

Where I'm From

by John Paul Wright, Louisville, Jefferson County

<https://railroadmusic.wordpress.com/2016/11/19/where-im-from/>

I am from the cold steel rail,
from Louisville to the south state line.
I am from cross ties and rocks.
(that set a line in time down the middle
of this great Commonwealth)
I am from diesel burned by
massive machines,
that pours into the night air –
hauling the freight that fills your home.

I am from Sonora and Bonnieville,
Rowletts and Rocky Hill.
I am from the forgotten cities
shadowed by I-65,
from Salmons and Bowling Green!
I am from I've been working
on the railroad, all
the live long day!!

I am from the south shops and the L&N,
Hazard and Ravenna.
From strong men and women working
around the clock.
Winter, Summer, Spring and Fall.

In my hand is the whistle
blowing a song of yesteryear.
From that high lonesome additive
of many a song of our place.
I am from the metaphors –
that cross these county lines –
and of the people who move this freight.

Where I'm From
By Mariam Williams

I'm from a street where 22s race
a doe down the pavement
and girls text
while horseback riding.

I'm from hallways converted to catwalks
and Polaroid recording record numbers of rotations
as moms and daughters and aunts and cousins
dance to "Delirious."

I'm from four brothers ducking dynamite
they set on Nazis in World War II,
and one sister's first driving test at 42,
alongside her children.

I'm from "That knife wouldn't cut hot butter!"
and "Why you so hard-headed?"

I'm from scalp-scorched, tender-headed girls whimpering
on Saturday nights
and fried, dyed, and laid to the side
Sunday mornings.

I'm from four-dollar dinners after church, cooked
on a stove-top that licked fearless fingertips
as it engulfed matches.

I'm from ten-minute school lunches
with pizza in a rectangle and silence
as punishment.

I'm from patent-leather Mary Janes and lace
stockings. Aunt Jemimah handkerchiefed
and afro-sheened. I'm from moonshine burning
thirsty throats in dry towns, and naked eyes aching
for city lights but blinded
by stars.

CRICKETS, FROGS, AND WHIPPOORWILLS

I am from the country

Down a dirt road

Closer as the crow flies

Between the soybeans and wheat

Near the barn with the hay fort

Beside the silo filled with corn

I am from the country

Bike paths through the pastures

Hide and seek in the corn fields

Fireflies in empty Miracle Whip jars

Tire swings and climbing trees

Tomboys and fishing ponds

I am from the country

Counting constellations at night

Finding shapes in the clouds by day

Ditches deeper than I am tall

Skipping stones and catching toads

Falling asleep with open windows hearing nothing but crickets and frogs and
whippoorwills

Written by Debi Baldwin

Reflecting on Mount Vernon, Knox County, OH

Written in Louisville, Jefferson County, KY

Where I'm From

I'm am from my birth in Alabama red dirt and
Kentucky bred of hopes and dreams

I'm from the Browns, Bakers, Ligon, and Knights,
a strong family tree that grew me

I'm from share croppers, land owners, carpenters, educators,
and live-in house mothers who led the way to *somewhere*

I'm on the shoulders of Kennedy Bridge builders, McAlpine Locks and Dam engineers,
Those who worked while being black at GE, Phillip Morris, Brown-Forman, and American Standard

I'm from a county called Jefferson and a city full of
Louavillians who look like me, like them, like those, and the others..
So proud, so connected culturally!

I'm from Cherokee blood and pure African black!
I'm from places of the country and the city

City country city.. this is where I'm from

I know who I am, what I want, and what I don't,
I speaks my mind and lives my story

Every moment is me and every blessing is not free...
I am here to BE!

By Sister of the Mud – Jefferson County