



Metamorphosis

GJLP's Poetry AntholoZine

2021



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Introduction

Metamorphosis is a collective poetry AntholoZine meant to encourage both reflection and goal setting by examining where you have come from and where you are headed! Through our own metamorphosis, we transform our pasts into a better future. Before beginning, take a couple minutes to center yourself. If you would like to try meditating, [check out this resource](#).

Before beginning, answer the following questions silently, in conversation with a trusted friend or adult, or through journaling:

1. How are you feeling at this moment right now, physically and mentally?
2. Is there anything that is preoccupying your mind and energy?
3. Are you in the right headspace for reflection about the past and future?

If not, that's okay! I would encourage you to check out this resource on [self-care](#) before continuing and reaching out to someone you trust to share these thoughts and feelings.

It is important to give yourself the space and time you need to complete this project. Listen to what your body and mind are saying. If at any point you need to take a break, get a snack, watch a comforting show you've seen a hundred times, you absolutely should give yourself the space to do so. This project does not need to be completed in a single sitting. In fact, it may take a while for you to really reflect and then turn those reflections into written words. That's okay! It's all part of the process.

When you do feel centered and ready, you can continue to the project overview for more details!



Overview

Part 1: "I Come From..." -- Look back at the past. Tell us about where you come from physically, mentally, spiritually, etc. Go as far back as you would like, from the day you were born, your earliest memory, the first time you felt seen. Tell us what your life has been like, what you have accomplished, what you have gone through. You have complete freedom over what you share; it can be locations, sayings or colloquialisms you grew up hearing, memories of people or foods or smells. Reflect on the past.

Part 2: "I'm Headed Towards..." -- Then, look towards the future. Where are you headed physically, mentally, spiritually, etc.? Towards greatness, a place to call home, a future that isn't yet possible but may be with you and your work? You can shape the future in this section; make it what you want to be. Set some goals for the future.

Part 3: At the end, you will combine part 1 and part 2 into one document and add graphics that represent you and your poem. These can be pictures and videos that you have taken or they can be online representations of your life. Add quotes, symbols, music, role models, etc. Be as creative as you would like!

Part 4: Finally, you will choose a single line from part 1 and part 2 that you would like to add to our community poem. This will be a collective poem in the same format as your individual poem, however each line and graphic will be from a different person's poem.



Inspiration

The inspiration for this project comes from the 2021 GSAN Staff Retreat as well as George Ella Lyon's poem "Where I'm From," shown below. As Lyon writes, "In such an atmosphere, how can we find our voices and make them heard? One avenue is through poetry, that heart-cry that comes to us in times of love and crisis." This is our heart-cry, a heart-cry for the trans and gender nonconforming communities that shows our resilience and perseverance. No matter where we are from or what we experience, we are all headed for greatness.

Where I'm From by George Ella Lyon

*I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.
I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.
I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.
Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments--
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.*



Examples

Example #1: Gill Platek

I come from a Baptism that tried to wash me away
From stained glass windows and bibles and praying the gay away
I come from overbearing priests that tried to cure me
From uncomfortable plaid skirts and forced confessions
The promise of hell and damnation that turned my mind into a graveyard
And my body into someone I didn't recognize

I come from running barefoot in the grass with my cousins turned siblings
From sleeping on the porch to see the stars
And my aunts making waffles in the morning
From sun burns and aloe, camping and s'mores
I come from playing in the creek and building forts out of trees

I come from privilege
From private school and ignorance, banned books and abstinence only
I come from American flags lining the streets
From country music on porches and the ringing of church bells on Sundays

I come from trying so hard to be something I'm not
From a place that I love but that doesn't always love me back
A place I have outgrown but wish it had grown with me

I come from the year 2015
From the legalization of gay marriage and the first time I heard about the LGBT+ community in a
positive way
I come from hanging on every word reporters said and testimonies I heard in the quiet darkness of my
room
From people who said it was okay and fought hard so that I could understand that too
From shedding internalized homophobia and choosing to love myself instead
I come from starting my life over with promises to my younger self
Promises of kindness and compassion for a kid who stuck it out and made it to a world that never
seemed possible

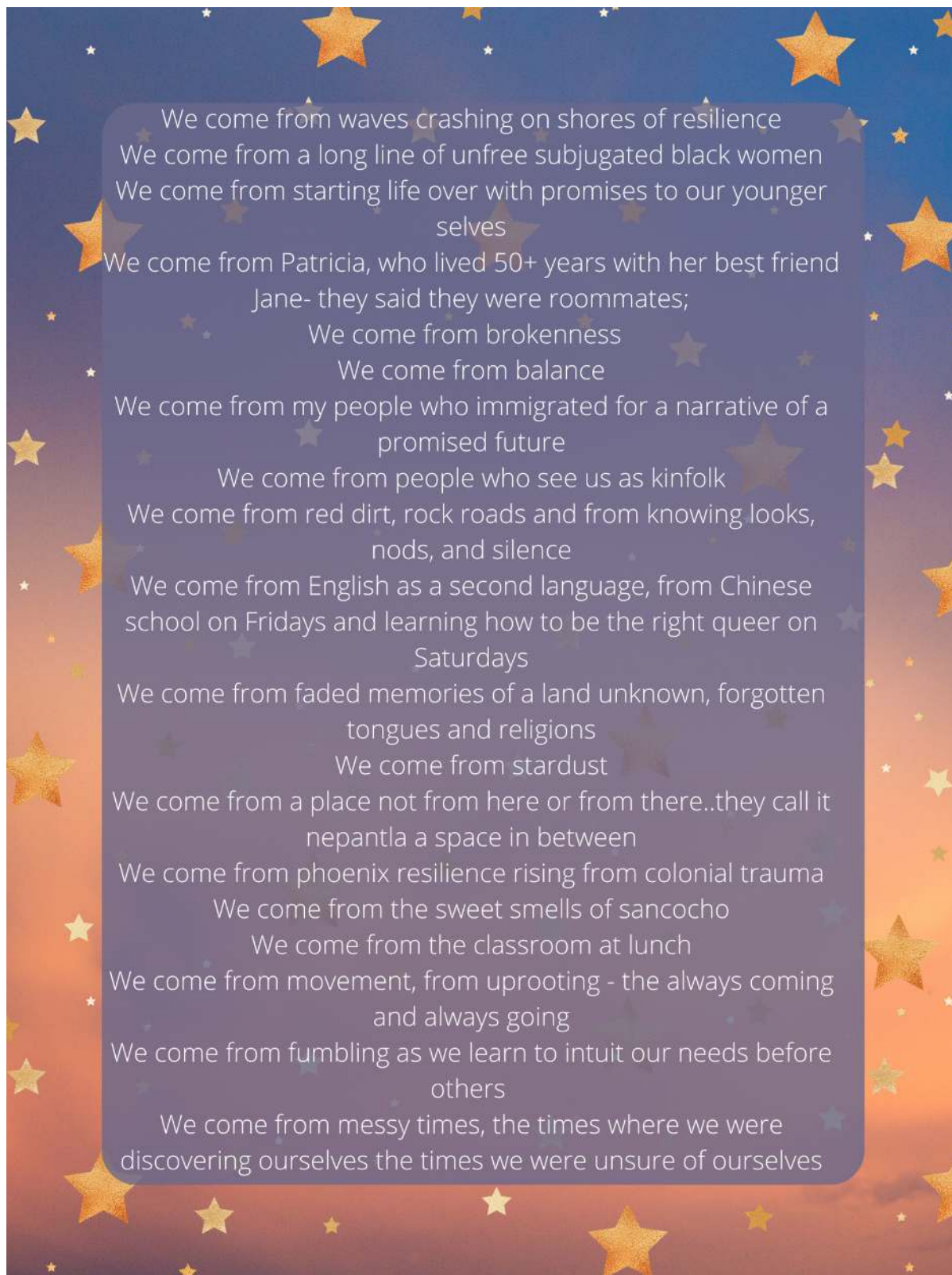
I am headed towards that future, a future that allows everyone to be who they are
A future free of side glances and smirks, online threats and nasty comments
I am headed towards the impossible because I am determined to make it possible
Determined to leave a world behind that should have been there the day I was born

I am headed towards greatness
I will no longer change myself to please the world
The world will be changed by me



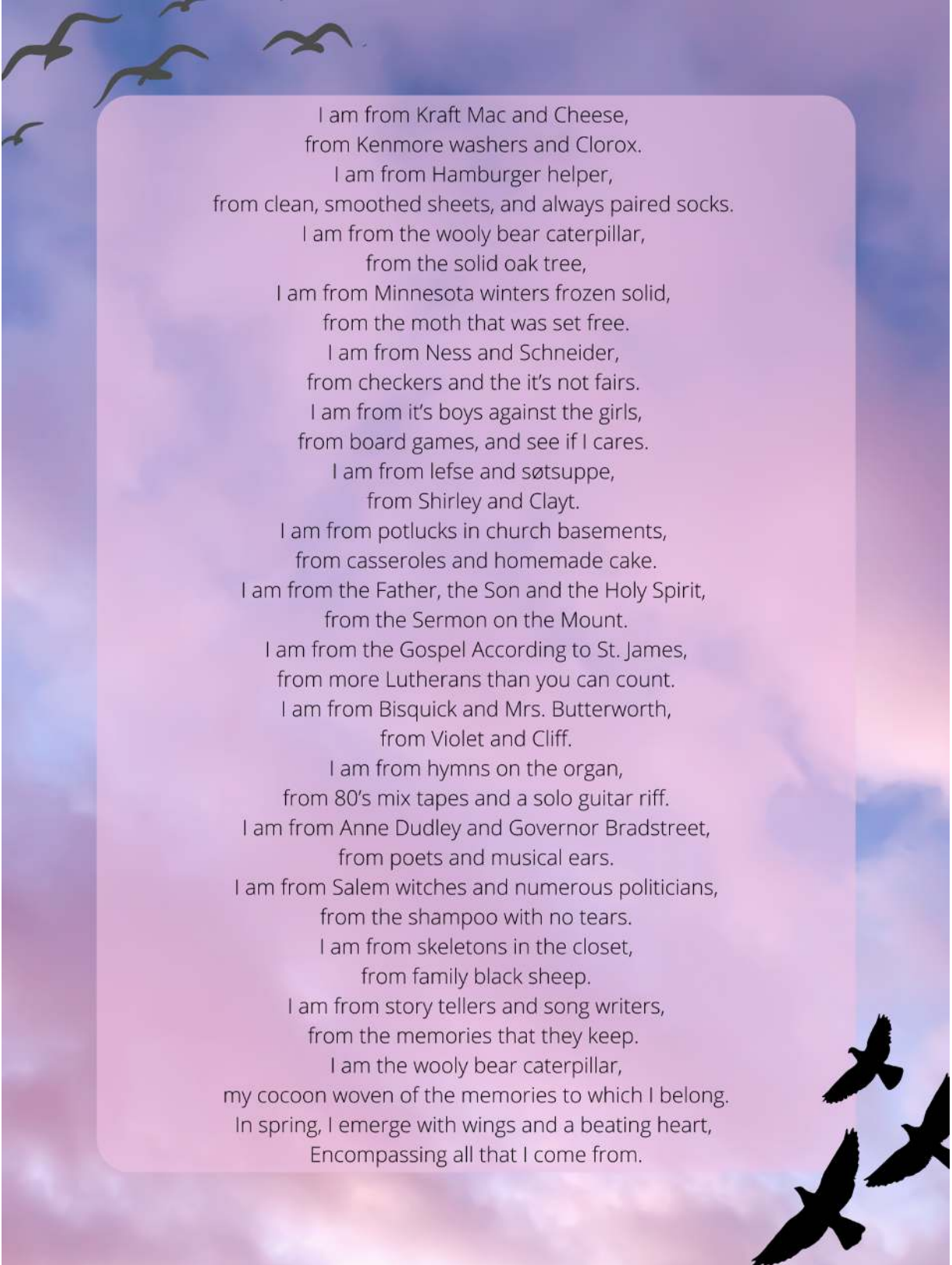


Example #2: GSA Network Staff Poem (Each line is from a different GSA Network staff member)





Example #3: Jill Lynne Ness



I am from Kraft Mac and Cheese,
from Kenmore washers and Clorox.
I am from Hamburger helper,
from clean, smoothed sheets, and always paired socks.
I am from the wooly bear caterpillar,
from the solid oak tree,
I am from Minnesota winters frozen solid,
from the moth that was set free.
I am from Ness and Schneider,
from checkers and the it's not fairs.
I am from it's boys against the girls,
from board games, and see if I cares.
I am from lefse and søtsuppe,
from Shirley and Clayt.
I am from potlucks in church basements,
from casseroles and homemade cake.
I am from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
from the Sermon on the Mount.
I am from the Gospel According to St. James,
from more Lutherans than you can count.
I am from Bisquick and Mrs. Butterworth,
from Violet and Cliff.
I am from hymns on the organ,
from 80's mix tapes and a solo guitar riff.
I am from Anne Dudley and Governor Bradstreet,
from poets and musical ears.
I am from Salem witches and numerous politicians,
from the shampoo with no tears.
I am from skeletons in the closet,
from family black sheep.
I am from story tellers and song writers,
from the memories that they keep.
I am the wooly bear caterpillar,
my cocoon woven of the memories to which I belong.
In spring, I emerge with wings and a beating heart,
Encompassing all that I come from.



Example #4: Taiya Farrugia

I am from swing sets that sway.
I am from sitting on the porch watching the
lightning strike.
I am from birds chirping and cars humming.
I am from bike rides to the sandy beach.
I am from big fluffy dogs with heart shaped noses.
I am from green grass and blossoming flowers.
I am from the busiest city.
I am from tall highrises.
I am from a busy household with doors slamming, tv
loud, phones ringing, and sisters screaming.
I am from bouncy trampolines and galloping
horses.
I am from the Mediterranean with the sea
breeze, fresh light crispy pastries ,and warm
weather.
I am from my dad's sweet and savory pecan pie.
I am from my mom's hugs that can solve any
problem.
I am from laughing all night with friends until we
can't breath.
I am from island music with sweet mangos and
starfruits.

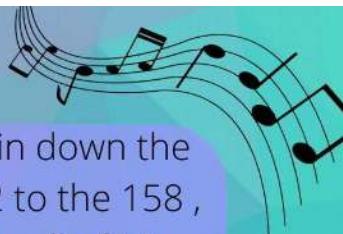


Example #5: Ethan Bui

I am from long wooden chopsticks
From Rough edged beyblades and trading cards
I am from the soft fabric of the hammocks
and the fresh scented plants that stand tall like
a giant
I am from a Bonsai Trees
Whose leaves danced gracefully onto the
ground
I am from the jagged pointy sticks and vast
moorish sandcastles
From Nguyen and Bui
And from farming and cooking
From running wild with our soaring imaginations
I am from ancient Buddhist temples whose walls
were engulfed in moss
From crispy oily fried noodles and piping hot
pho
From working in the scorching rice field where
cicadas buzzed
And from walking the horde of colossal cows
I am from travelling on antique boats and the
majestic oceans full of marine life



Example #6: By Gabriel Vidal



I come from cracks on the sidewalk, cruisin down the street, riding skateboards, bus passes 152 to the 158 , east to west el Valle del San Fernando to all of LA

I come from hidden stories, stories too painful to share, stories that run deeply in me even if I haven't heard the whole story

I come from the homies, to the gays to best friends, those that looked after one another, to are you down to kick it? I come from chosen families

I come from messy times, the times where I was discovering myself the times I was unsure of myself, from backyard parties to fake IDs to kickbacks to sneaking around for my first real kiss

I come from mango twist, riguas, pupusas de arroz pupusas de maiz, queso con frijol queso con locorro y horchata de morro... yeaaaa it's damn goood!

I come from binding to injection needles, top surgery - tender, toxic, and transforming bois, just tryna to figure it out

I come from cumbias, hip hop - puro punks, going to shows, crate diggers, dusty record stores to finding myself thru music

I come from laughter, dreams , resistance and I come from me





Guiding Questions

The questions below are meant to help you reflect on some possible things you may want to include in your poem. Let them be a spark that ignites further memories beyond the confines of the question. Some questions may speak to you a lot; others might bring nothing to the surface. Focus on the ones that resonate with you and write without worry.

1. What was a common scent around your household? What did it smell like and where did it come from?
2. Where was your favorite place to be? What did it look like?
3. Where did you grow up? What was it like?
4. What was school like?
5. What was a family tradition you had growing up?
6. What was your favorite meal? How did it taste?
7. What was a common saying or phrase you heard growing up?
8. Where were you born? Where is your family from?
9. What are the important parts of your identity?
10. What were some of your hobbies and interests?
11. What music did you listen to growing up?
12. Who did you grow up with (family, friends, etc.)?
13. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself and your life?
14. What do you want to be when you grow up?
15. How do you want to change the world?
16. What do you hope the future is like for you and others?
17. What do you hope your future self is like? What qualities do they have?



Writing Your Poem

Hopefully by now you are feeling prepared to create your own poem! If you would prefer to write independently, now is the chance to start a rough draft of your project. If you would prefer further guidance, follow the guidelines below!

1. After reading the examples above and thinking through the guided questions, begin by creating a list of all the words that you might want to include in your poem. Think about nouns, verbs, and adjectives that describe the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of your past and future life. Write as many as come to mind, even if you won't include them later. Remember, you are creating a two part poem that includes "I come from..." and "I'm headed towards..." You will then have the chance to add backgrounds, graphics, etc.
2. Highlight the words from your list that speak to you the most. Which ones do you connect to and feel comfortable including in your poem?
3. Start to arrange the words into phrases or categories. List them in a way that makes sense to you!
4. Are there any words that you want to add extra description to? For example, instead of "I come from the lake" you could add "I come from the depths of a blue-ish green lake."
5. Write your poem! Be sure to include the phrases "I come from..." and "I'm headed towards" throughout the poem when you see fit. Feel free to edit and make changes throughout the process.
6. When you feel like you have finished your poem, add color, graphics, a background, etc. A free and simple website for this type of graphic design is called <https://www.canva.com/>
7. Finally, submit your graphic poem online through THIS FORM. The form will also ask you to include your favorite line from part 1 and part 2 of your poem that will be combined with other participants' quotes to form one collective poem. You will also have the option to submit a graphic or picture that you would like to appear on the collective poem.



Final Thoughts

We hope this project gave you an opportunity to reflect on where you come from and where you are headed! It can be helpful to reflect on your experiences and life in order to process and outline your own personal growth. It is also a great opportunity to think about the future, set goals, and continuously track your journey. Be sure to keep your final project for your future self so you can always see how far you've come and the endless possibilities you have for your future.

Check our [website](#) in the future to see your poem and a collection of other trans and gender nonconforming people's projects!



Contact Information

Have questions or need help? Contact us through this [form](#)!

You can also check out our [website](#) and get involved with the Gender Justice Leadership Programs by signing up for our [newsletter](#) and following us on [social media](#)!