

Where I'm From

Our personal histories play a significant role in shaping how we relate with God and exist in Christian community. We don't leave our unique childhood experiences and family histories behind when we go off to college, rather we carry them with us into adulthood. Taking time to reflect on these things may sometimes help to shed light on why we relate to God the way that we do, why we connect quickly with some people while we have a harder time connecting with others, as well as why we love what we love, fear what we fear, long for what we long for etc. Exploring our stories may not answer all of these questions, but it will help us along the way. Additionally, each member of the body of Christ has a different history that they bring into the community. We can learn more about God as we share our stories and learn about different experiences and cultures.

Through RealLife at Home this semester, we want to provide space and encouragement for us to begin (or continue) to explore our backgrounds. This "Where I'm From" template and the accompanying reflection questions are meant to be a small step toward thinking about our own stories and sharing those experiences with others.

Instructions:

1. Take some time to read "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon.
2. After reading, turn to the second page of this document and take some time to fill in the blanks of the poem with details from your own life. Take as long as you'd like, and of course be as creative as you'd like.
3. Optional: After completing these two steps, if you'd like to share your poem for RealLife at Home at some point, you can email matthew.waanders@cru.org and we can chat about what that could look like.
4. Optional: If you would like to go further, you could take some time to think about the reflection questions at the end. You could even discuss these with a friend.

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 am 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 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.

Where I'm From

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).

Reflection Questions:

1. What was it like for you to write your poem?
2. Were there any things that you thought about (wether they made it into your poem or not) that brought you a feeling of joy? Any that were painful? What were they?
3. What kinds of things does your poem reveal about you or your family? Did you realize anything about yourself or your family as you wrote?
4. How do you think your childhood experiences and family history have shaped the way you view God? How do they shape the way you interact with our Christian community?