

Where I'm From Poem

Throughout our reading of "An Hour with Abuelo," we've been exploring the question: What is the value of knowing your family heritage? With this assignment, you have the opportunity to further explore and share your personal family heritage and how it has shaped you. You will write a poem that allows you to express where you're from beyond simply saying the name of a city, state or country. Your poem will represent specific people and experiences in your life that create your roots and contribute to who you are today. Your poem will be just as unique as you and your family heritage.

1. Gather Ideas for your writing:

- a) **Fill out your section of the prewriting organizer** – Choose **5** topics from the following list, write them on the organizer, and record your own responses:

Favorite memory from when you were little	Favorite song/type of music	Favorite holiday food	Favorite family tradition
Favorite story, novel, or poem that you will never forget	Best adjective to describe your family	Specific story about a specific family member that influenced you	Favorite family game or activity
Words or phrases that you say often	Words or phrases that people often say to you	The best thing you've ever been told	The worst thing you've ever been told
Items you've had for years and cannot live without	Important religious symbols or experiences	Greatest joy	Biggest loss

- b) **Interview an adult family member** – Because your family heritage starts with previous generations, you will need to gather information for your poem by interviewing an adult in your family who has known you since you were a baby. The adult you choose should be someone who knows you and your family history well. You can even interview more than one person. Use the topics on the prewriting organizer to guide your interview and take notes.

2. Draft Your Poem:

Select from your prewriting organizer the information you would like to include in your poem. You do not have to include everything from your notes, and you can always add more information to your poem as you go along. Use the example poems as models for your writing if you get stuck.

You can use the template provided to you to help get your poem started. However, feel free to make it your own. You do not need to strictly follow the template

Your final poem should be **at least 20 lines** long.

3. Publish Your Poem:

1. Make sure your poem is at least 20 lines long
2. Find at least one place where you could add more specific details or more creative word choice.
3. Double check for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation
4. Create a final copy on unlined paper (can be typed or written in ink). Add artistic elements such as a border or pictures. The appearance of your poem should be as wonderfully unique as the poem itself! This will be a memoir piece!!!

4. Reflect on Your Poem:

In a detailed paragraph, clearly explain how this poem demonstrates where you're from and what you value about your family's heritage. Restate the prompt, cite at least three pieces of text evidence from your own writing and explain the significance of each in helping you become the person you are today. This paragraph must be typed, printed, and handed in with your poem.

	Score	Comments
Organization – Your ideas are easily followed by the reader. Line and stanza breaks are purposeful.	5 4 3 2 1	
Elaboration – Explanations and descriptions help readers better understand your life experiences. In other words, add more than just single words, describe them.	10 8 6 4 2	
Word Choice – You have used vivid verbs and adjectives that paint a picture in the readers’ minds (for example, the box isn’t filled with pictures, it is spilling old pictures). Language is non-repetitive.	10 8 6 4 2	
Poem Publishing – Your poem is at least 20 lines long. It is pleasing to look at; it is neatly written in ink or typed on unlined paper. You have included an artistic element (border, pictures etc.) that enhances your poem.	5 4 3 2 1	
Typed Reflection - You have clearly explained the details included in your poem in a manner that demonstrates its direct and personal tie to your past/heritage. A minimum of 3 lines are specifically cited and elaborated upon.	10 8 6 4 2	
Conventions – Errors in spelling and grammar are minimal and do not impede the meaning of your writing.	<p style="text-align: center;">Poem</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reflection</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>	
	_____ / 50	

“Where I’m From” Prewriting Organizer

Topic	Me	Adult Family Member

Where I'm From Poem

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Your final poem should be **at least 20 lines** long.

FIRST STANZA....

I am from (specific ordinary item) _____

From (product name) _____ **and** (another product name) _____

I'm from the (home description) _____

(Adjectives that describe the above home description) _____, _____

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

I'm 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) _____

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) _____

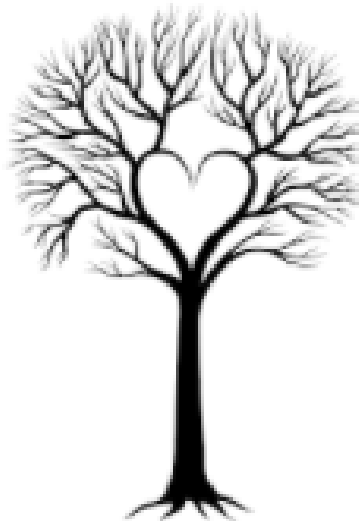
(location of family pictures) _____

I am from (general statement with DETAILS about who you are or where you are from) _____

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 Billi'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.



"I'm From the Woods...." by Nick

I'm from the woods and the creek behind my fence
From the gray wooden backyard deck.
I'm from the honeysuckles,
The pear trees by the neighbor's garden
From the creek when I swing over it.

I'm from the yellow walls of Grandma's kitchen
From the Yorkshire pup, the coolest thing in my family.
I'm from macaroni pictures of the Ark
From "I just can't snap my fingers and make it happen"
and from David the Gnome in summers long ago.

I'm from my mom's side of the family,
From roasting turkeys for each holiday,
From when Papaw yelled at his boss and got fired
From the family pictures in the big wooden cabinet and
From the family gathering when we drag them out.

I am from those moments.
A root that no one sees, but walks all over
An important part of the tree."

Where I'm From.... by Lauren

I'm from baths in the kitchen sink,
From Downy and Mom's perfume
I am from flowers by the fence (yellow and springy
they tasted like crayons).
I am from the ivy crawling up the house,
The baby tree whose sturdy trunk shot from the ground
A mirror image of my planted feet.

I'm from sprinkles and plastic table donut shops
From Bert and Ernie
I'm from stupid heads and dot dot I got my cootie shot
From don't touch this and don't touch that.
I'm from Hymn No. 96 and why is this piece of bread so small?
And bible crafts made from neon pipe cleaners.

I'm from Bill and Darlene's branch
From hot soup and freshly baked corn bread
From the Well, when I was little's and the snowy games
Told to me by Green Bay Packer season ticket holders
In the storage room are boxes
Overflowing with shiny, color-coated memories
Bundles of dreams kept alive
To ask my mother about.

I am from those moments
A leaf changing color with the weather
Time only strengthens the branch that holds me.



I just know when I quit looking to
other people for directions, I found
my own map.

— George Ella Lyon —

AZ QUOTES



*With brother Robert
at Mesa Verde, 1953*



First grade

[audio of George Ella Lyon reading her poem](#)