

Where I'm From

By George Ella Lyon

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.



Photo by Ann W. Olson

George Ella Lyon

Growing up in a coal-mining town in the mountains of Kentucky, I loved words, tree climbing, bike riding, singing, my family, stories, dinner and school.

Yes, I loved school. Pencils and paper, all those books, kids to play with, colored chalk, teachers, recess, something new every day.

I started writing poems on my own in third grade. I first published in 1983, a poetry collection called *Mountain*. My books frequently take place in Appalachia.

I went to college and graduate school and began a life of teaching, writing, and raising a family. I started out writing poetry for adults and teaching college; now I write for kids as well as adults.