

I AM FROM

A poem by Sally Eldridge

2022 Hidden Histories Programme Participant

I am from concrete cancer crumbling houses,
a rhubarb forest where Toby loved to hide.
A Laburnum tree and a privet hedge castle wall,
with a rickety wooden gate to be climbed.
A red phone box and a postbox sentry watching over my keep house life.

I am from "hand-me-downs" to handmade dresses, hand knitted cardies and jumble sale buys.
Cuddles and "gerr off" parma violet breath with powder faces,
Runner beans, broad beans, carrots and cabbage;
"Eat up your meat" and "What's for pud?"
A market day selling bunnies and bread, tinned peaches and tractors, boxes of Other People's lives.

I am from cows chewing the cud as they look you in the eye. From long lanes and open fields and fords and sky.
Big Sky!
Sunday beach days, knotted hankies and rolled up trousers, kids in pants jumping waves.
From Betsey and Jonny; half wild curiosity, half stay at home happiness. An adventure in the making.....
Stepping out into a different life.

I am from a khaki life of rules and regulations, spanners and sponges, collecting, delivering, road maps and planning.
From learning and living, training and marching, cleaning....
Endless cleaning.

I am from a change of direction; new words, new life, new shifts, new uniform - another uniform!
Illnesses, accidents, miracles.
New friends
New hairdressers
Where's the nearest supermarket please?

I am made from a life lived, time spent, memories made, friends, the love of a good man, family bonds, My Family.
My life of adventure and boredom, hurry up and wait, hurt and happiness, pain and peace.....a history being made.

This poem was written in response to the "I Am From" project designed by Julie Landsman and George Ella Lyon.