If I forget about the good
If I overlook the golden edges present in every day
If I fail to see the lining that splashes something of a silver tone on the horizon of right now
Ghana comes flooding in
And, I remember.
I’m taken back to classrooms that hug the Gulf of Guinea
And, I remember.
I’m taken back to language lessons shared over warm meals of Joloff, Fufu and Banku
And I remember.
I’m taken back to afternoons teetering on wooden benches under mahogany trees soaking up stories while time runs free
I remember.
I’m taken back to feel the winding red Ghanaian roads beneath my feet that paved my journey of discovery
And, I remember...
I remember the life learnings I collected alongside the Ghanaian women who allowed me in to trek their path
I remember gathering raw glimpses grace on the way to the family farm
I remember gaining a deeper understanding of humility on those electricity free evenings every time my hands joined in with others to prepare dinner and break bread
I remember learning empathy as we checked in on every neighbor on the way to church Sunday after Sunday
And I remember chiseling something formidable and unmovable off of the lived resilience I was able to witness in Ghana
If I forget about the good
Ghana comes rushing in
And my memories, the lessons learned inside and outside of the walls of the classroom and the growth that I departed with roots me and reminds me
If I forget what it feels like to be unashamedly myself and fully welcomed in a place
Perfectly secure in a space
Ghana comes rushing in
And, I remember
I remember the families who said yes, yes and yes again to my presence
I remember the sisters and brothers who made room for me in their homes and in their villages
I remember the mothers and aunties who clothed me on chilly nights with the warmth of their care
I remember the schools that welcomed my voice and challenged my creativity
I remember a country
That stood on tip toe anticipation
For my arrival
Because she had so much to teach me and her pedagogy was one rooted in love

If I forget about the necessity of my being
The importance of the humanity of my neighbor
And the ties that bind my heartbeat to the heartbeat of my sisters and brothers in the global community
Ghana washes over me
And I remember
I remember
Ghana taught me learning abroad is grounding
She taught me that we create deeper, stronger and more agile learning portfolios
When we let our courage take us to places where our everydays become our teachers
Where the homes, schools, the communities we abide, the market places we visit, and the festivals we are invited to
Become places where we participate in a sacred exchange
Or giving and receiving, of listening to and learning from
And years later
When the world is facing an unprecedented pandemic
And the political climate is ripe for disunity and division
Years later
When uncertainty boils over into anxiety
When towering waves grief threaten to swallow us whole as we face multiple international travesties
Years later
When the unthinkable becomes our new normal
Years later in our quiet moments
When we thirst for something, anything, that might recalibrate, refocus and renew us
Our experiences from abroad will travel across oceans and will rest in the corners of our most troubled places to whisper lessons, and rekindle memories
Our experiences from abroad will pull up a chair in the midst of our unhinged sense of doubt and begin their transformative work
To remind us and root us
To shift us and sturdy us
To anchor us and restore us.
This is the gift of studying abroad
It is a once in a lifetime opportunity
To sign up for a reoccurring encounter
With the global community
That will etch reminders of what is possible in our hands on our heart
I am forever a student of Africa
And if I forget
Ghana, Tanzania, the DRC,
They return to me, and remind me
And for the simple reminders that mend the jagged edges of my joy in times of great challenge and greater opportunity
I am so very thankful