

Before you start

Fill these however you like — words, fragments, one thing or twenty. Nothing here has to be a sentence, and you will not use all of it. Some of what surfaces will be good and some of it will not. Both belong. When you are done, circle the ones you want to keep and turn the page.

People who mattered

living or gone — and the ones you called something else

Foods and meals

what was on the table, what was in the cupboard

Games, or things you did

outside, inside, alone, together

Phrases you heard over and over

quote them the way they were said

Ordinary things in the house or the yard

objects, not categories

Traditions, or stories that got retold

the ones everybody knew

Smells and tastes

the ones that come back on their own

Songs, or lines from songs

church, radio, kitchen, car

ANCIENT PATH

Where I Am From

Twenty-six small questions about the people, places and things that made you. Answer them in any order, on any day. There are no wrong answers and nobody is grading it. When you have filled these in, turn over and put them into the shape on the back.

THE ORDINARY THINGS

Start small and specific. Not "dishes" — the chipped blue bowl.

1. **One ordinary thing from the house you grew up in** *a specific object, not a category*

2. **Something that was always in the cupboard** *a brand or product name*

3. **And one more** *another brand or product name*

THE HOUSE

The building itself, and what it was like to be inside it.

4. **Describe the house** *a few words, not a sentence*

5. **One word for what it felt like** *an adjective*

6. **Another word** *another adjective*

7. **Something you could smell, taste, or touch there** *one sensory detail*

WHAT GREW OUTSIDE

Something living, from the yard or the road or the field.

8. **A plant, a tree, or something natural you remember** *name it*

9. **Say something about it** *what it did, or what you did with it*

YOUR PEOPLE

Names matter here. Use the ones you actually called them.

10. **Something your family always did** *a tradition*

11. **Something your family was known for** *a trait*

12. **A name from your family** *someone living or gone*

13. **And another** *another name*

WHAT THEY DID, WHAT THEY SAID

The habits, and the lines you heard so often you stopped hearing them.

14. Something your family tended to do *a habit, said plainly*

15. And another *another habit*

16. Something you were told as a child *quote it*

17. And another *another thing you were told*

WHERE YOU COME FROM

Faith or its absence, the place, and the food.

18. Faith, church, or the absence of it *however it was for you — including not at all*

19. Say a little more *one more line about that*

20. Where you were born, and who you come from *a place and a family name*

21. A food that means your family *be specific*

22. And another *another one*

THE STORIES YOU KEPT

The last four lines are where the poem turns. Take your time.

23. A story about one person in your family *one person, one detail*

24. A detail about someone else *another person, another detail*

25. Where the pictures and mementos are kept *the drawer, the box, the shelf*

26. Why those things matter *your own words — this line is the ending*

NOW PUT THEM IN ORDER

The Shape

Every line starts the same way. Copy your answers from the other side into the blanks below, in order. You do not have to use them all, and you can add lines of your own. Read it out loud when you finish — that is when most people find out what they wrote.

I am from _____

From _____ and _____

I am from the _____

_____, _____, _____

I am from _____

I'm from _____ and _____

From _____ and _____

I'm from the _____ and _____

From _____ and _____

I'm from _____, _____

I'm from _____

_____, _____

From the _____

The _____

Keep it. Show it to one person. Or type it into the collection at ancientpathcoaching.com — you choose whether your name goes on it, and you can take it back down at any time.