

I began my teaching career as a stranger teaching English in the West African nation of Sierra Leone a long time ago, when it called itself the Future Garden Spot of Africa during the 1964 World's Fair (I remember visiting its pavilion and feeling such optimism about this newly independent nation with such a bright future --- before the ravages of a violent civil war and Ebola took turns cutting into its "bright future" 30 – 40 years after my service there. In those days, I was the one far from home, the one who dealt successfully with early onset homesickness, who lived the paradox of feeling very much at home with the kind, gentle people of and near my school, while eagerly awaiting news from home coming in the daily mail. This occurred from September 1964 through June 1966.

Since then, I have been the one in my homeland who has taught numerous students from Guyana, the Dominican Republic, and in my present school, over the years, Israel, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, South Korea, Japan and China, among others. Because of my two years in Sierra Leone, I have consistently and constantly admired these students for their ability to adjust to a new culture, to a new language, to the demands and visions of their parents. So many of them have succeeded. Whether they have come to the U. S. hoping to become permanent residents or just staying for a few years in the name of better educational opportunities, they have my respect, and I love teaching them.

It is to these students that the poem "Home" is dedicated.

