Name: _____ **8**____ **Date:** _____

"Where I'm From" Poem

Throughout this unit we have been looking at short stories with young characters set in different places and from different backgrounds. One character is from a moving from one place to another – small town to big city ("Checkouts"), and the other character is extremely proud of where she is from – her family, her street, even her place on the track ("Raymond's Run"). Now it is time to hear about where YOU are from.

The Task: Using the following examples as inspiration, tell about where you are from through a poem.

Step 1: Look at examples and note what you like in the box below.

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 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.

What do you like? As you read through the poems, write down **words, phrases, and lines** you like.

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<u>Step 2</u>: Find Inspiration (brainstorm)
Get on Facebook, Instagram, Google+, computer files…wherever you and your family keep family photos. Find photographs of yourself and your family when you were younger, taken at places and events that you remember fondly.

When you have some photos selected, spread them out…or scroll through them. Are there items, places, people, or time periods that stick out? For each photo, **write a word or phrase that it reminds you of**.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

<u>Step 2 cont.</u> : Answer the following questions. This will prepare you to write your "Where I'm From" poem.

1. Describe where you live. What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? (This could be your actual house, or it could be another place that represents where you are from.)

2. What objects or belongings can be found in your home or room (list at least three)?

3. What are the names of people in your "family" (they could be alive or deceased, they do not need to be blood-relations)?

4. List and explain two or three family traditions.

5. What phrases, words or sayings are important to you or to members of your family?

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6. What are some beliefs that represent where you are from?

7. What foods are important to you or your family?

8. List two or three important childhood memories.

9. Describe the weather where you are from?

10. What do people do where you are from?

11. What are your favorite things to do?

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<u>Step 3</u>: Write YOUR poem **DUE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

Incorporate your answers to the questions above into your "Where I'm From" poem. Simply add "I'm from" or "From" to the beginning of each line in the same style as the samples you have been shown. You do not have to use all of the words or categories you brainstormed under Step 2. As you compose your poem, you can add new words and phrases that describe where you are from.

***Use the template on the back if you need help getting started.**

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The *WHERE I'M FROM* Template

I am from _____ (specific ordinary item), from _____ (product name) 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).

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<u>Step 4</u>: Revise YOUR Poem **DUE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**

After you have a first complete draft, use the group writing workshop to get feedback on your poem. Take your time and make changes where you think they should go. **<u>Print</u>** your final poem alongside a photo of your choice that represents Where You Are From.

Your Photo

Your Poem