

Where I'm From

I am from a Kentucky summer day
By a stream that ran and skipped and spilled
At the back of the woods,
Quietly cool and graceful,
This clear stream of water,
Provided by nature, unspoiled by man,
To beautify the earth in this age
And to quench the gravel dust of another.
Here, where old blind Mason Dockery
Stooped to gather his water
And sing his songs of the corn hackers.
Where my own grandfather brought his mules
To water after a long and laborious
Day in the timber.

Whose other feet have trod on the banks
Where mine stepped amid the wild flowers and ferns?
Today I appreciate its beauty
That I had been so unaware of before.
For, I realize that it is indeed a rare thing
To be able to stand in its clear running water,
With the tall, tall trees roaring overhead in the wind,
With a little red haired boy of nine who speaks of pollution,
And a free spirit named Sherry
With a handful of blue roosters
And a wild bird's track at her feet.

Connie J. Embry
Morgantown, KY (Butler County)

Copyright © 2016

Where I'm From

*I am from bottle sprinklers,
from out-houses and wringer washers.
I am from clothes lines and porch swings.
I am from wooden plank porches
with secret treasures beneath.*

*I am from chocolate birthday cake and gospel music,
from Donnie Stanley and Kathryn Sue.
I am from farmers and timber workers,
from straight-ticket Republicans and Sunday School.
I am from men eat first and women eat last,
from Amazing Grace and Just As I Am.*

*I am from the green-shingled house,
from the garden and the indian buried by the stump.
I am from Third District Elementary,
a struggling student and cheerleader.*

*I am second to the oldest, who became the oldest.
I was Jeff's younger sister, then there was no Jeff.
I am the big sister, the peacemaker.
I am Thomas and Marguerite, Ed and Hazel.*

*In my room there was a skate box,
brimming full of grade cards, concert tickets,
Tiger Beat magazines and Junior-Senior Prom programs.
I am those moments before I fell, like a leaf,
from the family tree.*

Donna Newland

Morgantown, KY (Butler County) Copyright © 2016

Where I'm From

I am from Butler County, land of my ancestors.
There is an easiness to this place,
In the land and in the people, and it brings me peace.
I am not from the rugged mountains of eastern Kentucky
Or the flat lands of western Kentucky,
But a little of both.

I am from the Green River and the Rochester Dam,
And from quiet pastures and the green, rolling hills that surround them.
I am from rows of cliffs that suddenly appear from the hills,
Or a rock house, where, if I'm lucky,
I may find an arrowhead
Left by the family who lived there two hundred years before me.

I am from people who are not hayseeds nor hillbillies,
But country folks in the best sense of the word.
We speak with a cadence all our own, softly and slowly,
Not southern, but Kentuckian.
I am from a place where clothes are warshed, not washed,
And the tea is sweet, but the cornbread isn't.

I am from homes where strangers are treated as family and company,
Where they will sit first and eat first and
Be filled with good food, either fresh from the garden
Or canned from last year's.
There will always be something fried, there will always be cornbread,
And there will always be dessert.

I am from homes where the stranger gets the first slice of pie,
Whether it's hicker nut or pecan.
Where there is much talking and laughing,
And they will leave the table full and happy.
And they will know why it brings me joy to say,
I am from Butler County, land of my ancestors.

Karen Harper Lain
Rochester, KY (Butler County)

Copyright © 2016

Where I'm From

I am from the pot belly stove,
nail kegs and a breadbox on the porch.
From a roll of baloney and a banana stalk
hanging from the side room ceiling.
I am from the shelves with canned kraut,
Dickies, and scooped great northerns.
From candled eggs, bartered for the print
sack to make a new shirt or dress
for the younguns.

I am from "roll your own," the twist or plug
and the factory rolled.
From burning the bed to start the seeds,
pegging, plowing with jenny, worming,
suckering and removing the top.
I am from the cutting, hanging, curing,
stripping and grading. The Christmas
presents will be coming soon.

I am from Steamboat Willie, Boston Blackie
and Nellie Belle, huddled 'round the
neighbor's living room to view. I
I am from the Pledge of Allegiance,
with no under God.

I am from the '50 Ford and the '57 Chevy,
all waxed and shined for the drag.
A sip of "shine" to add to the weekend fun.
I am from duck tails and Blue Suede Shoes.
From years to labor for the good life,
so peaceful and uncomplicated.
Thou shalt love thy neighbor.

Roger Givens
Morgantown, KY

Copyright © 2016