Name ____________________________________________
Period _______ Due Date ___/___/____

Where I’m From/My Name

I’m from these moments—
Snapped before I budded—
leaf-fall from the family tree.

-Lyon

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters.

-Cisneros

Essential Guidelines:
• be specific and descriptive
• show instead of tell
• edit carefully and often
• properly head your paper (see the website for instructions)
• final draft must be typed
• use only Word, Pages or OpenOffice
• print a hard copy or e-mail an attachment to DeMieroV@edmonds.wednet.edu

Option One: “Where I’m From”
Write your own version of “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon. In her poem, Lyon uses specific language to give her readers a richer sense of her background. From “where” specifically do you come? What are the objects, sights, smells, tastes, sounds, voices, places, or routines that have had a central part in making you who you are today? Please write a poem of roughly four stanzas that is in the spirit of “Where I’m From.” Like Lyon’s poem, your poem can be in free verse (does not have to use meter or rhyme).

Option Two: “My Name”
In the spirit of Sandra Cisneros’s piece “My Name,” write about all or part of your own name. Your piece may, but does not have to, include answers to the following questions: why were you given the name you were, what does your name mean, what images does your name evoke, how do you feel about your name, do others in your family share your name. Write a response of roughly four or five paragraphs.

Assessment
Your work will be assessed primarily on how effectively and creatively you reflect the spirit of the original piece. Additionally, basic mechanical conventions (spelling, fluency, etc.) will be considered.

Extension
Using recommended online tools, create a Wordle from your work. Save the Wordle you create, print it out and submit it for possible display in the classroom. Write a brief (= 25)s reflection about the connections you see between the Wordle and your text (short story or poem). What does this comparison reveal? What remains hidden?
Where I’m From

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.
My Name

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse – which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female – but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena – which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

“My Name” is from Sandra Cisneros's short story cycle “The House on Mango Street.”