

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA
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Richard Rodriguez
(Author, *Hunger for Memory*) c/o Bantam Books, Inc.
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10103

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

I recently read your Hunger for Memory and I write to say how moved and impressed I was. I had seen a part of the book in The Uses of English, but had not read it all--perhaps I was waiting, frugally, until the paper-back edition appeared. Now I've bought several extra copies as gifts for friends, who, I think, should read it. It may well be that you are by now so far removed from that book, and so engrossed with other writings, that a letter from an admiring reader may seem irrelevant, but I did want to write.

Your book touched me at many levels. First, I am an anthropologist, so I am professionally concerned with culture and language, and with problems of multilingual states: most of my own work has been in tropical Africa, in multi-ethnic states like Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania.

Second, although my main fieldwork has been in Africa, I have made some brief studies of what I called "apartheid in the valley." I was born South Africa, so I am familiar with the proto-apartheid system, and when I first visited the Central Valley, some twenty years ago, I found it quite familiar. I spent a few months at Patterson ("the apricot capital of the world," near Modesto) staying first in the Anglo side of town, then staying with La familia Garza, across the tracks. It was an enlightening experience for a newcomer to the U.S.A., and when I read your book I was constantly reminded of those days.

I could also share your experiences as a scholarship boy, even if only to a limited extent. I grew up with few expectations of going to university, but a three-year scholarship to Cambridge University changed my life. And while there, I met real scholarship boys—a Scottish miner's son had a room near mine--and appreciated their problems, by comparison with which mine were trivial.

Your chapter on the church especially sang to me, even though my own Catholic background is very different, for I was a convert while an undergraduate, more than thirty years ago. One of the powerful appeals for me

