

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.

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Process:

Step 1: Pre-Write/Brainstorm/Family Portrait

Think about what makes you YOU. Answer the questions and fill out the Family Portrait form.

Step 2: Poem Template

Directions: Fill in the blanks of the attached poem template.

Step 3: Rough Draft

Handwrite a rough draft of your poem, copying from the template. Leave out the words in the parenthesis. Make sure to give it a title. "I Am From..." or "Where I'm From" is fine.

Step 4: Edit and Revise (use a red pen)

Revise your poem. This means you are looking for places where you should be more specific, descriptive or could include a poetic device. Can your reader visualize what you are describing? Use your five senses and poetic devices (metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification rhyme) to help create a sense of being there.

Edit your poem. You are now looking for convention errors. Circle any words you think may be spelled incorrectly. Underline words that need to be capitalized. Add punctuation where appropriate.

Step 5: Peer Edit (use a green pen)

Have a partner read your poem/Read a partner's poem. Mark any area that needs clarification or is confusing to you with a question mark. Circle any misspelled words. Underline words that should be capitalized.

At the bottom, print your name, as the editor. Then write down one thing you enjoyed about the poem you read and one question you have.

Step 6: Rewrite

Now that editing and revision is completed, rewrite your poem by hand (no typing), fixing all that was marked in the previous steps.

Step 7: Final Draft

Type your poem. Include your title, name and date at the top. The font should be size 12 and easy to read.

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Pre-write:

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? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? (This could be your actual house, or it could be another place that represents where you are from.)
2. What objects or belongings can be found in your home or room? (List at least three.)
3. What are the names of people in your "family" (they could be alive or deceased, they do not need to be blood-relations)?
4. List two or three family traditions.
5. What phrases, words or sayings are important to you or to members of your family?
6. What are some beliefs that represent where you are from?

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7. What foods are important to you or your family?

8. List 2 or 3 important childhood memories.

9. Describe the weather where you are from.

10. What do people do where you are from?

11. What are your favorite things to do?

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Incorporate your answers to the pre-write 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 sample you have been shown. You do not have to use all of the words or categories you brainstormed under Step I. As you compose your poem, you can add new words and phrases that describe where you are from. You could also use the template below to help you write.

TEMPLATE:

First Stanza:

I am from (specific ordinary item) _____

from (product name) _____

and (another product name) _____

I am from the (home description) _____

Adjective that describes the above home description _____

It (tasted, sounded, looked, felt -choose one) _____

I am from the (plant, flower, or natural item) _____

the (plant, flower, or natural item) _____

(Description of natural item) _____

I'm from the (family tradition) _____

and (family trait) _____ from

(name of family member) _____ and (name of family member) _____

and (another name) _____

I'm from the (description of family tendency) _____ and

(Another family tendency) _____

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Second Stanza:

From (something you were told as a child) _____ **and**

(another thing you were told as a child) _____

I'm from (representation of religious or spiritual beliefs or lack of

it) _____,

(further description of spiritual beliefs) _____

I'm from (place of birth and family ancestry) _____,

(Two food items that represent your ancestry) _____ **and** _____.

From the (specific family story with a detail about a specific person) _____

the (another detail of another family member) _____ **I am**

from (general statement with DETAILS about who you are or where you are

from) _____

STEP 1 – Brainstorm

Use the tables below to brainstorm ideas for each of the stanzas of your *Where I'm Going Poem*.

Second Stanza

Classes/subjects you're most worried about: • •	List four things you'd like to do next summer: • • • •
List two colleges you think you might want to apply to: • •	List a few things you might want to do while you're in college: • • • •

Third Stanza

List two traits (characteristics) you hope to pass on to your children or others you come into contact with: • •	Two family traditions you hope to pass on: • •
Name four family members: • • • •	List four goals your parents have for you: • • • •
List four goals (at least one career goal) you have for yourself: • • • •	

Fourth Stanza

Two places that are very important to you or where you can imagine yourself living: • •	Four changes you would like to make in the world: • • • •
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Step 2: First Draft

On a separate piece of paper, begin writing the first draft of your *Where I'm Going Poem*. Follow the format (on the other side of this sheet) and plug in words from your brainstorm above.

"Where I'm Going" Poem

Directions: In College Readiness, you have already written a poem about where you're from. Now we're asking you to take what you've written about where you're from and to think about where you're going. Just follow the format below:

WHERE I'M GOING Poem Format:

Begin with your favorite four lines (or favorite stanza) from your "Where I'm From" poem from College Readiness. If you do not have a draft of your "Where I'm From" poem with you, save this part for later. Copy those lines here:

<skip a line>

I am going to conquer my fear of _____ and _____
(class/subject) (class/subject)

I am going to spend my summers _____ or _____
(activity you like) (activity you like)

I am going to graduate from DCP and apply to _____ or _____
(college/university) (college/university)

where I will _____
(some things you want to do while you're in college)

<skip a line>

I will be _____ and _____
(a family trait that you hope to pass on) (family tradition that you plan to keep)

From _____ and _____
(name of a family member) (name of another family member)

I will be _____ and _____
(a goal your parents have for you) (another goal your parents have for you)

I will be _____
(a career goal you have for yourself)

<skip a line>

I will be _____ and _____
(two places you hope to live, work, or study in the future)

I will be _____ and _____
(two changes that you will make in the world or in your community)

<skip a line>

I will always be from _____
(the three most important things listed in your I AM FROM poem)

even when I am _____
(a career goal you have for yourself)