I Am a Teacher in a Country School

BY KIM STAFFORD

Here are the lyrics to an original song by Kim Stafford, poet and director of the Oregon Writing Project at Lewis and Clark. Kim is a part of the NWP Rural Sites Network and he shared this song with the participants of the NWP meeting in Nashville.

School bus travels where the dust will rise.  
You'd be amazed what I see in their eyes.  
Barb wire humming a country song.  
The children are mine, but not for long.

They come to me from off the farm.
Like the doctor says, I try to do no harm.
Show them how to figure, and never to fight,
Help them to know how to write.

*Chorus:*
I am a teacher in a country school
Grace and wisdom are my golden rule.
I love the children, I'm a teaching fool.
I am a teacher in a country school.

I look out the window as the sun goes down—
They say I'd do better if I moved to town.
They may be right, but I can't go.
My children's voices have my soul.

They grow up fast, and then they're gone.
A few stay around, but most move on.
You hand out diplomas and say their names.
You send your gift away.

*Chorus repeats*

But now, young stranger, I remember one fall
You wrote a paper that I still recall.
You said you'd ramble until one day
You'd come home to stay.

When I retire, you could take my place.
You could meet the children face to face.
To the best among them you could gently say
At the end of the day:

*Chorus:*
You could be a teacher in a country school
Grace and wisdom your golden rule.
You'll love the children like a teaching fool
You'll be their teacher in this country school.