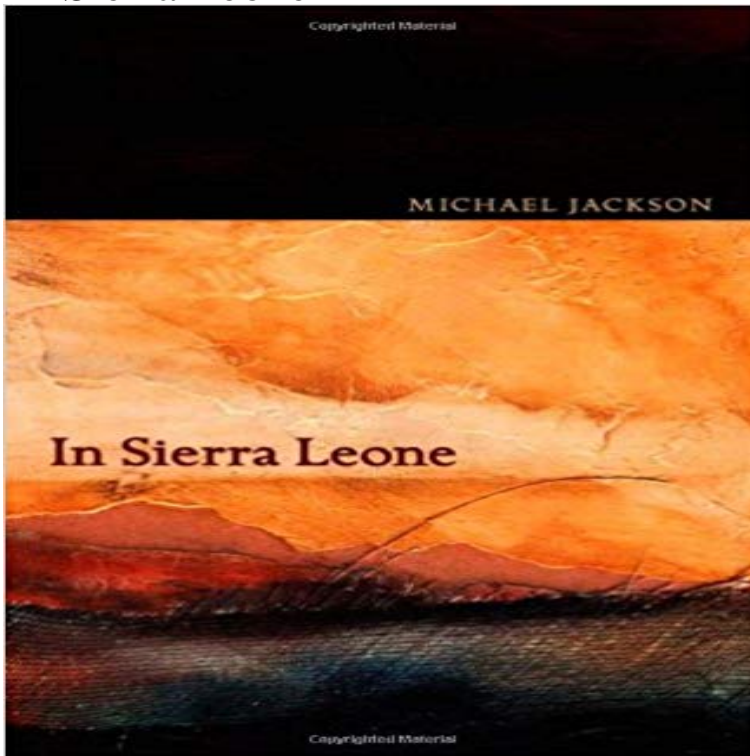


## In Sierra Leone



In 2002, as Sierra Leone prepared to announce the end of its brutal civil war, the distinguished anthropologist, poet, and novelist Michael Jackson returned to the country where he had intermittently lived and worked as an ethnographer since 1969. While his initial concern was to help his old friend Sewa Bockarie (S. B.) Maraha prominent figure in Sierra Leonean politics write his autobiography, Jacksons experiences during his stay led him to create a more complex work: *In Sierra Leone*, a beautifully rendered mosaic integrating S. B.s moving stories with personal reflections, ethnographic digressions, and meditations on history and violence. Though the Revolutionary United Front (R.U.F.) ostensibly fought its war (1991-2002) against corrupt government, the people of Sierra Leone were its victims. By the time the war was over, more than fifty thousand were dead, thousands more had been maimed, and over one million were displaced. Jackson relates the stories of political leaders and ordinary people trying to salvage their lives and livelihoods in the aftermath of cataclysmic violence. Combining these with his own knowledge of African folklore, history, and politics and with S. B.s bittersweet memories of his familys rich heritage, his imprisonment as a political detainee, and his position in several of Sierra Leones post-independence governments Jackson has created a work of elegiac, literary, and philosophical power.

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