

Autobiographia

G. E. Patterson

I had everything and luck: Rings of smoke blown for me; sunlight safe inside the leaves of cottonwoods; pure, simple harmonies of church music, echoes of slave songs; scraps of candy wrappers—airborne. Everything. Mother and father, brother, aunts, uncles; chores and schoolwork and playtime. Everything.

I was given gloves against winter cold. I was made to wear gloves when I gardened. I was made to garden; taught to hold forks in my left hand when cutting, in my right when bringing food to my mouth. Everything.

I had clothes I was told not to wear outside; a face you could clean up almost handsome; I had friends to fight with and secrets, spread all over the neighborhood; the best teachers, white and colored. I'm not making this up. I knew that I had everything. Still do.

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Time to Make a List of Things to be Thankful For

Do not write on this paper. Write your responses in your Composition Notebook underneath your copy of "Autobiographia."

1. When you were a child, did you have a special place you liked to go?
2. Did your family have something or someplace cool that other kids didn't have or possibly envied?
3. What foods were most special to you when you were a child?
4. What types of candy did you like as a child?
5. What music was important to you as a child?
6. Who were special people in your life as a child that were NOT actually in your family?
7. Who were the special people or pets in your family that you can't imagine life without?
8. What were the top five fun ways you spent your time as a child?
9. What kind of things were you made to do as a child that you may have hated at the time, but you are now glad you were forced to do?
10. What are the top two things your parents (or someone else) taught you that you are glad someone took the time to teach you?
11. What are your best physical qualities?
12. What are your best personality/spiritual qualities?
13. Count your blessings. List some things here that you're thankful for that might not be mentioned in #s 1-12.

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I had everything and luck: _____

_____. Everything.

_____;

_____. Everything.

I was given _____.

I was made to _____.

I was made _____; taught to _____

_____.

_____. Everything.

I had _____;

_____;

I had _____

_____.

_____. I'm not making this up.

I knew that I had everything. Still do.