

Where I'm From

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the black 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.

-- George Ella Lyons

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"Where I'm From" appears in George Ella Lyon's *Where I'm From, Where Poems Come From*, a poetry workshop-book for teachers and students, illustrated with photographs by Robert Hoskins and published by Absey & Co, Spring, Texas, 1999.

Where I'm From (framed poem)

I am _____
from _____ and _____.
I am from the _____.
(_____, _____
it _____ like _____.)
I am from _____,
the _____
_____.
as if _____.

I'm from _____ and _____,
from _____ and _____.
I'm from the _____
and the _____,
from _____.
I'm from _____
with a _____
and _____.

I'm from _____,
_____ and _____.
From the _____
to the _____
the _____.
_____ was a _____
_____,
a _____
to _____.
I am from _____

_____.