

Where I'm From

by George Ella Lyons

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 cotton ball 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.

Write your own version of "Where I'm From"

Notice that the poem above mentions the following:

Specific ordinary item
Product names
Home/neighborhood description
Plant, flower, element of nature
Family tradition, family trait
Family names
Family tendency
Something you were told as a child
Representative of religion (or no religion)
Place of birth, home ancestry
Family food items
Specific story about person & detail
Location of family pictures, mementoes, archives
Lines indicating worth of these and
how you fit in

Things to think about:
Favorite objects
Games played as a child
Images/items from childhood
Shapes
Central events/happenings
Family activities/worship
Tastes, food
Voice of people around you
What people said to you, e.g. - rules
Town or street names or community where you grew up
Stories told repeatedly
Hiding places when you were small
Smells
What grew in your yard
Favorite relatives' names
Parents' jobs
School memories