

Where I Come From

A beginner poetry practice in memory, detail & belonging

You don't need to know how to write a poem. Begin with the words you already have.

Poetry often begins with noticing the details we might otherwise pass by. For this practice, you will use simple memories—places, people, sounds, tastes, sayings and ordinary objects—to create a portrait of where you come from.

BEGIN WITH A LIST

Before you try to write a poem, jot down a few details from your life. Don't search for impressive answers. Specific is better than perfect.

- a place you remember clearly
- a person whose voice you can still hear
- a smell or taste that takes you somewhere
- a saying, expression or piece of advice you grew up hearing
- an ordinary object that holds a memory
- a sound that belongs to your childhood or home

NOW, BEGIN YOUR POEM

Start with the words “**I come from...**”

Repeat the phrase as often as you like. Let each line lead to another detail. You do not need to rhyme, explain, or tell the story in order.

I come from... the kitchen light left on after everyone went to bed
Sunday voices spilling into the hallway
a chipped blue cup no one ever threw away
the sound of my name called from another room

LET THE DETAILS DO THE WORK

If a line surprises you, follow it. If a memory appears that was not on your list, let it in. The poem does not have to explain who you are. It can simply gather the small things that helped make you.

When you finish: Read your poem aloud once. Circle one line that feels especially alive. That line may be the beginning of another poem—or simply one worth keeping.

There is no correct way to come from somewhere.

CREATE. INSPIRE. ENVISION.