

Where I'm 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 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.

1. Begin with: "I am from _____." (Fill in with one of the items you listed while prewriting).
2. Continue on the next line with: "From _____ and _____." (Fill in each blank with items from your list).
3. Continue with: "I am from _____ and _____." (Fill in the blanks from your list as you did before). Continue this format until you have completed your poem.
4. End the poem with an explanation of where you keep any symbols, items, boxes or pictures that may represent some or most of the topics you included in your poem.
5. Reread your poem and make any changes or edits. This poem can be rewritten over and over again, and you'll probably find yourself thinking about more things that you can add to your poem even when you are finished.