Original Poem:
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 jujubes 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.

Model Poem:
Where I'm From
By Ms. Vaca
I am from bookshelves,
from vinegar and green detergent.
I am from the dog hair in every corner
(Yellow, abundant,
the vacuum could never get it all.)
I am from azaleas
the magnolia tree
whose leaves crunched under my feet like snow
every fall.
I'm from puzzles and sunburns,
from Dorothy Ann and Mary Christine Catherine
I'm from reading and road trips
From "Please watch your brother" and
"Don't let your brother hit you!"
I'm from Easter sunrises and Iowa churches at Christmas
I'm from Alexandria and the Rileys,
Sterzinger's potato chips and sponge candy.
From my Air Force dad's refusal to go to Vietnam,
from my mom's leaving home at 17.
On a low shelf in my new house is a stack of photo albums,
carefully curated by my faraway father,
chronicling my childhood.
I am from these pages,
yellowed but firm,
holding on to me across the country.