

Where I'm From Activity

Where I'm From - 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 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's 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.

Where I'm From Activity

Creating Your Own

1. Choose categories and make lists – be as specific and personal as possible. Don't worry about readers knowing what/who you are talking about.

Potential Categories

- Parents' or significant family members' names
 - Special foods or meals
 - Songs, novels, poems, stories you'll never forget
 - Ordinary household items
 - Family traits
 - Family traditions
 - Community events/traditions
 - Phrases repeated often in your family
 - Losses/joys/accidents
 - Mementos/symbols
 - Family tendencies
 - Vehicles
 - Neighbourhood
 - Think of places, but instead of naming the places list items or details associated with the places)
 - Talents/skills/activities
2. Select the items you want to include in your poem – you don't have to use everything. And you can add more as you go.
 3. Start with "I am from ..."
 4. Repeat "I am from" as the frame as you add more items/details. You can refer to the model as an example.
 5. End with a unifying symbol or idea. You can refer to the model as an example.