

WHERE I'M FROM

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.
—by George Ella Lyon

You can use this worksheet, developed by Cindy Blandford as part of an 8th grade lesson plan, to help you think through your childhood:

See: Write a list of things you saw

Smell: Write a list of things you smelled

Hear: Write a list of things you heard/things spoken to you

Touch/Feel: Write a list of things you felt, including emotions

Taste: Write a list of things you tasted – literally or metaphorically

Write down any memories or flashbacks you experienced

Write down and describe any important family information

Write down and describe any hobbies or special interests

Write down any interesting or important details about your past

Write down something that people always say about you or an ancestor

Write down something (good or bad) that people often say to you or an ancestor

Write down any names you go by other than your biological one.

Danna Smith at poetrypop.com says this poem is about your memories and upbringing. This poem is personal and should reflect specific details and feelings about your life and memories. She has developed this template to use to help you write your own poem:

I am from (a specific item from your childhood home)

from (two products or objects from your past)

I am from (a phrase describing your childhood home)

and (more description of your childhood home)

I am from (a plant, tree or natural object from your past)

whose (personify that natural object)

I am from (two objects from your past)

from (two family names or ancestors)

and from (two family traits or tendencies)

from (another family trait, habit or tendency)

I am from (a religious memory or family tradition)

from (two foods from your family history)

from (a specific event in the life of an ancestor)

and from (another detail from the life of an ancestor)

(a memory or object you had as a child)

I am from the moments...

(continue this thought or repeat a line or idea from earlier in the poem)

See Danna's own poem at <https://poetrypop.com/2021/03/20/how-to-write-a-where-im-from-poem-with-template/>