

Where I Am From

A simple writing exercise to help you to begin to curate and preserve your story.

George Ella Lyon spurred a movement with her poem, *Where I am From*. This movement has traveled from writing classes to family reunions, from juvenile detention centers to refugee camps, through prisons and into retirement communities because of its unique universality.

It's now time to make it part of your journey.

Read her poem and then, using the attached template, create your own, *Where I Am From* poem.

Where I Am From By George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-
tetrachloride

I am from the dirt under the back
porch
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets)
I am from the forsythia bush,
the Dutch elm
whose long gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from the fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls

and the pass-it-ons,
from perk up and pipe down.
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie
Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
from the finger my grandfather
lost to the auger
the eye my father shut to keep his
sight.
Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments-
snapped before I budded-
leaf-fall from the family tree.

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This worksheet is adapted from the work of George Ella Lyon

Your turn: Use this template to write a poem about the experiences that shaped you.

I am from _____
(An everyday item in your home)

from _____ and _____
(Products or everyday items in your home)

I am from the _____,
(Description of your home)

_____ ,
(A detail about your home – a smell, taste, or feel)

I am from the _____ the _____
(Plant, flower, natural item)

(Description of plant, flower or natural item)

I'm from _____ and _____
(A family tradition and/or a family trait)

From _____ and _____
(Family members)

I'm from _____ and _____
(Family habits)

from _____ and _____
(Things you were told as a child)

I'm from _____
(A song, saying, poem or verse you learned as a child)

And _____
(Something you could do or were proud of as a child)

I'm from _____ and _____
(Family members)

_____ and _____
(Favorite / oft eaten family Food)

From _____
(A story about a family member)

(Description of family mementos, pictures or treasures.)

(Location of mementos)

(More description if need)

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