Where I'm From

By Aaron L. Schlossberg

I'm from the cul-de-sac where puddles don't dry,

from the palm leaf that fell from a sky that doesn't lie;

I'm from the bow that hums when the heater kicks on,

from the arrows I never loosed, just dreamed had gone;

I'm from the drain that breathes under turquoise light,

from daring my reflection to blink first at night;

I'm from Mom's cracked mug that smells like cloves,

from Dad's half-built shelf and his half-told jokes;

I'm from messages sent at 3:04,

from reading them back like confessions or lore;

I'm from the frog in the gutter that sang in the rain,

from the sidewalk chalk spelling my old nickname;

I'm from Tiana framed between thumbtacks and tape,

from Anika's autograph looping like a secret escape;

I'm from the bus stop where the lamp hums loud,

from counting how many moths make a crowd;

I’m from the place where no one says “stay”,

from the voice that fills the silence before it decays;

I’m from the night I mistook fog for a ghost,

from learning that echoes tell truths the loudest voice won’t;

I’m from chlorine-stung eyes and the fear of the deep,

from a dream where the pool drain whispered in sleep;

I’m from my neighbor’s cat who stares like she knows,

from the cracked snow globe still making snow;

I’m from notebooks of words I meant to say,

from eraser dust that still spells my name halfway;

I’m from ceiling-fan shadows that count my sins,

from tracing my breath on the cold within;

I’m from the clock that skips the number four,

from a knock that came once and nevermore;

I’m from the promise to stay when I wanted to run,

from the soft hum of streetlights impersonating the sun;

I’m from the rain that plays piano on tin,

from knocking over the art room’s trash bin;

I'm from the attic where nothing's been sold,

from jars of air labeled *Young* and *Old*;

I'm from the phone that rings when only Joyce is there,

from answering anyway just to prove I care;

I'm from the photo booth strip where my eyes are closed,

from the second shot where I almost look whole;

I'm from the words I rehearse before sleep,

from the small forgivenesses I never keep;

I'm from the streetlight that flickers when I pass,

from believing it's trying to tell me "*at last*";

I'm from nostalgic aesthetics that now scream "*liminal!*",

from forty-five whole seconds on that goddamn bull;

I'm from constantly yapping 'til the day is done,

and now from learning that silence is NOT where I'm from.

Author's note: "*Where I'm From*" was originally a poem by George Ella Lyon. I have made my own version before (which can be accessed *here*); however, for *this* assignment, it was for my "Intro to Fiction Writing" course, so I didn't think that I should just reproduce my own. It had to be *fictional*, whereas mine is truthful and about *me*. So what I did is imagine a new, fictional person, and write what *their* "Where I'm From" would be. I *did* insert a bit of prose that applies to me as well, but it is mostly fictional.