



Roots Co-curricular Lab | *Where I'm From Poem*

“Today I have learned to be free. Today I have learned to be spiritual because I have reconnected with my roots, with the source of my life.”

Alvaro Dávila,
“Re-Discovering My Spiritual History” (1994)

This week, our readings and refraction video suggest that being aware of one’s roots is a crucial aspect of living well. Inspired by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schulz’s claim that “family matters,” Alvaro Dávila’s autobiographical reflection denying one’s roots, and Coach Rockwell’s story about surprising changes in how her roots encouraged her, this co-curricular lab invites you to specify and contemplate your own roots through poetry.

Guidelines

1. Prepare an original “Where I’m From” poem. The composition of a “Where I’m From” poem, [made famous by poet George Ella Lyon](#), encourages you to consider those people, places, ideas, and experiences that have influenced you. [Click here](#) to listen to George Ella Lyon recite her “Where I’m From poem.” This poem is all about you and your relationship with your roots. There is no standard formula, structure, or type of poem that you must achieve or create. Your skills as a poet are not important. Rather, your ability to reflect on the integration or tension of the stories of your life is the focus. Write honestly in a manner that helps you reflect on who, what, and where has helped form you. You may wish to [consider George Ella Lyon’s recommendations for writing](#) before you begin.
2. In your commonplace book, beginning on page 232 (or later), summarize your experience, connect it to the text from the *roots* session, and apply it to your practice of living well.
3. Consider reciting your poem at the First-year Poetry Café co-curricular event on September 23 (see the co-curricular event calendar for details). By compositing your poem, reciting your poem, and reflecting upon both experiences in your commonplace book, you may complete both a co-curricular lab and a co-curricular event requirement.