**"Where I'm From" Poem Assignment**

Our next major assignment requires you to be a bit introspective (to be introspective means to do some soul-searching – to think about what makes you YOU). You will be writing a poem about where and what you come from—the people, the places, the things, and the experiences that make you who you are.

Make a list of things that you feel have shaped you and place them in categories. Make your categories first and list within them or make your list and then categorize. Your categories may be whatever you wish. Some examples are

* 1. Places
  2. Family
  3. Friends
  4. Heroes
  5. Trials
  6. Important events
  7. Strong memories
  8. Conversations
  9. Things said to you
  10. Foods
  11. Music
  12. Movies
  13. Objects
  14. Beliefs
  15. Fears
  16. Strengths
  17. Weaknesses

**Ideas about how to make the poem work:**

* Location: Is there one particular town, city, state, or country that has impacted or shaped who you are (as Maycomb County has shaped who Scout is)?
* Work: Your parents' work could open into a memory of going with them, helping, being in the way. You might write about a remembered dialogue between your parents concerning work (maybe one or both have an interesting job?). Maybe your grandfather and father are carpenters. Your poem could be centered around a bunch of tools they used.
* Life Event: an important event could open into a free-writing about all of the memories of that experience.

Ideas: a big game, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, a major trip, a wedding, a great loss, the death of a loved one, etc.

* Food: Your poem could open into a scene at the table, a character sketch of the person who prepared the food, a litany of different experiences with it, etc. Food poems give you a great opportunity to use imagery to the best of your ability.
* Art or Music: Music could take you to a scene where the music is playing; could provide you the chance to interleave the words of the song and words you might have said, or a narrative of what you were thinking and feeling at the time the song was first important to you (“Where I'm Singing From”).
* Dialogue: something someone said to you could open into a poem that captures that moment; could be what you wanted to say back but never did.
* An important object: a significant object could open into a sensory exploration of the object-what it felt, sounded, smelled, looked, and tasted like; then where it came from, what happened to it, a memory of your connection with it. Is there a secret or a longing connected with this object? A message? If you could go back to yourself when this object was important to you, what would you ask, tell, or give yourself?

Remember, you are the expert on you. No one else sees the world as you do; no one else has your material to draw on. This is an easy poem to write, but it will take time – so do not procrastinate.

**Poem Requirements:**

* Your poem must be a **minimum** of \_\_\_\_ lines. (The minimum does not guarantee a good grade).
* Typed, MLA formatted
* Submitted to turnitin.com by date to be determined \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**I Am From**

I am from the color yellow…

from mornings and afternoons

spent in the brilliant sunshine.

I am from whispering pine trees

and the tall oak in the side yard

that stretched its arms to cradle,

and allowed me to climb.

I'm from Barbie Dolls and dance classes,

Arabesques and tap shoes.

From a pink poodle and a Yankee Doodle,

and recitals at the Coliseum.

From hair ribbons and dress-up clothes,

and costume jewelry

from a wooden box

in Georgie’s house.

I'm from apple pies and crystal doorknobs,

from antique furniture and century-old fireplaces.

I am from family reunions and family traditions,

From the North and the South.

From wrinkled hands that lovingly touched my hair.

From those seen only once a year,

and those seen every day.

I am from North Carolina.

From green-blue mountains that touch the sky,

from the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus,

from summers spent in Cherokee country

and sliding down slippery rocks.

I am from Chimney Rock and Bottomless Pools,

from red, orange, and yellow leaves

underfoot on paths through the woods.

I am from Georgia peaches and red clay,

and honeysuckle and muscadine.

I am from the purple bike I learned late to ride.

From the Rapids and the Hornets.

From the gift of occasional snow holidays,

And summer nights of hide-and-seek

By the light of the fireflies.

I am from the South Carolina lowcountry,

from ocean sunrises

and pluff mud

and sea shells

and calm.

I am from suntans and even sunburns.

From sand between my toes (and everywhere else),

dolphin-spotting, and treasure hunting.

I am from the rest I find at ocean’s side.

I am from Arabian Nights and Cinderella.

I am from Joseph and his coat,

and Charlie’s chocolate.

I am from Scarlett and Dorothy,

From Scout and Juliet.

I am from beautiful black letters

on a stark white page.

From my imagination

that made the words come alive.

I am from my birth family,

but now part of a larger circle.

I am from nurses and teachers,

scientists and pilots, lawyers and salesmen.

I am from artists and craftsmen

engineers and architects.

I am from the Dreamers and the Do-ers.

I am from Budget and Jenny,

Cameo and Bobo,

and a cat of snowy white

-or soot-black when she played in the fireplace.

Silly cat.

I am from the heart-pain of growing up

and a big brother who truly made it better.

I am from broken hearts,

and healing hugs.

I am from laughter and tears.

I am from heroes and places, real and imagined.