

I Am From

—after George Ella Lyon

rain and mud
brooms and shovels.
I'm from the rumble of
freight trains near the old house.
I am from grass, tall trees
and gladiolas.
From the huge maple tree that engulfed
the white two-story house.

I am from ocean beaches
cornmeal mush and family debates.
From loggers and nurses.
I'm from sleeping late
church on Sundays
and strong opinions on everything

I am from use your head
oh, my aching back
and big band music.
I'm from green Cascades
and trips to the Coast.
From homemade whole wheat bread
and store-bought potato chips.

I am from Reed and Eleanor's branch.
From aunts, on their way to dances
who trudged down the hill
in mud-caked boots
and changed into strappy
high heels before
climbing into the old Ford.
From uncles who avoided fines on
overweight logging trucks.

I'm from black and white photos
which divide my childhood
into rectangles of time
rooted in tall trees and
salt water.

—Lorraine Jeffery