

I am from...

Inspired by the original poem by George Ella Lyon



Poems by Students of the MIT Women's League
English Conversation Class

"I am from..."

By Deborah, Brazil



I am from a radio on,
From some coffee and cheese.
I am from a messy house, music, dance, and happy laughter.
I am from my Mom's garden with tomatoes and collards.

I am from friends meeting and cooking together,
From Amanlis, David, and Vera.
I am from not depending on others and helping each other,
From "Be yourself." and "I said no."

I'm from religious grandparents.
I'm from Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais;
Pizza and barbecue;
From the mother who turned deaf at age six;
The father who was the tenth son of eleven;
All the printed pictures on the wall showing how important family is for us.



"I am from..."

By Isabel, Spain



I am from bookstores and libraries,
From MioCid and Miss Marple.

I am from "Pension la Pepa", a guest-room always full, and a kitchen always busy.

I am from red geraniums and white azahar flowers,
the fig trees we used to climb in my grandmother's patio.

I am from storytelling during summer bonfires and long walks at the beach,
From Antonio and Mami.

I'm from my father's hugs and my mother's butterfly kisses
From "hurry up, drink your milk" and "are you still sleeping?"

I am from early morning Sunday Mass and kneel-down bedside prayers.

I am from Palencia, "the unknown beautiful" city,
Spanish omelettes and ham croquettes, churros and turrón;
From my grandparents' living in Shanghai and their boat trip back to Spain, just in time for the civil war;
From the daily letters my father wrote to my mother, occasionally answered, all of them carefully kept in the
back of a drawer;

The same drawer where the old black and white pictures were stored. All mixed up, no order kept;
Places, names and dates on their backs, untold stories and well-known memories nobody seems to
remember correctly anymore.

I am from all these moments.



“I am from...”

By Desiree, Italy



I am from unselected photos forgotten in a dusty box,
From olive oil and fresh-baked bread.

I am from *“that branch of the lake of Como which extends toward the South...”*.

I am from rhododendrons, azaleas, oaks and sequoias;
all of them are in the well-kept gardens of famous villas beside the lake.

I am from the border with the “neutral” country,
From the Romanos who represent the North with Russian origins, and from the Citros who represent the South and Greek ancestors.

I am from an Italian family, and family is first,
From “Always be a good girl” and “Be grateful for what you have.”.

I am from a Catholic family who does not go too often to church...

I am from Como, birthplace of Volta, Terragni, Perlasca and many others,
From polenta and European perch fillet risotto;

From the border crossed by all my family members to work, I started to discover the world;
From the pictures that are the connection with the past and the springboard toward the future.
Sooner or later I will always find my way back home.



<http://www.fresia.com/>

"I am from..."

By Anita, Norway



I am from fishing rods and crime story books,
From "Tine" and "Pink Fish".

I am from the Northern light, white snow, blue ocean, fresh, cold air;

I am from fresh water, cold and clear.

I'm from midsummer celebrations and stickiness,
From Klara and Jens.

I'm from the hardworking and honest,

From "Those who don't work to get warm will eat to get warm."

I'm from Christianity, strong Christmas traditions.

I'm from the land of the midnight sun and a fisherman's family, grilled salmon, creamy cake with strawberries;

From the youth who had to get work to make money for his family,

The handy family who helps whenever needed.



"I am from..."

By Elin, Norway



I am from the cheese slicer,
From Volvo Amazon and Vereides' Bakery.
I am from thin walls, green, dark, the smell of diesel.
I am from dandelions, shabby and bright.

I'm from the accordionist and blue eyes,
From Anne and Hermod.
I'm from the noisy family and the laughs,
From "Don't sleep away the summer night -- it is too beautiful." and "Be home by 11!".

I'm from Sunday School, and looking for UFOs and Huldra.
I'm from Bukta and the Huus's, meat casserole, strawberry jam,
From the father who had to stay at home and run the family farm,
The mother who worked on a boat and sailed all around the world.
Albums arranged by my sister, in my parents' cabinet, helping me to remember who I am.



"I am from..."

By Yumiko, Japan



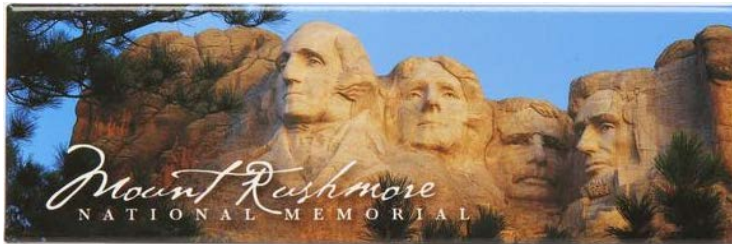
I am from green grapes,
From Muscat and Thompson,
Genuine, sweet, sour, and juicy.

I am from cherry blossoms, beautiful and short-lived.

I'm from having dinner at home and traveling to far places with my family;
From Mell and Nene.

I'm from the cautious and impatient,
From "Be dependable." and "Be punctual."

I'm from Buddhism, but not strong.
I'm from Japan, spinach and blackberries;
From the girl who looks stable but still depends on her parents,
The boy who is mischievous and stubborn.
Mount Rushmore, the national parks in the central U.S.;
The many magnets we got when we traveled.



"I am from..."

By Paula, USA



I am from sponge curlers,
From Ajax and Folger's Coffee.
I am from the porcelain tub and Saturday night baths, hot, steamy, Ivory Soap smell.

I am from lilacs, Mom's old-fashioned phlox, their hummingbird guests.
I'm from Christmas cookies and auburn hair;
From Eva and Adeline.
I'm from the weak eyes and the strong wills;
From "Be kind." and "Don't be so stubborn!"

I'm from rosary beads, lace mantillas worn at Mass,
I'm from Warsaw, Vilnius and County Kerry, the desperate and hopeful, reaching these shores over three generations; Babka bread and corned beef;
From the discovery of Great Uncle Tim's Filipino family and the Dear John letter among Dad's WWII keepsakes;
The worn leather photo album, now mine, filled with unknowable faces, no one alive to tell us their stories.

