WHERE I’M FROM AND WHO I AM: REFLECTIONS OF AN ELDER
By Valerie Vickers

A Universe of billions of stars, the birth and death of galaxies
A cosmic dance of forces, dark and light

A gathering of Earth atoms into elements, compounds, mixtures
Raging volcanoes, earthquakes, great seas and vast change

The evolution of chemical soup into nucleic acids for life
Diatoms, jellyfish, dinosaurs, wooly mammoths, cave dwellers

Birth, coupling, death of countless hominids
Migration, struggle to survive across Africa and Asia

DNA from Britain—England, Scotland, Ireland—
Iberia, Scandinavia, Senegal, Eastern Europe

Perilous crossings of oceans in sailing ships, of land in covered wagons
Sweat and toil of farm life during the Great Depression

Wars-British Isles, America—Revolutionary, Civil, Foreign
Prisons, pestilence, tyranny, freedom

Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Quakers,
Believers, nonbelievers, persecuted, deported

Maine, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Nebraska
Kansas—Lone Elm, Iola, Augusta, Topeka

Hunters, gatherers, ordinary people, extraordinary people
Cowboys, farmers, railroad workers, homemakers, judges, teachers

Rolling Kansas prairies, endless sky, cabin in the Rockies
North Carolina’s Piedmont, Blue Ridge Mountains and Coastal Plain

Weather of four seasons, calm and chaotic
City neighborhoods with mulberry trees, crepe myrtle, dogs

--that is where I’m from
Woman: daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt
Friend, mentor, teacher

Kansas/North Carolina educated, global learner
Swimmer, lover of children, critters, music, travel, books

Kansas sunflowers, Colorado columbine, North Carolina Venus fly-traps
Belize acacia, Uganda papyrus, Jamaica mangroves

Fresh garden peas, fried chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, tomatoes
Fast food and herbs

Notebook paper, typewriter, Kodak film, map, books
Digital camera, computer, iCloud, GPS, Kindles

Spiritual seeker, Quaker Universalist, cosmic adventurer
Writer and dabbler

Mourner of destruction of all Earth’s habitats
Passionate naturalist; cherisher of the wild

--that is who I am