Writing ourselves into Poetry

"I am From" Poems

(A graphic adaptation of Mary Pipher's poetry exercise in "Middle of Everywhere")
Each one of us is a person from somewhere.

This somewhere is a place.

And this somewhere is not a place.

Being from somewhere is also
A collection, like a photo album of snapshots

where the pictures are the little details, and the album is the book of you.

we are from our own five senses: what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

And we are from Histories—our small years.

And our elder's many more years before us.

Poetry is a space where we can be from all our somewheres.
In a book I read by Mary Pipher, A Nebraska Native.

She writes about the beauty of knowing where we are from...

And the beauty of listening to our neighbor's too...

If they choose to share with us.
Each of the sentences in the poems begins with "I am from..."

* This is called an ANAPHORA*

And the rest of the sentence is about one of our somewheres.

Poetry is an art form that is first for ourselves. And it never has to be for anyone else, but it can be if you'd like. It's your choice.

If you'd like to write and draw an "I am from" poem...

Here's how...
Make a draft of your somewheres

your places...

your senses...

see-
hear-
touch-
smell-
taste-

Then write your somewheres after the words "I AM FROM..."

It might seem silly, for example, to write: "I am from Mac and Cheese on Sundays."
but even the small details

and sometimes, especially
the small details...

Are where we are From too.
Here's an example...

- I am from... Oklahoma and "y'all"
- I am from... a dad who's been a postman all my life.
- I am from... tornados and sticky heat
- I am from... shepherd's pie
- I am from... county clare, ireland
- I am from... magnolia trees at grandma's
- I am from... two homes, one quiet, one full of noise and laughter.
- I am from... gas station candy
- I am from... windchimes around the home.
- I am from... tomato vines

You can make it longer or shorter than ten lines, too.
Now your turn...

What does this poem look like as your graphic novel story? -M.