich, You may be poor
Livin high on the hog
Or stretched out on the floor
You may be a professor
With knowledge to burn
Or just a young kid with a lot to learn
You may be black, white, red, yellow
Or in between
You may be kind or a little mean

But if you remember this simple phrase
You'll be a winner for the rest of your days
First stand up everyone in the place
Now put a great big smile on your face
Everybody ready? Let's go!
This is the phrase you need to know
I can change, I can do it
Just Keep Tryin, And you'll do it.
(Repeat)

1930's

My mother brought us up to eat three square meals a day,
without eating between meals. When I got old enough to run
my own kitchen I ate three square meals a day. And then three
more at night. My Mama made me do it.

Mama Made Me Do It

Mama made me do it (Repeat 2x's)
Told me clean my plate (Repeat 2x's)
That's how I gained this weight

Mama made me do it (Repeat 2x's)
Told me eat to grow strong (Repeat 2x's)
My mother was never wrong
Mama made me do it (Repeat 2x's)
Said there were children starving (Repeat 2x's)
As she just went on carving
Mama made me do it (Repeat 2x's)
Piled my plate up high (Repeat 2x's)
Right up to my eye

Mama made me do it (Repeat 2x's)
Mama taught me to be good (Repeat 2x's)
Said shut-up girl and eat you food
Mama made me do it (Repeat 3x's)
Yea

1940's

We walked everywhere when we were kids so we could spend our carfare on chocolate candy bars and ice cream cones. They were both 5 cents then and bigger than the ones you pay a dollar for today. Though I no longer spend my carfare on candy bars, I still love to eat but I hate to exercise.

I Hate To Exercise

I hate to exercise (Repeat 2x's)

Sometime I fall from grace

Fast foodin all over the place

Weighty gains on hips and thighs

Trays of Danish flash before my eyes

Listen to what I say

I struggle every day

I really hate to exercise (Repeat 2x's)

It doesn't matter how big my size

I just hate to exercise (Repeat 2x's)

Can't do it

Can't stand it

Early to bed and late to rise

Makes a woman unhealthy and over size

Oh baby, I hate to exercise (Repeat 3x's)

Yea

1950's

We had something called dates in the 1950's. Not the ones you eat, but I ate on all of mine. I was in my twenties, and it was a very romantic time. When young men came to call on me instead of bringing me flowers they brought me pork chop sandwiches. They were fried, cost 75 cents and were better than steak. That was romance in the 1950's – greasy food.

Greasy Food

Greasy food. Tastes good?

Make you big like a pig.
All fat like that
Starts a crave. An early grave.

Greasy food. Tastes good?
Creamy dips. Pad your hips.
Burgers and fries. Line your thighs.
Sweet treats. Fatty meats.
Are unkind behind.
Make your belly shake like jelly.

Greasy feed. (Repeat 3x's)
Tastes good?

1960's

The 1960's was a fabulous decade. I discovered French wine and cheese in Paris, and learned to be an activist in the streets of New York. At home my teenaged daughters drove me to eat wine with pork chops, and bread and cheese with my ribs and trouble.

Trouble

Trouble will make you eat (Repeat 2x's)
Run out in the street
Lookin for a treat

Trouble will make you eat (Repeat 2x's)
Run out in the street
Lookin for a treat
A treat to eat, To eat a treat (Repeat 2x's)

Trouble (Repeat 6x's)
A treat to eat
Trouble (Repeat 3x's)

1970's

In the 1970's food was a feminist issue and I was a fat feminist.

Always looking for a quasi politically correct excuse to eat. In the 1960's it was being a wife and mother, the rejection of being a black artist and other oppressions. In the 1970's it was all that and being a woman too. The 1970's kept me wondering when I'd get enough pain.

Pain

Pain, pain pa-a-a-a-in
I feel a pain in my knee
So bad I can't see
Make me hobble around
And twist my hip
I'm sorry I ate those chips

I feel a pain in my back
Feel like it could crack
Make me holler and scream
Stay away from that ice cream

I feel a pain in my leg
Like I'm pullin a keg
Can't get up those stairs
Stop eatin chocolate eclairs

Will this end?

Yes

When?

Now

How?

Move around shake your body
Make a sound make it hearty
Walk a mile and you'll smile
You'll feel good, You'll feel great
You'll lose that weight (Repeat 3x's)

Oh yea

1980's

By the 1980's there was no diet I hadn't tried. I gained weight on all of them. I didn't know you couldn't, so I'd combine them. If one worked well, two or three should work better. I finally broke the scale at 258. God knows what I weighed after that. Tomorrow, I'll change.

Tomorrow

Tomorrow (Repeat 2x's)

I'll lose it tomorrow

Tomorrow I'll lose it

I'll lose it tomorrow

Tomorrow (Repeat 3x's)

No Today!

I can change I can do it

Just keep on tryin and you'll do it

Now!

The worst part about being fat was squeezing through the subway turnstile sideways; hobbling down the stairs panting and blowing while some bewildered passenger holds the door for me. And then to have two people get up to give me one seat. I just got to change.

I Just Got To Change

I just got to change (Repeat 2x's)

I can't stand the pain

It's like a fire in my brain

Everyday it's the same

Never mind who's to blame

It's me that's got to change
Eatin all that food is so insane
I just got to change (Repeat 2x's)

Repeat The Change Song

Finale

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