

Poetry Project with George Ella Lyon
Ohio Kentucky Indiana Children's Literature Conference
November 5, 2016
Thomas More College

Where I'm From
by
Patricia Richards
Kenton County

*I am from
strength
perseverance
from each peak of the mountains
to every slow curve at river's bend
from the knobs
to sweet prairie grass
bustling urban cores
to rolling hills
of sweet Corn
tobacco barns and drying leaves
painted Cows
sleek horses
hay bales rolled for winter
I am
from cast iron tradition
coal tipples
coal dust
black lung
I am
from stories and songs
dancing along the bluegrass
to the limestone
sandstone
conglomerate
and
shale
I am
from
Kentucky.*

Where I'm From
Poetry project with George Ella Lyon
Ohio Kentucky Indiana Literature Conference
Author session November 5, 2016
Thomas More College

I am from hard work and determination
From early a.m. cow milking when the electric fails
I am from the warmth of the wood stove at my Granny's house
I am from the creaking of the wooden swing on Mamaw's front porch
I'm from people who ran from hardships in their past...
to create futures without foundations
I am from a gaggle of siblings,
but Mom made pink gravy just for me
I am from garlic and red sauce along the Ohio
From giggles and snorts
as my sister and I snuck an ice cold
refreshing can of Coke from the fridge at night
I am from relief upon hearing velcro ripping in the morning
I am from messy spaces, faces and hands
support of family, original and developed
I am from a mom who taught me to be afraid
of too much
I am from twice terrified on the operating table
unable to move my own body
then flooded
with relief and love
at the tiny indignant cries
I am from a small town where you know everyone's name
I am from the backyard of Kingston Drive
from the tree house under the willow tree
with mud pies
poison ivy
barking dogs
I am from Sumter Avenue
playing capture the flag in the yard
playing hockey with friends
on our backyard rink
with a softball
so no one got hurt
I am from another river city
with river boats
festivals
and just sitting in the car with my family
after church on Sunday afternoons
watching the river
I am from the cry of the gull
smashing the shell of the quahog
I am from a wide summer sky
with white clouds
just beyond my hand

as my father turns our tiny plane
the water shining below
I am from doodling pictures in school notebooks
I am from millennials told we can be
whatever we want to be
in a world with
peace
love
and aspiration
now overworked
over educated
and in crippling debt
told it's all our fault
I am me
a mom
wife
daughter
and someone's child
I am from family
always there
supporting
helping
irritating
loving
I am from a world where
everyone is interested
in my sister
and
I am just the tag-along...
the second one
I am from grief
seeing my child's face
seeing her love
in the world around me
hugs surround me
from those in the world
I am from her prayer clothes
and first name
I am from words and nature
blended together
from bugs and fun
I am from sneaking away
to find a quiet place where
I can finally crack open that book
that has been calling to me all day long
Where I'm from is the Bluegrass
not just the state
but from the sound
the twang of the sound
of my father's fingers across the banjo's strings
or the sweet sound of the mandolin's strum
I am from the music on the radio
singing in my own off key voice

not caring if anyone hears
Where I am from
we sing
and
believe in hope
it hasn't failed us yet.

cNovember 5, 2016
OKI Children's Literature Conference
Thomas More College
Author session with George Ella Lyon,
Kentucky Poet Laureate 2015-16
"Where I'm From" Poetry project
with contributions from 34
conference session attendees.

Where I'm From (Small Town Girl Rap)

by Pauletta Hansel, Thomas More College, Kenton County

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HerV6gdhrHY>

Where We're From

I come from the hiding place
in the forsythia bushes,
lost under the bass booming from dinged-up cars,
from the mildewed *MAD* magazines and
the matches that won't light.

I'm from schools
that graded my deportment
although I didn't know what that meant,
from a rag tag McCane and McNamara's Band
banging on the bottom of kettles
with wooden spoons.

I am from the county library,
the world given me
in a card I sign my name on,
from chalk dust
and the musty smell of books.

I'm from the woods
that are really nobody's property,
from the basketball court
where Oscar Robertson was my first idol.
I once made 72 straight free throws. (Really!)

I'm from *C-A-T-S*
and by *Ohio's sparkling waters*
and when the teams of Dixie fall in line,
from the cornfield ragers
where coyotes yipped like little girls.

I'm from calls never answered.
I am from lightning strikes and primordial soup.
I'm from some other end of the sky.

I'm from rickety plywood bike ramps
and the *Legend of Zelda*
and poor grades on a spelling test.
I'm from banana boat bicycle seats
with streamers on the handlebars
and baseball cards in the spokes,
from kool-aid and frozen fish sticks,
from plaid early American furniture
with skirts.

I come from towns that grew up along river banks,
like cypress knees around a pond,
from the milk chocolate eddies in the Ohio.
In my dreams are the faces of aunts & uncles,
dogs & cats, mother & father, coaches, grandparents
all sifting apart and merging
into one who is me
and then splitting apart again.
I'm from Kentucky in the most roundabout way,
from a confluence of DNA
conspiring on a boozy night.
I'm from Great-Grandma Adams'
Appalachia where the blue clouds visit low
on the crests that birthed my mom and hers.
I am from a family tree barely fractured.
When I fell, I didn't fall far.

I am from staring out windows,
from sticks and starry crumbs caught in my hair.
I come from the pages and pages of writing
that kept me alive.
It's not black night but a darkness within
that makes us speak, and speak again
I'm from unpolished speech,
from black ink stammer.
I'm from hard work
and a little chip on my shoulder,
from the absence of fear
that stops creativity.
I'm from that high corner
of this cluttered room
where the books
and would-be manuscripts
haven't quite reached the ceiling.
But mostly,
I'm from the comma
at the end of the line.

**By Thomas More College Creative Writing Vision Program's From Draft to Craft Class
(Kenton County): Terri L. Alekzander, Andrew Boettcher, Laurel Chambers, John Cruze,
Terry Focht, Teri Foltz, Kris Gillis, Pauletta Hansel, Andrew Jensen, Jerry Judge,
Meridith Owensby, Nicole Rahe, Susan Scardina, Chuck Stringer, Thomas Ward, Nicky
Westrick and Scott Whitehurst**

WHERE I'M FROM...

I am from long stalks of grass
And autumn red leaves
From backyard berry bushes
And long walks in the woods

I am from riverbanks and creek beds
And hopping from stone to stone
From bamboo fishing poles
Dipping into the pond

I am from Grandma's goetta
Boiling away on the stove
And peeking in her windows
To see if she's home

I am from the Funkes
Who value wide open skies
And the ground beneath their feet
A family where just about anything
"Beats a kick in the pants"

I am from the Hayes
Where a southern drawl
Meets a Canadian "eh"
From Aunt Emell's divine blueberry cake
Served with a "Honey, you look just like your daddy"

I left and went east
And came back for a bit.

I left and went west.
And came back again.
Because it's a little like falling in love
This place where I am from.

KATHERINE HAYES, ERLANGER, KENTON COUNTY

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Brayden Cunningham

Age: 11

Kenton County

John G. Carlisle Elementary School

I'm from Hensleys and Johnsons,
I'm from dogs and pit bulls ,
I'm from deciduous trees and bluegrass Kentucky,
I'm from brown squirrels and colored cats,
I'm from pizza and chicken,
I'm from Master Chef and Inside Out,
I'm from football and Christmas,
I'm from Joseph, Miguel, and Tayari,
I'm from playing football and sleeping,
I'm from "Hi" and "Go to your room",
I'm from liking pink and being competitive,
I'm from being in the NFL or becoming a vet,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Tayari Hill

Age: 11

Kenton County

John G. Carlisle Elementary School

I'm from Dobys and Hills,
I'm from a beagle named Hope and a fluffy rabbit named Lola,
I'm from Covington and flowers blooming in the spring,
I'm from outdoor cats and brown squirrels,
I'm from cheese pizza and chocolate ice cream,
I'm from Teen Titans and Avengers,
I'm from going out of town and having dinner together,
I'm from math and gym,
I'm from Treavon and Joseph,
I'm from eating and playing games,
I'm from "Hi!" and "You're smart",
I'm from being competitive and loving pink,
I'm from playing in the NBA or becoming a chef,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Jaelynn Turner

Age: 9

Kenton County

John G. Carlisle Elementary School

I'm from Hensleys and Johnsons,
I'm from dogs and birds,
I'm from evergreen trees and wet mud,
I'm from squirrels and cats,
I'm from bananas and chicken,
I'm from Bring it On and Bring it On: All or Nothing,
I'm from having fun and getting together,
I'm from Halloween and Christmas,
I'm from Brooke and Mylek,
I'm from going to school and getting an education,
I'm from "I love you" and "You're sweet",
I'm from being happy and being smart,
I'm from having a big dream,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Kennisha

Age: 11

Kenton County

John G. Carlisle Elementary School

I'm from Wagoners and McCoys,
I'm from Champ, Fluffy and Dimon,
I'm from Covington and kids playing outside,
I'm from cats and dogs,
I'm from tacos and chicken,
I'm from Girl Meets World and Annie,
I'm from Mario and Monopoly,
I'm from math and gym,
I'm from Makayla and Cheyenne,
I'm from playing basketball and watching TV,
I'm from "You're smart" and "Love you",
I'm from kind and smart,
I'm from owning a pony,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Thomas

Age: 10

Kenton County

John G. Carlisle Elementary School

I'm from Garcias and Salinas,

I'm from Simba and Lili,

I'm from Wal-Mart and basketball courts,

I'm from birds and dogs,

I'm from burgers and yogurt,

I'm from Regular Show and The Smurfs,

I'm from eating at restaurants and talking at the table,

I'm from Social Studies and BLOCK,

I'm from drawing characters and watching TV,

I'm from "Can I borrow your sharpener?" and "Do your homework",

I'm from dressing the same,

I'm from having a Happy New Year,

I'm from John G. Carlisle.