

Looking for Home

Souvenir from Home

“As I pass a balloon to each one of you, you will feel the tug of the string as it gently lifts you up, higher and higher, until you are floating gently, safely out of this room.” I hear the professor’s voice as I give in to her guided visualization at a summer workshop on ‘Differentiating Curriculum for the Gifted’. We are taking part in a strategy we could use in our classrooms with kids.

“Choose your favourite color and see it, a new balloon . . . yours,” she says. It makes a squeaky latex sound as I run one hand over its red newness. Eyes closed, steady breathing, body more relaxed than I can remember, I am transported to lightness and freedom.

“Feel your balloon lift you out of the theatre, each one of you floating down the hall and out the opened doors. See your companions, wave to them, as the distance grows greater between you and them.”

The pauses in the professor’s speech allow me to take in each image. Huge, fat Ruth seated beside me, lifts up and away effortlessly. Joy takes over her rippling face and the sound of the wind replaces her constant chatter. I feel the warmth of the sun on my back.

"Everything's okay . . . you are safe . . . this ride is yours. Float higher and higher." Far below me the university shrinks. I scan the expanse of sandy beaches; waders and sandcastle builders are specks below. "You're going to travel back in time, back to the time when you were a child." In flight, I'm not conscious of my body as I drift softly, warm and serene.

"You're going back to your neighbourhood, the place where you grew up. Perhaps for you there were many places. Choose the one that has significance," the instructor says. I am hardly aware of the multiple choices for some because I grew up secure in one house. I hover weightless above the hill I used to coast down on my bicycle as a child, wild hair flying, free—gypsy girl. I soar above the dump I rooted in, where I discovered the deer's head, its eyes glazed over, antlers removed. The rubble remains heaped despite the later arrival of the bulldozers of the late fifties, the cement mixers, the moving vans, that changed our 'playground' forever. I hover over Frew's Grocery where I lined up for penny candy, breathless in the hope that the sugar strawberries wouldn't be gone by the time I got to the front of the line. And polite always, for Mrs. Frew had a bad temper with the wavering indecision of children. I linger awhile over Rosalind Jung's backyard where we played tents and Arabs. Then I drop down to peer in the kitchen window where her mom made jokes in Chinese and whacked meat with a cleaver. I slow down to look closer at the lilac bush under which I buried Fluffy, my cat, in the shoebox. That same lilac bush later provided cover for Caroline Harrison and me, the two 'Carolines', to hide in the tall grass and watch the 'Eye-talians' move in while we whistled at them with blades of grass stretched taut between our thumbs. As children, we tried to decide if they were really 'white people'.

“Feel the balloon gently descend. You are on the street in front of your home. See the place you grew up in. See the door and take your time walking up to it. Enter the same way you did as a child,” she continues.

I feel cold suddenly. Is the wind whipping up the street off the mountains? I hesitate to approach my door, although I’ve never felt that way or had reason to before. I let my feelings take over and an anxiety tightens up my muscles. The front yard is so bare—those monkey trees never took and the ground looks so parched. Hydrangeas, how I hate them. Not blue, not pink, not purple. In our yard, the mottled mixture of neglect. Oh! The house is smaller than I remember it.

I press down the latch, and with the same give as before, the door opens. I step in. Sun streams in through the windows, past venetian blinds and crisscrossed curtains, to form a solid shaft of light in which cigarette smoke and dust particles hang. A still, golden glow suspends over the rooms. There is a smell of dust.

A large, curved arch delineates the living room from the kitchen. There’s the old wood stove where I made my potions—mixtures of spices I would boil on the burners in a small iron frying pan. I used the ‘stinks’, as I called them, to create incantations that would drive out imaginary devils in front of the open burners. I’d seen natives doing it in fifties B-movies. From the ceiling hangs the rack where my father used to hang his union suit to dry in winter, every stain on display. Then I see the gas stove which replaced the early wood model. Images and eras flicker in and out but the golden light continues to cast its dim shadow over the past.

“See the people who lived there. Your family. Others. See them as they were, doing what they did,” the professor leads and I follow.

I call out, "I'm home," but my family doesn't hear me. No one responds. Strange. My father is in the living room where the television takes preeminence over everything else. His face is to the plaster wall, his back to me, his tool kit at his side. "Dad, dad!" I shout, wanting his attention. "I'm home. . . ."

My voice is feebler as I catch on to the idea that they don't hear me. My brother is posted at the back door wearing his grey melton cloth jacket with its pocket torn off by firecrackers lit and stuffed inside. He's probably looking for his friends, ready to make a swift exit. But he, too, is motionless. They all are, as though they are mock ups of themselves from the past. My mother's lean back is tethered by apron strings as it faces me. She is in the nook surrounded by flour and sugar in yellowing buff canisters with red lids. The nook is hers, a place where my mother rolled out pie crust, and fluted swags and roses, all ornamental stuff to fill up her life. But there is no motion now, just stillness. "If I call out, she won't answer me either," I think. "I won't bother."

I wander the house becoming the child I was, entering into the stillness. It's not quiet, though. There is the familiar hum of the Frigidaire and the reliable creak of a few floor joists. Nobody's seen me and I might be disturbing them, so I tiptoe as I always did, never loudly, not on my heels. Until this time, I'm unaware of my sadness at not being "seen" and at not receiving a welcome.

In the solitude of the hallway I am shocked by my desires for the first time: to be hugged, to be rushed at by my family, to be surrounded, thronged and brought in close, to be at the center. To be cherished and listened to, without judgment. I begin to cry as I continue down the hallway to the addition. I walk past the scary part, where the stairs divide into basement and bedrooms. This is where my grannie's ghost came to live after she died.

“Enter your room, the room where you slept, where you kept your things and find a meaningful object. The layer of wallpaper I chose as a teenager peels away. The riotous crazy-quilt pattern exceeded my cheeriness at that age. The room is restored to the pink of my childhood. It’s nearly empty except for a chenille bed cover, a plywood desk my dad made, and a chest of drawers. I always called them ‘chesterdrawers’ to match the term, ‘chesterfield’. My tears handicap my frantic search in the closet for a meaningful souvenir—the upside down mammy doll, the copy of *Charlotte’s Web* I won from a t.v. program, my faded sewing kit. I hold them up one by one and appraise each item, but none has any special significance. I rifle the drawers—nothing. I’m blinded by a mixture of mascara and tears; my nose is running and I’m obsessed with clutching at the past for something I can’t find, and stunned by something I’ve discovered.

“It’s time to go back. You leave the house behind, closing it up the way you came in. It was just a visit. You can go back any time. But now your balloon is lifting you up,” reminds the professor.

My time is up and I am empty handed! I lift off the ground, sobbing. A hand reaches across and presses a wad of tissues into mine. . . .

There must be more images about landing but I miss them all. I blow and wipe as quietly as I can.

“Just relax. Take your time. Come back to the room whenever you’re ready.”

The workshop leader comes close to me and whispers, “I didn’t say anything or stop because I thought you could handle it.” I nod, wincing, holding back the pain.

The Desire to Return Home

My family lived in separate solitudes, each of us: my mom, my dad, my brother, and I. Everyone went his

or her own way. I don't remember us connecting with each other in intimate ways. We talked about things, daily events, but they were facts, stripped of feelings. If I asked my dad for advice or told him my troubles, he'd snap at me, "Don't tell **me** your troubles. I've got troubles of my own." Then he'd turn to his tool bag and prepare to leave for work.

If talk wavered over the edge into an area that might "upset someone" the conversation was stopped. "That's not pretty," my father would say.

Or: "You don't feel that way. No, you don't," my mother assured me. She couldn't bear for me to feel that way. So I couldn't feel that way. It was wrong to feel that way. So I didn't, not outwardly. I just didn't say. I held my **feelings** in secret. And some I denied and buried deep inside me until this visualization.

The guided visualization of the professor encouraged me to experience the feelings about home as it was in another time. Taking part in the visualizations helped me to discover certain truths about my home. My home was not 'home' in the sense of letting down one's hair, a place where one could have rest and refuge. It was a place where we conformed to strict guidelines that excluded baring our souls.

Prior to the visualization I had often romanticized returning home. I felt a need to capture something that might have been; to grasp once again something I considered to have been satisfying, free of problems. But my memory of home was something elusive which had "mutated with age." (Shaw, S., 1990, p. 226). Still I felt a need 'to return' in my mind to a home where I felt more secure, more protected, and more at peace with the world and myself. The urge to return home is explained by Stephen Shaw (1990):

Perhaps it is one way in which we strive to fend off the darker and more stressful moments of our lives, to cling to a knowledge of hope that our lives will return to a more ordered and positive setting where we will be able to grow once more and experience the satisfaction of acknowledging that growth, and in many unobtrusive ways having it acknowledged externally.

For almost everyone the notion of home is usually a positive one. It is the known as opposed to the unknown; it is certainty as opposed to uncertainty, security rather than insecurity, the knowledge that in the final analysis someone else, our parents, will make the necessary decisions and will protect us from harm. It is the familiar and predictable. Better that than the unknown, the unpredictable, with a stranger imposing strange ways. It is also the primordial sense of the need for security, of being held, of belonging. (p. 226)

My personal conscious search for 'home', stemming from the visualization I had taken part in the year before, enhanced my desire to create 'home' in the classroom. This was evident in the increased sensitivity I demonstrated towards my students over the next year. I was at a point in my teaching career where I had become comfortable with curriculum and instruction, and I began to put an increasing emphasis on the children themselves. I was asking myself, "What would it be like to be a child in this classroom? To be doing these activities? To be with others in this classroom?" I was working towards making my classroom a more personal place to be, not just cozy in the sense of the physical environment, but in the way that children interacted with each other.

As a learner and a reader, I noticed more books, articles and short stories with titles and themes that dealt with home. I found images of home in literature as I read and connected those images to my own memories. I began to write my childhood memories, and as I read and reread them, the experience reminded me of that described by Robert Frost in his poem "Ghost House" (Lathem, 1969):

I dwell in a lonely house I know
That vanished many a summer ago,
I dwell with a strangely aching heart
In that vanished abode there far apart. (p. 6)

It was painful for me to "dwell" on home because of the contrast between my romanticized, superficial recollections in the past and those memories I repossessed through the concentration of writing and reexamining them. What had vanished were the concrete exterior images of recollection, and I found myself inside the core of feelings of moments from long ago.

There were many images from literature that helped me clarify my own ideas and feelings about my desire to 'return home'. Robert Frost, in his poem "The Hired Man" (Lathem, 1969, p. 38), creates a dialogue between a farmer and his wife, the subject of which is the return to the farm, in the farmer's absence, of a somewhat unreliable and lazy old labourer who is now ill. In the past, the hired man has not really done a day's work for a day's wages. After a lengthy discussion with his wife, the farmer refuses to give in to her pleas to rehire him and maintains his own resolve. The farmer goes inside the house to tell the man his decision. On reaching the hired man's bedside, the farmer finds that the labourer has

died in his sleep. During the dialogue the wife says, "Warren . . . he has come home to die".

"Home is the place where, when you have
to go there,
They have to take you in."
"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve." (p. 38)

I shared with Frost's hired man a need to return to that same sense of security, the familiar, the predictable and the belonging. From the poem I learn that 'home' does not have to mean the place in which we were born or where we lived with our families; it is defined by something else. Nor is home a place which we have to earn, as Shaw (1990) points out:

It does not matter what you have or have not done,
there is always a place for you at home. This implies
the idea of acceptance, an understanding by another
that this is also your place of being and that in it
you simply are. (p. 232)

I discover an added but complementary meaning in Schutz's "The Homecomer", in which he refers to home as a "starting point and a terminus" in the lifetime journey of an individual (1971, pp. 107-108). Home, then, could be that place where our journey into the world begins and ends. Home is "the point or place in which we feel secure enough to begin taking risks and from which we embark on adventures"; home is the place "to which we return triumphant or discouraged." (Shaw, 1990, p. 232) As Frost's hired man goes home to die, I am reminded that home holds more than just a geographical place in our lives.

“Home is where we are born or at least become conscious of the world and first establish identity in relation to others.” Home is a “notion” (Shaw, 1990, p. 232). “The symbolic character of the notion ‘home’ is emotionally evocative and hard to describe” says Schutz (1971) who points out the possibility of individual interpretations:

. . . home means one thing to the man who has never left it, another thing to the man who lives far from it, and still another to him who returns . . . [it] is an expression of the highest degree of familiarity and intimacy. (Schutz, 1971, pp. 107-108)

Home is defined in different ways depending on who we are; though what we all have in common in our personal definition of home is the familiarity and intimacy found in relationships.

When we examine the root of the word home we see that the need for security is universal. The first appearance of home in the Indo-European base form is “kei”, meaning to lie or settle down. This is related to the German to lull or put to sleep. In Old Norse the word “heimr” means residence or world. The Old Irish word “doim” or “coem” derives from the same root and means dear or beloved (Webster’s, 1969).

Home, then, is that which provides us with the sense of communion with others that helps the individual self emerge. Home helps us become conscious of the world around ourselves and establish an identity with others. James Agee’s “Knoxville: Summer 1915” (1983) renders the atmosphere of communion as a comfortable intimacy found by a child with his family:

On the rough wet grass of the back yard my father and mother have spread quilts. We all lie there, my

mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt, and I too am lying there. First we were sitting up, then one of us lay down, and then we all lay down, on our stomachs, or on our sides, or on our backs, and they have kept on talking. They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet, of nothing in particular, of nothing at all in particular; of nothing at all. The stars are wide and alive, they seem each like a smile of great sweetness, and they seem very near. All my people are larger bodies than mine, quiet, with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. . . ." (p. 7.)

It is interesting that in Agee's picture the family is "lying down" or "settled"; they are amongst their "beloved"; and they are in silent "communion" with each other. The passage includes the physical and emotional attributes found in the etymology of home.

The Call of 'Home'

Home has the quality of 'otherness' even when the other is absent. The feeling can be portable, a reminder of the familiarity shared when the other is near. Michael J. Rosen (1992) describes this feeling in his introduction to the children's book of poems entitled, *Home*:

Home is like what you take away each time you leave the house. Like a wristwatch, it ticks beside the ticking that is your heart. Whether or not you hear it, look at its face, or feel its hold, We're with you is what the minute, hour, and second hands of home have to tell.

Home is the place that goes where you go, yet it welcomes you upon your return. Like a dog over-

joyed at the door, We've missed you is what you hear, no matter how long you've been gone. (p. 3)

The concrete objects of home evoke a sense of the familiar and the intimate as pointed out by the idiomatic phrase: "There is a little bit of home in this. We bring things from home to put up around us in the new abode because in the things themselves there is the space of home." (Winning, 1990, pp. 247-248) Heidegger speaks of the objects from home in relation to one's own home: "Even when we relate ourselves to those things that are not in our immediate reach, we are staying with the things themselves." (1964, p. 334) Things from home evoke a feeling, as Michael J. Rosen (1992) points out:

Home is all the things you know by name: a family of dishes, books, and clothes that waits for you to choose among them every day. We're ready for you is what the chorus in your house sings. Your fingerprints are grinning on their faces (p. 3).

In my guided visualization I was able to remember the things from my childhood that were so familiar and evoked the memories of my home, but when the time came to choose something with special meaning, none of these objects symbolised the intimate quality of home I look for. At that point in the visualization I became more desperate in my search.

Rosen (1992) points out that it is the familiarity and intimacy of 'other' that helps to etch out the uniqueness of the individual: "And home is all the names that know you, the one and only person who does just what you do." (p. 3)

Home calls to us: it reminds us of home when we are away, "We're with you"; it calls us in, "We've missed

you"; it welcomes us in, "We're ready for you". Home calls to us to be part of a community: "Home is all the words that call you in for dinner, over to help, into a hug, out of a dream." (Rosen, 1992, p. 3) Home calls to each of us as a search for the familiar, the intimate, the safe, the place where one can take risks, fail and be accepted back in:

Come in, come in, wherever you've been. . . .
This is the poem in which you're a part.
This is the home that knows you by heart.
(Rosen, 1992, p. 3)

Because the call of home is as unique to the individual as is the definition of home, it is difficult to explain to someone else. In her picture book, *Appalachia* (1991), Cynthia Rylant describes it thus:

Those who do go off, who find some way to become doctors or teachers, nearly always come back to the part of Appalachia where they grew up. They're never good at explaining why. Some will say they had brothers and sisters still here and they missed them. But most will shake their heads and have a look on their faces like the look you see on dogs who wander home after being lost for a couple weeks and who search out that corner of the yard they knew they had to find again before they could get a good sleep. (p. 5)

I ask myself, then, what is that calling for home for me if it is not to be found in my memories of my own home? And where is my home, then, if it is not the home in which I grew up? Can I find that sense of home for my soul somewhere else? I have felt the calling of teach-

ing—a pedagogical calling—and I have responded to the ‘calling’ of a child who is in need of care. Max van Manen (1991) reminds me that “the pedagogical calling is that which calls, summons us to listen to the child’s needs” and draws child and parent—in this case, child and teacher—“into oneness.” (p. 25) This pedagogical calling has been a quest for me, with similarities to the one I embarked upon in the guided visualization to find a symbolic object, a reason for my journey.

I believe that the next story may be the beginning of my quest for a home for my soul, when, as a teenager working part-time in a cafeteria, I am given advice by the senior bus girl to “do something that lasts.” That “something” would allow me to settle down and reside or “dwell” in the “strong sense of watching over something, preserving a space where the human being can feel sheltered, protected”, much like the “idea of a house with its wall and fences [as] a “safe keeping” . . . “of something which needs to be watched over.” (van Manen, 1984, p. 54) Instead of a “house with its wall and fences”, my “house” would be my classroom, and my “home” a space of intimacy for myself and my students there within. I would learn to “dwell” in the classroom as a teacher, in which I would realize my “true essence.” (Bollnow, 1961, p. 33)

Searching for Home

Do you remember the White Lunch Cafeteria on Granville Street? The one with the neon sign with the people circling holding a tray. The manager phoned, “You applied for a part-time job as a bus girl? If you want it, come in on Friday and get your uniform and training.” He hurled his words at me, “You want it?”

I couldn’t hide my enthusiasm. “Oh, yes. Thank you. Eighty-five cents an hour? This Friday, that’s this Friday

the 19th? Quarter to five. Oh, thanks." My first job—bus girl.

My uniform was black and rustled when I walked. It was intended to fit someone else—princess lines with a bust that curved lower and larger than mine. "Walk fast dear, no one will notice," Louise told me. She was the senior bus girl, the one who wore a cap with a stripe, in charge of training all of us on the floor. Louise was no girl, though. She must have been in her seventies. Rez capsules tinted more of her scalp than her hair and her eyesight betrayed her at the mirror, leaving a dotty spackle of Maybelline on her withered cheeks.

"You're just part-time, aren'tcha?" Louise squinted at me out of one eye as she folded her wiping rag carefully on the handle of her cart. "You're just stayin' for the summer, though? You're not gonna quit school for this, are ya?" she badgered. "Okay, that's better. 'Cause this is no job to make a livin' at." Louise backed the cart out of the station, automatically filling it with vinegar shakers, white and malt, loading on plastic dispensers with the words 'Ketchup' and 'Mustard' written in gold letters on their sides. "Come along with me and I'll show ya the ropes, then."

"Look at me, at my age, workin' at this. I never got a good education. You stay in school, ya hear me." Her bent body wheels around and she peers at me, hunched over the table, waiting for my agreement. I nod; she intimidates me.

"All I ever wanted was to do somethin' that would stay put. Somethin' that would last. Look at me! Here, I clean up dishes and I wipe. All day I wipe. They come along, eat and mess it up all over again. I come back and I have to wipe up again." She moves close to me and studies my face, whispering in confidence so management won't hear, "It never lasts."

"Mmhhh," I nod, as though I understand.

"You get a good education. You get a good job," she lectures me in secret from behind a fist closed on a wiping rag that smells of ketchup and ashtrays: "Do something that lasts."

Throughout the years since, in the many jobs I held, I have thought of Louise's words. They haunted me when I worked in mind-dulling office jobs where the only measure of my value as a person was the number of keystrokes per hour I could perform. I wanted something more lasting at the end of the day than the heap of card chips that filled up my machine. Louise's words had become my crucible.

Later, even as a student teacher, I sought help from my sponsor teacher, and she replied, "Yes, you taught them that yesterday. But you'll have to teach them that again. They forget—they're kids."

I railed to myself, undermining all my efforts, "I thought this was something important, something that would have an effect!" Twenty-five years after Louise taught me how to wipe out ashtrays, I erase a lesson on the chalkboard at the end of the day and I reflect on her words. I think of a phone call I received last week.

"Hello, Carollyne? It's Beth, . . . from Grade five . . . from Sunnyview." It's Bethany who was in my class two years ago, the sort of girl who bursts with uncontrollable enthusiasm, the kind you want to take aside and tell the facts of life before they happen to her.

"You know Deanna? You remember? She's smoking, and you know what else?" her voice turns to a whisper as she turns her best friend in, "She's making out. Ummhhmm." "No, I'm not. Not me. My mom would kill me." "And Brian, he failed every subject and he doesn't even care. Tim, he came back, but he's a snob. No one will even talk to him." Bethany tells me about **everyone**

we both knew. She rebuilds every bridge between us, me, as I am now, teacher of city children, and her former confidante, ally and teacher in what the principal called, “a school of biker dads and born-again parents.”

Bethany hesitates on the phone. She is holding back something that is the very reason for her call. Her voice becomes that of a nine-year old, “I still have all my poems. The ones I wrote with you.” That was the year Bethany told a family secret that she had held in her heart for many years. My friend and colleague and I organized a writer’s conference for the children to share their works. The reporter from the local paper came, moms poured in the door; even a school official showed up.

When it came Bethany’s turn, she stepped up to the microphone and calmly read a poem she wrote to her cousin who had drowned four years before. She spoke to that child, telling her she would not be forgotten, and that she was still loved. She shared her longings with an audience of strangers while her mother sobbed quietly into hankies offered by other moms seated at her side in the back row of our classroom. Beth spoke the words a family could not say; she expressed the feelings they had hidden from each other.

“And you know what?” Bethany says, her confidence building, “I wrote a song and I’m gonna get it published.” I smile as I wipe away today’s chalk, all the while thinking of Bethany. On second thought, I wonder if there is, indeed, a job with effects that last longer than teaching.

I had been looking for a meaningful objective, to “do something that lasts.” Bethany’s words reassured me that I was in possession of the object of my quest. I was answering the calling of teaching that would allow me to settle down, to reside, to dwell—to realize my true essence—to be ‘at home’. Later I would recognize the

classroom as 'home', a place of intimacy, familiarity and trust where I could create a place of ever-increasing openness in which children could grow. A child's family home does not always permit him or her to speak from the heart. Bethany was able to find that freedom and safety to speak out in the classroom. In her family, the cousin's death had been an emotion-filled unspoken subject, which had become a taboo topic. But the right classroom can be a place for such intimate exchanges, a 'home' for children.

What does it mean to be 'at home'? Can one be 'at home' outside of one's own house? These are questions I grapple with in the classroom, and I begin to understand as I read Otto Bollnow's (1961) 'Lived-Space' in which he outlines the difference between "house" and "home". He asks the following questions about 'home': "But after I have returned to my place of residence, am I really 'at home' there? Where is my real home?" (p. 32). Bollnow refers to a person's house as a "reference point from which [that person] builds his [or her] spatial world" (pp. 32-33). But the author points out that it would be an exaggeration to call the individual house the center of a person's space (pp. 32-33). He writes that "the house is the means by which man carves out of the universal space, a special and to some extent private space, and thus separates inner space from an outer space." (p. 33) The outer space is "the space of openness, of danger and abandonment", a place where one must exercise caution. The inner space is "an area protected and hidden, an area in which a person can be relieved of continual anxious alertness, into which he [or she] can withdraw in order to return to him [or her]self." (p. 33) Ideally inner space is the place where one can be oneself. The boundary between the inner and outer spaces are the walls of the house. However, the notion of boundary should not

be considered as something that limits or confines; instead, the boundary is a point from which growth continues. (Heidegger, 1964, p. 332). In the same manner, the sense of 'home' should broaden as we grow older and venture into the world.

The boundary between the security of the inner space and the insecurity of the outer space is not so abrupt as I have implied:

. . . When I leave the protection of my house, I do not immediately step into a hostile world. I remain at first in a protective neighbourhood, an area of trusted relationships, of vocation, friendships, etc. Around the individual house in the broader area of that which we call home (Heimat). It thins out slowly from the relatively known through the comparatively unknown, into the completely unknown. (Bollnow, 1961, p. 35)

As I read Bollnow's work I see the possibilities of my own classroom being a home if it provides the atmosphere of the "protective neighbourhood", the opportunity for building "trusted relationships", experiencing "vocation" and developing "friendships". My classroom certainly does not remain the completely unknown, and it can be the intimate and safe haven which develops the security for the child to open.

My attention is drawn to Vandenberg's emphasis on the importance of home in developing "the security which allows the child to open" to the world: "the outside world is explored inside the home" (1975, p. 43). I believe the consequences of creating the security of home in the classroom are similar to those developed in the family home which provides a security for children. The security of home helps to foster "openness toward adults" sin-

gularly represented by the teacher (Vandenberg, 1975, p. 44). The teacher can have the same disposition of openness creating a safety for the children to develop confidence and curiosity—an openness to the future. (Vandenberg, 1975, p. 44)

As a teacher I cannot undo the damage that has been committed to a child, but I can create an atmosphere in the classroom where the child can live his or her childhood more fully, which may result in an eagerness to learn.

Getting Back 'Home'

- What are the pedagogical implications of these questions of home in my classroom practice?
- What are the conditions of home in the classroom like?
- Can I create the conditions of home in the classroom?
- Is the experience of being 'at home' in the classroom important for children, and if so, how is it important?
- What is being at home in the classroom like for me as a teacher?
- What is it like to experience 'home' in the classroom?
- Can we do something with this 'homeness'?
- Can it do something to us?

I wanted to understand the answers to these questions, the experiences of being at home through the use of stories from my classroom and those of my childhood memories of home. I was interested in how so many of my colleagues and I take the same education courses at university; we discuss what takes place in our classrooms—the process and the product of that which is created jointly by teacher and students—yet, in actuality,