

WHERE I'M FROM

I'm from Jersey cows and burley tobacco
Steaming cow patties and sticky tobacco suckers
The trample of cows' hooves thru Mama's marigolds
And Daddy losing his false teeth while chasing a wayward bull
From walnut trees and sugar maples made for climbing
And henhouses with tin roofs for sunbathing

I'm from hot summer nights on hardwood floors
And cold winter dawns before the Warm Morning stove
From a family drawn physically closer by the vagaries of weather
Where iced tea under a shade tree and a blanket-wrapped iron
Substituted for air conditioning and central heat

I'm from twice on Sundays at Salem Church
Wednesday nights, too
And twice yearly revivals to remind me of multitudinous sins
And dinner on the grounds with country ham, fried chicken,
Homemade rolls, lemonade, and chocolate cake
Prepared by ladies with names like Miss Ora and Aunt Lou Janie,
Who wasn't my aunt at all

I'm from Goodnight, Griderville, Route Two, Cave City,
And Hiseville, home of the Cardinals
Who lost more games than they won
A school where teachers rotated thru a revolving door
Leaving wistful students behind
Wondering what might have been

I'm from a first teaching position
Where I learned more than I taught
Where excellence was expected
And my father's "Anything worth doing is worth doing well" rang in my ears

I'm from a legacy of laughter and riches
Feared lost with my parents' deaths
But now kept alive thru memories
And the power of my pen

Doris Cella

Murray State University (retired)
Calloway County, KY

Where I'm From

by Frances Wells, Calloway County (born in Union County)

I am from the granite dipper,
frozen into the water bucket
on Mamaw's back porch,
on Christmas morning.

I am from the rooster's crowing,
the smell of stoked coal in
Warm Morning heaters.
From kitchen laughter,
hot homemade biscuits
stuffed with salty country ham,
and my awakening
to ice coated branches
and beauty.

I am from a featherbed,
troop train's lonesome whistles,
feed sack aprons.
From sassafras root
for great-grandmother's snuff can,
and flowered oil cloths covering
Sunday lunch. It kept the flies off.

I am from wooden outhouses,
second water baths in galvanized tubs,
and Big Chief tablets.
Skating under the big tent,
dime store Evening In Paris perfume,
ice cream cone dripping,
and sore arm from typhoid shots.

From counting seconds between thunder
and lightening at my father's knee.
Conquering fears, seeing nature.
Becoming an artist.

I AM FROM

I am from my momma, running barefoot in the gravel to rescue me from
Highway 62.

I am from my daddy, whistling as he came home from the “Flying SS’s”-
Southern States, feed, seed, fertilizer and grain.

I am from God, “my ever present help in time of trouble”

I am from crunchy leaves as I walked home from school.

I am from chicken and dumplings, German Chocolate birthday cake,
fresh squash, tomatoes, corn and new potatoes.

I am from Granny and the smell of turpentine and oil paint.

I am from blue ribbons at the county fair, Windsor Newton paintbrushes,
watercolors and landscapes.

I am from ice skates and Winnie the Pooh, stuffed animals and the friendship
of books.

I am from long summer days dressed as old ladies or “Eunice and Momma”
with my lifelong friend.

I am from my older brother who told me to pull the cat’s tail, “it won’t hurt
you!”

I am from my younger brother who threw sticks on the balcony and said,
“Sherry did it!”

I am from the oval encircled red roses of my bedroom wallpaper, the squares
of Momma’s quilts and a circle of love
formed by relatives holding hands and giving thanks.

Sherry Shutt Darnall, Murray, Calloway County