

“Where I’m From”

a poem by Danielle

This seventh grade girl wrote this poem after her class read and analyzed the poem, “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon. For a copy of Lyon’s poem and more information about the poem, you can investigate this website:

<http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>

In addition to the student’s poem, I’ve included the teachers’ graphic organizer students used. If you want to try composing a “Where I’m From” poem, you can use the student’s poem as a mentor text and the organizer can help you brainstorm and jot notes before you write.

Here are some suggestions for studying this poem:

- * First, enjoy this poem. Read it out loud several times and listen to images that speak to you and stir your emotions.
- * Study the details the author chose for each stanza and pinpoint specific details and those that helped you infer. For example, the last line in the third stanza, “The loved one that was almost taken by a kitchen knife,”—what inferences or images come to mind when you read/hear this?
- * What does the author mean by the last three lines of the poem?
- * Do you feel that this poem truly expresses where the author is from? Explain your position.

Where I'm From
By Danielle

I am from books,
From Gail Carson Levine and Victor Hugo.
I am from the dusty shelves in the closet.
The cramped, tight spaces
That smelled of mold.
I am from the common water lily,
The delicate white orchid,
Who stands so tall and proud
Surrounded by glittering dew.

I'm from the Black and White cookie and strength,
From Jordan and Ryan.
I'm from the loyalists
And the betrayers,
From It could always be worse,
And It will work itself out.
I'm from Jesus Christ our Savior,
With "A Night to Remember" charity
And Young Life games.

I'm from Hollywood Movie Stars and the simple Sisson,
Soba noodles with pork and Maryland crab cakes which I hate.
From the hope that was lost
In the fray of life,
The loved one that was almost taken by a kitchen knife.

In the plain, plastic, rubber tub,
Locked away and out of sight
Because there are too many things to face in this world
So we hide behind glassy eyes and painted faces.
The tub which holds all the memories from my past,
And also holds the hope for a better future to be built
From the ashes of yesterday.

I am from the long lost faces that have left this world behind,
Too sick to go on, too tired to fight.
So it is for them that I declare
That the ashes of my sorrow,
Will be the bricks
Of my tomorrow.

Childhood Memories' Graphic Organizer

Special Foods	Sayings Adults Repeated
Religious/Spiritual Experiences	Special Gatherings
Occupations of parents, guardians or family members	Notable Events (Tragedies & Celebrations)
Hobbies & Interests	Favorite Place To Be