*We gather in solidarity with women religious for*

***Communal Contemplative Prayer – Date, year***

***Settle into the immense Love in which we live and move and have our being....***

The Holy One is already here, smiling in greeting, in love with you just as you are…

Breathing in, I calm my body….  
Breathing out, I smile….

My smile relaxes the muscles in my face….

My smile relaxes the muscles in my heart….  
Dwelling in the present moment,  
I know this is a wonderful moment!

*Maybe something about this reflection will touch you or open you up.*

*You might bring that to God and see what happens. Or simply rest in the One who loves you.*

## **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.

***30 minutes of silence***

***We welcome one another’s reflections and prayers****.*

**Closing:** Dear God, may we never forget how much we need each other. After all, we are connected through your creation. Let us not be afraid to talk, to laugh, to cry, and to share stories and our lives with each other. Amen.

# Settling in prayer: Thank you to Maria Dejardins for the Thich Nhat Hanh blessing and Maria’s words within it.

# Poem: Thank you to Kathleen Cross. For interesting background, see <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>

Closing prayer: Maria Shriver’s Sunday Paper <https://www.mariashriversundaypaper.com/>