

Where I'm From.....

by Amy Raley

I am from down home cookin', from biscuits and gravy and chicken fried.

I am from the stone house high on the hill, that sits long and low.

There is nothing better in this world, than just sittin' on the front porch, it can't be denied.

I am from the maple trees, planted in the side yard over 60 years ago.

The red rose bushes, which were Grandmas pride.

Those tall, leafy trees that provided shade for numerous gatherings over the years.

I am from Daddy's stories and his discipline.

As well as Momma's love and her mending ways.

I am from UK basketball, as we all watched the TV screen with apprehension.

I am from the unforgiving, the loving, the lets not talk about it, never showing our fears.

I am from Blemer Blackburn and Searcy Felding, my two Grandfathers.

I am from Anna Mary and Ruth James, their wives.

Both marriages lasted the whole of their lives.

I am from worshipping the good Lord and Jesus and going to church on Sunday's.

Where you are friendly to strangers, give them a smile and say "Hey."

I am from the rolling hills of southwest Kentucky.

Horse Branch, if you want to get it right.

My ancestor, Make Miller, was the first to settle there.

We have a lot of old, pictures in a small closet, that's very narrow and tight.

I am from a big family, however, for many years now I have been out on my own.

But when you live close to relatives, and the Lord, you're never truly alone.

Where I'm From

I am from the rock ledge of Peter Cave
where I lay on my back
beside a fire beside my sleeping father
beneath the cave crickets and their silence.
There I calculated the world and all its elements.

I am from the top of a pine tree,
swaying, a hundred feet up.
This was my Everest, where
I surveyed the world and calculated it.

I am from guns,
bb's, 22's, .410's and 9's,
a bulleted history of shots
made and missed,
shots bragged and contested,
bullseyes and buck shots,
stepped off to calculate the yards.

I am from row after row of tobacco,
ten hours to a day,
five-hundred plants to a row
twelve rows to a section,
six stalks to a stick,
six-and-a-half acres to our farm,
twenty-five miles to market,
and gallons of sweat to give.
The math added up to a calculated living.

I am from scuffy boots
in dark hollers and deep humus,
the forest wind curled around my face,
the tall, elder oaks stood guard,
while I hunted ginseng
and calculated how many roots
were needed to pay that year's debts.

In this way my life is mathematical.
I add, subtract, divide and multiply
the days of my life and all that comprise them.
I am from calculations,
a significant arithmetic.

Todd Autry, Rosine, Ky (Ohio County)