

Rachel E. Vernon



The Exile's Return¹

Three African Boys
All dead.
One of Cold
One of madness
And one
Of excessive
Anglicization.

I have
Returned home
To exile.

I have the
Form of Africa
The tongue
Of England.

No-one
Here
Or there
Speaks
The language
Of my heart.

I
Am alone.
An alien
In my homeland.

And yet
I wonder

Did you
My Christ
Speak
Your father's
Tongue
On returning
Home?

Or did
You sit
As I
An exile
In the Courts of Heaven
Knowing the ways of men

But a
Stranger
To angels?



1. In 1745 the Reverend Thomas Thompson took three boys from the Gold Coast of Africa to Islington in England to receive an English education under the auspices of the society for the propagation of the Gospel. Thomas Corboro died from consumption, William Cudjo went mad, but Phillip Quaake survived and after his ordination he went back home with his English wife Catherine, where he realized he had forgotten his native tongue.