

MODEL POEM FOR THIS LESSON

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 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

Student examples

“I’m From the Woods....” by Nick

I’m from the woods and the creek behind my fence
From the gray wooden backyard deck.
I’m from the honeysuckles,
The pear trees by the neighbor’s garden
From the creek when I swing over it.

I’m from the yellow walls of Grandma’s kitchen
From the Yorkshire pup, the coolest thing in my family.
I’m from macaroni pictures of the Ark
From “I just can’t snap my fingers and make it happen” and from David the Gnome in summers long ago.

I’m from my mom’s side of the family,
From roasting turkeys for each holiday,
From when Papaw yelled at his boss and got fired
From the family pictures in the big wooden cabinet and
From the family gathering when we drag them out.

I am from those moments.
A root that no one sees, but walks all over
An important part of the tree.”

Inspired by George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From”

Where I’m From.... by Lauren

I’m from baths in the kitchen sink,
From Downy and Mom’s perfume
I am from flowers by the fence (yellow and springy
they tasted like crayons).
I am from the ivy crawling up the house,
The baby tree whose sturdy trunk shot from the ground
A mirror image of my planted feet.

I'm from sprinkles and plastic table donut shops
From Bert and Ernie
I'm from stupid heads and dot dot I got my cootie shot
From don't touch this and don't touch that.
I'm from Hymn No. 96 and why is this piece of bread so small?
And bible crafts made from neon pipe cleaners.

I'm from Bill and Darlene's branch
From hot soup and freshly baked corn bread
From the Well, when I was little's and the snowy games
Told to me by Green Bay Packer season ticket holders
In the storage room are boxes
Overflowing with shiny, color-coated memories
Bundles of dreams kept alive
To ask my mother about.

I am from those moments
A leaf changing color with the weather
Time only strengthens the branch that holds me.

Inspired by George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From"

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR BRAINSTORMING

“Where I’m From” Poem

Writing is thinking - Preparation Worksheet

Step 1: Answering the following questions will prepare you to write your “Where I’m From” poem.

1. Describe where you live. What does it look like? Describe your favorite spot in this place. What are the various smells of your home? (This could be your actual house, or it could be another place that represents where you are from – another country, perhaps, or place where you were born.)
2. What objects or belongings can be found in your home or room (list at least three). Think of objects that are meaningful or specific to you. Give the objects a physical description.
3. What are the names of people in your “family.” They could be alive or deceased; they do not need to be blood-relations. Do they have a nickname?
4. What phrases, words, sayings, or mottos are important to you or to members of your family?
5. What foods are important to you or your family? Describe the aromas and features of this food.
6. List 2 or 3 important childhood memories.
7. Describe the weather where you are from.
8. What do people do for relaxation, adventure, or boredom where you are from?

Step 2: Incorporate your answers to the questions above into your “Where I’m From” poem. Simply add “I’m from” or “From” to the beginning of each line, in the same style as the model poem by Lyon. Be choosy with the images and descriptors you decide to include in your poem.