

"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 dressbox
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.

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Copy-Change Template

I am from __ (specific ordinary item) __
from __ (product name) and (?)
I am from the __ (home description) __.
(adjective, adjective; sensory detail.)
I am from the __ (plant, flower, natural item) __,
the __ (plant, flower, natural item) __
(description of the natural item).
I'm from __ (family tradition) __ and __ (family trait) __,
from __ (name of family member) __ and __ (another
name).
I'm from the __ (description of family tendency) __ and __ (another
one) __,

From __ (something you were told as a child) and __ (another) __.
I'm from __ (representation of religion -
or lack of it)
(further description)
I'm from __ (place of birth and family ancestry),
__ (two food items representing your family) __.
From the __ (specific family story about a specific person
and a detail)
the __ (another detail of another family member) __.
__(Location of family pictures, momentos, archives and several
more lines indicating
their worth)