

Where I'm From . . .

By Rose Reissman, inspired by George Ella Lyon

I am from third floor laundry room, machine washing

From Gaines and Downy scents and Febreze cranberry, spiced apple air mists.

I am from Seaman Avenue fuchsia plants centered, swept with bits of street side gravel, and some days wildfire polluted air.

I am from the deep green leafed bushes and bare Inwood Park trees seen through my bedroom window.

I am from mango gelato, Hombries Frio Frio, tres leches, guava cake, and designer oversized cobalt blue Prada sunglasses.

I am from the want to learn-it-alls.

And the pass the story on, culture, language forward "affirmista fashionistas,"

From the "Ye soy . . .," the "Speak up and Speak out,"

And the "Stand Straight" and "Be Proud,"

I am from hugs, laughs, heads up, smiles and strength.

I am from the Inwood bagels, Buunni Ethiopian coffee, heavy delicious scented and spiced silk road wraps, Manny's friendly Inwood Pharmacy at 4915 Broadway, renovated Inwood Library poetry at the mic and smiling staff.

From the fragrant Capital Diner breakfast pancake stacks with scented syrup and buttery melts,

From C-Town crowded shopping aisles with customers grabbing fruits and weekly specials.

From Yummy Thai- Pai Thai entrees, and steamed broccoli, and Garden Café beautifully presented plates, from Inwood Park Cathy led art events and Park Ranger cleanups,

From the free library surprise bookcase near the Starbucks, and the surprise Silver Bell Variety stores down Dyckman street with girls tiaras, holiday decorations,

From protests down Broadway and 207th Street.

I am from my mother's meetings and the shopping carts she packed tightly with supplies,

From my father's Venus Paradise coloring sets, and his life history audio tapes.

From my husband's photos of the Seaman Avenue playing ground slides and swings.

From the neighborhood lost pet and apartment furniture notices on the traffic light tall beams

The murals to community heroes on the sides of schools.

The scaffolds renovating buildings from the early 1900s still standing strong.

I am from actual street staircases leading to waiting to be discovered worlds.

I am from and am all of these and more

As the scents, sights, sweets and sour of Inwood, waft deliberately under my apartment door.

I am from Seaman, Inwood, Manhattan, New York City.