

## MY STORY

There are many ways to describe where a person is from, though none along give a full picture or tell a complete story. A poem by George Ella Lyon is called “Where I’m From.” The poem lends itself to imitation and makes a wonderful exercise of exploring our multiple stories and sense of belonging.

Give it a try! Take a few minutes to brainstorm as many different things in each prompt category as you can. Then, choose item(s) from each category for the designated “blank” in the poem. The prompts have a way of drawing out memories of the smell and bottom-drawer keepsakes; the faces of long-departed kin, the sound of their voices you still hold some deep place in memory. You’ll be surprised that, when you’re done, you will have said things about the sources of your unique you-ness that you’d never considered before. What’s more, you will have created something of yourself to share.

People, things, and memories representing where I’m from...

The Material World (Items and objects)	Your Home (Sounds, scents, shapes, colors & textures)
The Natural World (Plants, animals, places)	Family (Names, traits, traditions)
Food	Family Stories

**Where I'm From**  
**(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.

## The Where I'm From Template...

I am from \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_,  
specific ordinary item product name

and \_\_\_\_\_.  
specific item/product

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
description of something about your home description of something about your home

and \_\_\_\_\_.  
sensory description of something at home.

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_.  
plant, flower or natural item plant, flower or natural item

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, from  
a family tradition a family trait

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and  
name of a family member name of a family member

\_\_\_\_\_.  
name of a family member

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_, and  
Description of a family tendency

\_\_\_\_\_  
description of another family tendency.

I am from \_\_\_\_\_  
representation of family religious/spiritual beliefs (or lack of it)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
place of birth family ancestry

\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.  
family food family food

From the \_\_\_\_\_, the  
specific family story detail about a specific person

\_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_.  
another detail from a family member's story another detail from a family member's story

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ found \_\_\_\_\_  
family mementos/archives location of mementos

\_\_\_\_\_  
description of worth of mementos.