

Name: _____

“Where I’m From” Checklist for Final Drafts

- Include one or more of the following non-literal figures of speech:
 - Simile and/or Metaphor
 - Personification
 - Hyperbole
 - Paradox
 - Allusion
 - Idiom
 - Pun
 - Oxymoron
- The poem should contain the following poetic elements:
 - descriptive imagery
 - alliteration and/or assonance
 - repetition and/or a refrain
 - some parallel structure
- Appropriate, artistic decorations are strongly encouraged.*
- Only the poem should be on the front – no names, headings, assignment titles, dates, etc.
- Final drafts should be free of errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Final drafts should be in dark ink: typed or very neatly handwritten.
- The poem should be more than just a literal summary of things in your life. You are reflecting poetically on what makes you who you are. When your parents read the poem, they should weep (ideally, tears of *joy*) to see how you appreciate their influence.
- Poems should be in the first-person. Your voice and tone should be clear.
- The physical arrangement of the lines should look like poetry, with appropriate line breaks and spacing.
- Print TWO (2) final copies. Put your name on the BACK of one and turn it in. Give the other one to your mom on Mother’s Day.

Due Date: _____

Where I'm From

I am from clothespins,
 from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
 I am from the dirt under the back porch.
 (Black, glistening,
 it tasted like beets.)
 I am from the forsythia bush
 the Dutch elm
 whose long-gone limbs I remember
 as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
 from Imogene and Alafair.
 I'm from the know-it-alls
 and the pass-it-ons,
 from Perk up! and Pipe down!
 I'm from He restoreth my soul
 with a cottonball lamb
 and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
 fried corn and strong coffee.
 From the finger my grandfather lost
 to the auger,
 the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
 spilling old pictures,
 a sift of lost faces
 to drift beneath my dreams.
 I am from those moments--
 snapped before I budded --
 leaf-fall from the family tree.

--George Ella Lyon

The poem above was the original writing on which this exercise is based. Since the poem was written, the writer (and people all over the Internet) discovered that it is not only poetry, but also a way to examine one’s roots, reflect on family and traditions, and say something profound and poetic about one’s own identity. In order to make the most of this, it is important to recognize the difference between LITERAL and NON-LITERAL language. For example, a person cannot *literally* be from “fudge and eyeglasses” like it says at the beginning of the second stanza. This is just a poetic way of saying that fudge and eyeglasses played a significant role in her family.

Literal language says what it means, like a dictionary definition.

Non-literal language is often connotative, suggesting feelings beyond the words themselves.

If my son comes home very late, I might call him a “night owl.” That does not mean he is actually an owl; it is non-literal language that suggests he stays up very late...like an owl. Get it?

I knew you were sharp! Bright, too! (Those are non-literal ways of saying you are intelligent.)