

Where I'm From

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 am 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 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.

George Ella Lyon ¹

Storytelling in small groups or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next prompt and so forth. A person can pass.

- 1) Share about your thoughts and feelings as you read or heard “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon.**
- 2) Share about one phrase of the poem that brought up a memory or connection to your past family and life, where you’re from.**

¹ [poem_george_lyon.PDF \(smithsonianeducation.org\)](#) (accessed September 14, 2024).

3) Write “Where I’m From” about your own life’s journey.

Suggestion, for five minutes start writing whatever comes in your creative mind about “Where I’m From.” When done, if you are with another person or small group invite each person to read what they have written. Write below or in your journal. This is a good small group exercise to get to know each other better.

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By _____