

## Where Are You From?

"If you don't know where you're from, you'll have a hard time saying where you're going." Wendell Berry, among others, has voiced this idea that we need to understand our roots to know our place in the world. Before you investigate the events that shaped world history you have to first understand where **YOU** come from.

A poem by George Ella Lyon is called "[Where I'm From](#)." This poem is a great example to use as a guide. I'd like to suggest that you give it a try. The prompts have a way of drawing out memories of the smells of attics 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--with your children, spouse, siblings--that will be very unique, very personal and a very special gift.

I'll give you the template here. You can search on "where I'm from" and find many others who have taken the time to do this valuable exercise. More often than not, one person having completed it, will encourage all their brothers and sisters to complete the poem template for their parents and each other. The prompts have a way of drawing out memories of the smells of attics 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—with your parents, siblings, peers, and eventually spouse and children—that will be very unique, very personal, and a very special gift that you will want to keep.

### The *WHERE I'M FROM* Template

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (nation, region of origin), from \_\_\_\_\_ (characteristic of area) and \_\_\_\_\_.

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (home description... adjective, adjective, sensory detail).

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (plant, flower, natural item), the \_\_\_\_\_ (plant, flower, natural detail)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (family tradition) and \_\_\_\_\_ (family trait), from \_\_\_\_\_ (name of family member) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another family name) and \_\_\_\_\_ (family name).

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (description of family tendency) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another one).

From \_\_\_\_\_ (something you were told as a child) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another).

I am from (representation of religion, or lack of it). Further description.

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ (place of birth and family ancestry), \_\_\_\_\_ (two food items representing your family).

From the \_\_\_\_\_ (specific family story about a specific person and detail), the \_\_\_\_\_ (another detail, and the \_\_\_\_\_ (another detail about another family member).

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (location of family pictures, mementos, archives and several more lines indicating their worth).