

I'm From Hopkins County

by Teresa K. Ball, Madisonville, Hopkins County

I'm from the small hometown where everybody knows everything about everyone else.

I'm from where secrets are no longer secrets.

From playing in the streets at night until Mom calls us in for bedtime.

Hide and Seek, Red Rover, Kick the Can.

From where girls played football, baseball, basketball, with a neighborhood full of boys.

Where that girl was better than all those boys.

I'm from the Bible-belt South where you were expected to be in Church all the time.

Where two week revivals with red faced shouting evangelists preached in fancy clothes.

I'm from the almost rural area where drugs weren't even around until after we graduated.

Where two or three girls left for a few weeks to have secret abortions.

I'm from the growing up years spending two weeks at grandparents homes in the summer.

I'm from where one of the towns had 300 people and no colored people allowed after dark.

Where we played in the barn or walked downtown to the country store for bottled drinks.

Where everything smelled stale and musty.

Where we went to car races or horse shows for fun.

I'm from where we looked forward to the county fair every summer.

All the bright lights and wild rides that scared us to death.

Yes, I'm from the small town that formed me into what I've become today.

I'm from the area I call home.

Where I'm From

by Margaret Brown, Madisonville, Hopkins County

I'm from a father I never knew who fought a war before coming home to a
two-year-old me and dying in an accident two months later.

I'm from a stepfather who was there for the next thirty years,
Unless he was off fighting his own war with a bottle.

I'm from a mother who held life together for four daughters until
She chucked it all trying to hold herself together.

I'm from my grandfather's funeral home, the casket room, the family room,
The viewing room, but never the preparation room.

I'm from the furniture store where my grandmother showed me
That a woman could own a successful business.

I'm from the woods just south of the house where the currency
Of my make believe world was mitten-shaped sassafras leaves.

I'm from a wide, wild field of yellow daffodils that magically
Appeared each April, ripe for the picking.

I'm from The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew and Readers Digest
Condensed books.

I'm from hearty German ancestors with names like Libke and Schaefer.
I'm from poor English working stock named King.

I'm from Illinois. Not Chicago and gangsters,
But farms and small towns far south of the Windy City.

I'm from Olney, Illinois, home of the white squirrels,
Albinos with pink eyes.

I'm from my husband and my daughters and my grandchildren.
I'm from forty-eight years of living in my Kentucky.

WHERE I'M FROM

by Dotty Short, Madisonville, Hopkins County

I am from the mountains,
Where dogwoods and redbuds and cedars grow thick,
Where streams run clear and cool even on a hot summer day.

I am from the mountains
Where gardens grow plentiful
And beans are dried behind the stove,
Where cows graze on the green hillside,
And you wonder why they aren't lopsided,
Where children run barefooted through the tall grass
And spend their evenings catching junebugs and tying them to string.

I am from the mountains
Where moonshine and whiskey can make you a dollar,
But can't save your farm or stop the death of two brothers,
Where churches are full on Sunday mornings
And sins are washed away in the nearby creek.

I am from the mountains,
Where the smell of food brings the children indoors
And the sight of chicken and dumplings and green beans
And cornbread and blackberry cobbler make us eat till our tummies hurt,
Where life is simple and forgiving,
Where the mountains run through your veins and color your words,
Where you can go away three times but always come back home.

I am from the mountains.