**AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LUMUMBA SHITSUKANE**

**A ROAD TO DESTINY**

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INSTITUTE OF GENERAL STUDIES

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**BIRTH.**

On 1st July 2000 I breathed for the first time as a third born to my family at Mukumu hospital. I joined a lineage of Shitsukane a reputable old man who had departed. I am unlucky to have never meet him as it is rumored, he was generous, honest and wise man. My mother would tell me that as young as weeks, I showed traits of being defiant and paranoiac and I still hold these traits to-date. Of her three children, I used to disturb her to a point she couldn’t leave me with anyone to handle her businesses. I would yell so loud to a point the whole neighborhood would come to check whether I am being disciplined. It got to a point they got used to it. When I was about two months, I was introduced to Catholic church and got baptized with a white name which personally I have never liked, Cornelius. Lumumba, I was named by my granny two months after her elder son Lumumba had been laid with his fathers. They believed I was his incarnate. My mother wanted my second name to be white but she has never told me what it was, I suppose it was not anything close to Wilberforce, Wycliffe, Brian or other modern freaky names. It would be better if she traversed Africa and select a proper name from west, south or central Africa not north because those ‘white Africans’ aren’t anything close to me.

There are many things that happened to my family but the most memorable one was in the year 2002 when I had turned two. My dearest mother ran mad. I was told years later that she was possessed with ‘demons’ which had been send to her by her friend’s brother who was envious of her successful businesses. She told us that one day in August 2002, she was requested by her family friend to help her carry some furniture—bed. When she returned home, she started feeling a severe headache. She asked granny to get her some drugs, granny got her drugs but the condition escalated instead of reverting. The following day, it was pathetic. She would hit her head against the walls, request a rope and tie her head tightly. But all these efforts solved nothing. As of day three, things got out hand and she disappeared from home in the morning and by evening she was nowhere to be seen. My granny got worried as she had three of us and her daughter was nowhere. She charged her son-in-law Mr. Benedict who lived few miles and had married her elder daughter, auntie Betty. Mr. Ben tried his best and found her around 10pm along the banks of river Isikhu. He had told granny that around 3pm, he met her while reporting home from work but she couldn’t recognize him so he came to ask what happened and that’s when he was bombarded with heart-breaking news.

The following day, she carried me away and crawled into a thorny thicket. They looked for her the whole morning without traces until a little boy broke to them news that he saw her take a particular path. Mr. Ben the only male who granny could rely on as her boys were away, got her in a thick thicket. He had to clear the bush to get her but she was drifting inwards and this agitated Mr. Ben. He finally succeeded and got her out. What perplexed him was that none of us bore injuries—as of today no one bears injuries of that scenario. He got her to granny. Auntie Betty paid a visit and when she looked at her younger sister, she broke into tears. Just in few days her sister was emaciated, she never ate nor drank. Granny would cry the whole night cursing the witch or her God for not coming through. I was told they sought traditional medicine but none was able to cure her. Indeed, she was possessed. After a month of suffering, hearing her stomach throb like frogs in a pool, her eyes filed with dust unable to see, the demons or whatever it was took her to a strange journey. She travelled east to a distant place called Webuye where her maternal aunt was married. Who or how she catered for fare no one knows even herself. She would say, she jumped into a moving metal box and got dropped to her destination. When she entered the compound no one recognized her even her cousins. She asked for water and it was served. There, she ate for the first time. She requested to see her aunt but the old lady was out on a religious duty casting out demons from the possessed. I always assume, this was her road to healing. It was around 11am and auntie came. She was mesmerized to see her there, it was seldom. She asked, “Vio, what’s wrong? Why are you here emaciated and weak? Is my sister doing you wrong?” Mum, furious, rose to punch her but the old lady was powerful to retain her. I am told she never spoke.

Something happened. Old lady sensed that there must be something wrong as she was a woman of spirits. She said, “I am going. I have a battle with in the evening.” She set out for her normal duties. At around 5pm the old lady came charged with her spirits to rescue the life of her innocent aunt. When she came, my mother was crying, her stomach throbbing hard that everyone around could see and strange voices coming out of her. I am told those who experienced the scenario were frightened and never came back.

The old lady started praying and doing her magics in a quest of casting out demons. At home, the family was in total despair, not knowing where their daughter was. There was no news of her sight anywhere. By then there were no phones and telephone booths were expensive therefore they couldn’t ask from families like nowadays. Granny was getting weaker and weaker, strong winds would have blown her high in the air. She cried lamenting to God why he let all these happen to her with her spirit and trust held high in Him. She assumed her daughter was dead but one thing that resuscitated her hope was that no dreams ever indicated where she might be. After a week of tough search, the old lady managed to rid her off her “guests” but she couldn’t let her go because in her spirits she could see signs of trap ahead. Eventually, the old lady accompanied her on way home. She arrived, you could read everyone’s face and they were nervous with excitement despite a long chain of disappointments. The old lady narrated everything and it coincided with what granny said. I was elated to re-unite with mum. By then my sister Sebi was 8years old and she was schooling. My older brother Ferda, was four about to school and I was two without a knowledge of the goings. My sister was able to recount events but to prevent trauma, auntie Betty took her in. I bet a confusion of kidneys that I must have suffered this time mum was battling demons or whatever.

Mum had her savings with an intention of buying land and raise her family. By then her brothers were envying her wanting to kick her out. Good thing she has never fallen out with any despite sibling rivalry in their family. Early 2003, she had said to granny that “you can never heal or grow in the same environment that harassed you.” She decided to buy land but delayed to erect a house which she did in 2004. She moved in with two of us. It was a place neighboring the great rift valley. The same year Sebi joined us to attend a new school and be by her mother and siblings. My senses were growing and I started mingling and playing with other kids in the neighborhood together with Ferda. We started spending the whole day in the bush hunting birds, some days on the river banks fishing or swimming or in the open fields playing football. We also learned how to speak Kabras a native language. In the evening after returning, we would receive thorough beatings and be warned against staying away for long but when it dawned because we were not schooling, we would repeat the same mistake and receive another beating until it became a habit and a busy woman never saw the need again.

Mum had planned that we will join school the following year but again I was struck by frequent illness which made my whole body scaly. I suffered to a point mum thought I could die. She was a frequent customer to hospitals. She had been nicknamed “Ma’ Cor” by nurses and doctors. She spent a lot and her businesses registered loses as a result of frequent expenses on medicals. Ferda had been asked to join school the same year I was ailing but refused. He wanted to school with me as due to emotional attachment we had. By late that year, I healed but I couldn’t join because mum never wanted us to repeat in nursery, something we her have never done except for Sebi when she joined us.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

In January 2006, I joined a nearby primary school. By then, we had new neighbors from our cradle Idakholand, the Lubohwa’s. They were exactly like us, two boys Max and Marvin and a girl named Bria. Max was Sebi’s agemate and the rest our agemate but I was the youngest. At least we had a company. Four of us studied in same class. One morning, I was summoned by madam Jacky to join her class, “baby class” because I was younger and couldn’t study with my elder brother. She begged me to join her but I strongly refused and spent the whole day out of class. Other teachers would beg me to join her and lie that mum wanted me be there but I never succumbed to their begs. Earlier, when she was begging, Ferda tried to protect me not to, but gave up. I love my brother so much. Sometimes when I started a fight and got overwhelmed by opponents he would chip in and we would gang up and stage a war that attracted observers. Until today that spirit is still in us. When we are together, we reminisce ourselves of these early years and get swayed by a proud laughter of back then.

Mum was summoned by school that I was defiant and refused to join “baby class” but with her exemplary heart protected me and said if I had passed the tests, then no need. I was sharp, I passed tests easily. She was told I looked a revolutionary and it was evident in later years while in upper primary as class representative, I convinced my classmates to refuse punishment and boycott any other assignment on grounds that they were too hard and many, they did. We never did neither got punished. What a success! Also, in my final year at Lugusi Boys’ school I staged another successful one with school president… on campus the same, I helped organize a strike but never suffered the fangs bite of the senate. I hope out there it will something else. I, will narrate about it preceding in texts.

We would engage in a series of fights here and there. Now we had recruited Marvin and the squad was strong. We fought beasts and underdogs together. Sometimes, we would be reported but teachers never got punished. When I joined class one in 2007, from day one I was voted president until in 2011 in class five, I had been elected president unanimously until in class six when I decided to step down. At least a good dancer should learn to leave stage at one point.

Nine years later on the same date and month that I was born, mum welcomed a king, our youngest brother Mulupi whom we all endear. A dark-complexioned boy who usually says he is proud of being black and calls himself Mr. Soot, a darkest man in Africa. He used to hate his skin while in nursery school where he had been nicknamed ‘darkie’ by mates and teachers. Maybe he was whitewashed that a black skin is an emblem of shame rather than a glorious symbol of African greatness. When three of us are scattered in towns or cities like we are now, he keeps the aging lady company. I suppose he was a blessing in disguise especially when mum becomes an obvious prey of illness when we are away like now.

We were now grown ups and we no longer fought others. Few cases were reported to mum or at school. Mum would tell us never to come home crying that you were beaten, you are a man, the first thing you must learn is self-defense. The system is vicious, the weak ones are always outshined. Being strong is an advantage. When we remembered these statements, we would fight hard and if defeated it was our secret but we were rarely flogged by others. Year advanced and we were in class seven, I resumed my position again. The reign was smooth but now it was competitive. New comers were showing me dust but I retreated to studying smart to resume my throne, I sidelined laziness as mum would never welcome failure as an excuse. She used to whip us back then. She would say discipline is a rare commodity be disciplined but don’t be dumb people will override you. Every afternoon before having lunch, showering and doing assignments was the rule before anything. Despite her vicious nature we adapted. When our cousins visited, they wouldn’t put up with her. They would say, “auntie naye ni mkali.” (Auntie is so harsh) For real her ferocious nature has made us who we are today, I appreciate that. In 2013 she got a job as a matron at Mukumu girls now that we were readying for high school and she didn’t have a steady flow of income to fund our studies. She asked granny to take care of us and she did. Granny would beg us to read saying, “grands read so that you can yank fruits of success and help us who didn’t make but admired the opportunity.” This was a special motivation. She set off to work to pay our fees. She was determined to educate us and she has done that. While there she would telephone school and check whether a progress made. Everything was positive as she anticipated. In late 2014, we sat for our KCPE exams and we did our best. It was time for high school…

**HIGH SCHOOL**

On 10th February 2015, I got an opportunity to advance my studies at Lugusi boys’ high school in Kakamega county. I had dreamt and anticipated for this moment while growing. Folks in the village from when I was in upper primary would tell me high school is difficult to navigate. “a high school teacher only dictates notes and never writes anything,” one said. I asked, “even mathematics?” he replied. “yes” But I could trek down paths of history while in lower primary where folks would tell me, “Class this and that is hard, you will likely repeat.” When I got there, things were not as they said. They were failures not ready to accept their failures. They terrorized me but I believed in myself that I will make it.

I was admitted in stream 1 East. Our class teacher was a harsh lady in her late 40’s. She wrote class rules and stuck them on the wall so that everyone reads. Each rule with its punishment. The hardest one was noise making. Everyday almost half class would kneel for 40 minutes and do random cleanliness around school. In first week a first friend I met there was Moses Sikuku, being familiar with the school, I had shown him where he can have lunch and that is where our friendship began until final year. I met a couple of them including friends I had schooled with in same primary school, Tela, Ben and Harun. One of the greatest who I still revere, is Jimmy Robinson. A humble, bright and focused man who was elected class representative on day one. He has been and is still a friend to-date. He is like a brother to me. When I am down, he offers help. What I was told, nothing happened. Prophets of doom thought when they fail everyone can fail but to some extent, I appreciate them because they gave me a reason to disapprove them, GOING HARD.

It was a tough term and we sat for several papers which I didn’t pass. Nobody including myself could explain what was going on. I could look at my primary results and compare them with current performance and a heartbreak would follow. I knew mum wouldn’t welcome any excuse as she was used to. By then my brother had Ferda refused to join high school claiming he wanted something handy not sitting in class. He asked for a polytechnic to train as a mechanic, mum had begged him to join me but he stood firm with his choice. I was summoned by madam Sivona our class teacher to her office. She interrogated me to ascertain what the problem was. I remember her telling me that mum had rang her asking my progress but she lied that all was well to protect me. She advised me to take an action. I promised her that I will re-strategize and give her my best. She had told me that I had the potential of doing something and she would a keep a close eye to ensure I unleash it. After closing, it was second term and my term one transcript was wanting. I remember being lectured whether I went to enjoy life at high school. An agreement was that I perform and whenever I have promised to make her (mum) happy, I have always done it. During term two when the things were getting tougher to others who had outshined and blown dust my way, my energy was rejuvenating. I read, revised and committed myself towards a target set by class teacher. She set an A- to be achieved by end-term. This was greatest atrocity against me. How can I move from B to an A-? “What the hell is this woman thinking I am gonna do to achieve that? To hell.”

By end term I did as she had targeted. It was culture of the school to set targets even if you are unable to achieve. A form of slavery rampant in high schools, I bet countrywide. Any random high school graduate can attest to this. While in form 1 after re-opening for third term it was campaign time. Several posts had been declared vacant by office of deputy principal except the captain, his deputy and secretary who were appointed by teachers. I carefully analyzed the posts and settled on library coordinator. It was a minor post with no competition. By then I had gain little fame and it was an assurance that I will dust my opponents who were not well rooted. I have never had a dream of being a politician or taking part in but it was time to test waters with my leg. In a school of 600 students, I scooped a total of 325 votes to clinch the post. When I had proposed to friends the idea of me vying, they laughed, none believed I can do it. They thought I was merrymaking. I believed I can do something and I did. We took oath and assumed office. I worked hard to attract a higher post. I organized several events in my department including book-reading competition, magazine of the week and printing of best articles by students. Those that excited me to read were African creation stories and drawings. I coordinated other obvious things (cleaning). By end of term before joining form two I had been awarded as the best performer, a reward recommended by librarian.

In 2016, in junior high school things got tough for me. Mum had quit job citing that she wanted to look after us. That meant no fees. It was hell. I was frequently sent home, I almost lost hope and thought of hustling to raise fees. Something saved my dream of studying, it was an affirmative action fund from county government and it was meant for needy students, I was needy by then, no objection. The events of that year traumatized me. I had lost focus. I had entered adolescence stage two and started seeing some girls especially when out for school events.

Late 2016, a new regime was to be installed and there were not potential candidates to fill the posts. The school needed new team to work with and applications were made. Apart from three senior posts, the rest were to be vied for. I made an application for the deputy post and I was appointed deputy that year. Okach, the then school captain had suggested to deputy principal Mr. Nandi that I was the right candidate for the post and I couldn’t think twice as there was no time to address the reason to decline the proposal as time was running out and previous regime was out of stipulated time. This made me flashback sometimes in 2008 while in lower primary a teacher had made a joke on assembly on who wanted to become a head-boy one day, I rose from where I was and walked towards him and said I would like. He hysterically laughed and said if I believe in myself I will, maybe being appointed “head-boy” as boys would call in high school was a coincidence with my dream from lower primary. I worked hard to prove my potential maybe to attract a higher post later the following year.

2017 was a bad year for me. It the year I realized myself and fell out favor from school. I became rude and no arrows of advice hit my way would find me. I forgot my status in school and started misbehaving to a point my president complained and was about to report me to be deposed so that he can have a serious deputy. It was campaign time and politics were at the core of my life. I would sneak from school and attend night rallies. How I got the wind of where the rally will be, I am the only one who knows, sometimes I could be accompanied by other political enthusiasts. We would trek for long distances to get at those rallies. Sometimes when there were no rallies, we would sneak to attend funerals ceremonies or sneak to watch European league competitions “champions league” or stalk girls in the neighborhood. One thing that saved me was nobody was summoned to talk to me neither my mother summoned because the school was dubious of the allegations. All these happened in first term and I am always happy as I never drunk anything nor smoked like friends. My senior wanted me to report them but there was no way I could crucify my cronies.

In term two after a short break, I saw there was a need to mend my ways and become the original me. I had experienced drastic fall in grades and I realized I was walking the wrong path that could lead me to my self-destruction. While on short-term I had listened to a speech by Martin Luther King Snr about a “Turning point.” And I remember him mentioning that there comes a time one slides from the path and treks the wrong one but when he realizes that he is on a wrong path he challenges and chisels himself towards original himself and mends his ways. I did that and I experienced an exponential rise in performance. I talked to my senior and all went well. I was battling tainting a bad name I had painted myself to a point those who I knew started talking behind my back. One gentleman walked and talked to me straight in the eyes that I was digging my own grave. He was right I was descending to hell and once proven I could be expelled. Thanks to him, he saved my life.

After changing my ways, I said I won’t tolerate uncouth behavior from friends. I warned them against smuggling drugs in school but my requests hit deaf ears. I resolved to reporting them to administration for guiding and counselling and this is how I got worst titles in my life. “Mtemi Nasaba Bora” a character in Swahili novel “Kidagaa Kimemwozea” who did uncouth things to his people after ascending to power. Another nickname was “Majoka” a character in another Swahili play “Kigogo” by Pauline Kea who similarly after assuming power by fraud, he executed his opponents and rode the nation on a downward path. But I was executing my duties, I couldn’t put up with what is prohibited by school. Some of them still use these titles whenever we meet and I don’t feel bad anymore, they will say and I do things my way at the end I am the one accountable to my doings.

I was the perfect candidate to take over from my senior when the school had requested for new applications late in 2017 and the voting system had been scrapped and teachers were to do the appointments for every post. I had long admired the secretarial post in the council and I was eyeing it. I refused to apply for the top seat as many activities associated with it would distract from focusing on my road to destiny. One evening, I was summoned by Mr. Nandi in his office to explain why the two-day window was out and I didn’t hand in my application. I explained to him but he couldn’t be convinced. It was not easy to box Mr. Nandi I struggled to box him but he reiterated to see my application stressing that my reasons were vile and nowhere near reservoirs of truth. He called his senior Mr. Kokonya to talk to me but I stood with what I believed in, he gave me an example that I never any meaning in it, a case after nullification of 2017 elections in Kenya, Roselyn Akombe, a senior commissioner at the independent electoral body (IEBC) resigned citing that there were malpractices practiced by commissioners hence could not oversee another election. I refuted and reminded him that she resigned for a reason and similarly I refused to apply for a reason. They said it was a hard case and they would jointly solve it in a meeting with staff. What an ego! My case stalled appointment of new council.

Evening of following day, I submitted a penned letter applying for secretarial post. When Mr. Nandi looked at it his anger was about to disintegrate him. “Shitsukane, now I will cane you seriously. What is this? What did we agree on yesterday?” he said. I defended myself and he was restless. “Now you’ve declined power, who do you suggested?” I never thought twice, I had already known who will succeed the former. Without fear I said, “Wycliffe” a fellow veteran in crime. While president he peddled chapatis nicknamed “leopard skin” or owned a phone with a slang name “goat”

Same evening a panel was convened and my suggestion ‘Wycliffe’ was to interviewed. He was called for an interview and he showed up unprepared. We were interviewed together on pertinent issues the school should undertake. We presented our ideas and some were jotted down. After the interview, I was requested to deputize him but I disdained and suggested a boy who had walked and talked to me in the face on my wrongdoings. I told them I wanted to model tomorrow’s leaders who will take over from us. On this, he never thought twice.

We were appointed and presented to our mates for inauguration and they agreed to be served by our regime though they were against three of us at the top citing incompetence. We have harassed them at one point. The council carried out duties diligently until we convinced our Thomases that “we can.”

**REVOLUTION**

In June 2018, in our final year, we felt that the school is burdening us with unnecessary exams, served us poorly prepared as if we were prisoners. We had lamented for long that we needed a new math teacher because madam who taught us was incompetent and unable to handle form four math, we needed change. All over school a number had been severely punished, some suspended and others expelled and there was a feeling that all these happenings were a smokescreen of authoritarian leadership at school and it required a counter-event to neutralize.

As seniors in school (form forms) we resolved to hold a peaceful strike. We had heard cries of our juniors and one Sunday evening during preps we held a meeting to discuss careful steps to follow so as not to cause chaos and end up setting up an inferno. We agreed that after the following day’s assembly we will boycott classes until we address Mr. Kokonya himself on our grievances. Our principal was an unapproachable man even his juniors feared him but we made it clear that we will talk to him directly and I was in-charge as the secretary. We had spent the whole Sunday prep collecting views from junior classes and during Monday morning prep a form four delegation reviewed those views to defoliate inappropriate ones. After assembly we didn’t boycotted classes and remained outside. Teachers were mesmerized even the fierce ones were nothing than rained on lions. We made it clear we wanted to address Mr. Kokonya. It was 10am and Mr. Kokonya had not arrived. Several teachers tried to buy us but we turned down their offers. Mr. Nandi the ogre was then a rained-on cat, he frightened us on one-on-one basis but not in a group. When they would single out school president, his deputy and secretary to the council for confrontation the masses would follow us. We had agreed to move like a shoal of fish to avoid conquest. They tried with threats but their efforts bore no fruits. They jerked off their anger, left us and went for a staff meeting after tireless trials to win us and numerous calls to principal.

A few minutes to 11am, Mr. Kokonya arrived in a happy mood willing to address us because he knew if he shows otherwise with a wrong response the unexpected might happen. He requested for an assembly to hear our issues, his staff joined him to hear what were the issues and I was sure by their presence, it was a deal done especially for anyone on forefront to represent the rest. As the one in-charge I boldly came out, saluted him plus my comrades and pulled out a written script of grievances and read them to him. He had a note book where he jotted somethings. After listening to others who had issues of concern, he adjourned the assembly and assured us that he will act immediately. What I was concerned with was lifting the suspension punishment, unnecessary expulsion and poorly prepared meals, on this, I salute him to have acted.

Days later after return from mid-term break, I was summoned by Mr. Nandi to his office. I thought they were normal issues relating to the council as we had requested special attire for council members and a trip to Kisumu. When I knocked to my surprise it was a panel of five teachers and Mr. principal. A wave of shame and embarrassment swept my conscience. I knew it must be something fishy. I was ordered to sit. They started by advising and he switched (deputy principal) to reading accounts that I found out I was guilty. “Shitsukane, we have full evidence that you were a mastermind behind the cold strike 3 weeks ago. True?” I accepted because there was no way I could win against them. “Two, Shitsukane, you are against suspension and expulsion of your school mates. True? I accepted. “Ok! read chapter 5 (iv) of school constitution, what does it say? I read from the constitution “anyone found guilty by the school shall be suspended for two weeks or if committed unpardonable crime, he is deemed to be expelled.” “Do you see why your mates are away?” I had no response to any of them rather than accepting. He read other counts but I can’t remember. They told me they would review the counts. They eventually pardoned me rather those accounts were a direct talisman to expulsion.

Next in line was school president and his deputy, they all went through the system. We were all punished severely and threatened to be removed, from our posts if we misbehaved. Later I found out that an uncle Tom friend of mine had betrayed and sold me to his masters whom I thought was our common enemy. Anyway, in a crowd of sheep there must a sheeplike wolf that masquerades as another sheep only to betray them and eventually feast on them.

In mid-October a few days to our final papers we lost a friend, Austin Dissi. He had been stabbed his friend over a USB flash disk. I can’t recount everything right but I remember there were rumors doing rounds that they had engaged in a business and he had paid for it only for his friend to beat around the bush with lies that he had forgotten it home. Disii got furious and demanded his friend to refund his money or they will never sit in the same class again. His friend a day scholar threatened to kill him if he persisted but Disii downplayed the threat and the following Wednesday morning his friend arrived armed to get rid off his paranoiac creditor. After Christian union session, their morning class was not attended to because the teacher had not arrived. They engaged in an altercation and it turned out noisy but teachers in other classes busy feeding knowledge to other students ignored it. Disii’s debtor pulled out his knife and threatened to stab his classmates, seeing death with their eyes, some flew through the windows while others remained to mediate and get them in good terms. They were both angry and Disii a well-built rugby player threw a first blow and to prove his might.

The teacher came in for lesson but he couldn’t settle chaotic class. He pulled the noise catalysts and ordered them to head to staffroom for punishment. They followed but on separable terms. On arrival he ordered them to kneel as he set to catch-up with the rest on the matter and also teach. No one was in staffroom, they continued to exchange harsh words vowing to fight over there. Solomon reached for his hidden knife and stabbed Disii on the neck and set on heels as he had accomplished his mission. Disii yelled in pain to signal danger. He tried to follow while bleeding profusely but he couldn’t make, he fell right at the staffroom door. His main artery to the head had been wounded badly. The principal who was at the time arriving was disgusted to see his student in a such a state. He saw a flash of the victim being followed by a profusely bleeding student but he couldn’t identify who it was. In a confused state he called out for assistance and we rushed out of class not bothering ongoing Kiswahili lesson to help our comrade be rushed to hospital. He drove off in speed to see if he can save his life.

The villain ran off but he was subdued, cornered and held. The principal returned in a sorry state still perturbed by what he had seen and we could read his face that even though we expected the best, we should be ready to welcome the worst. His phone rang right there. He moved to a distant place to receive it. He returned with a hurtful message and we knew the ship couldn’t be saved. He convened a staff meeting for about 20 minutes to discuss hospital report. They finished and he requested for an assembly to address the school fraternity. All was set and after few speeches from other teachers, it was his turn to address. He started “Glory be to God our Lord. He has made this day so that we can rejoice in him but for us it is no more rejoicing but grieving. It is hurtful to say but I will have to say it; Austin Disii is no more.” A climate of somber mood engulfed us and the air was filed with wails and this attracted the neighborhood to flow in to check what the noise was about. They were bombarded with the news of the demise of our comrade. It was hard for principal to convince the deceased’s parents that their son is with the angels. He tried his best through his secretary to address the issue to Dissi’s. wherever they were they were perplexed about the message they received. They had to excuse themselves and drive from their jobs. It was painful seeing them cry for their only son and a firstborn. The climate in school had changed, everyone weeping. Our primary counterparts had flown in, neighbors, parents nearby and media personalities from local stations were in to wrap news to cast in the afternoon and evening broadcasts. We were warned as the council not to appear near any camera or media personality as we would plunge the school in the unfortunate.

News spread like wild fire and in the afternoon, we were visited by education officers from ministry of education to console with us and give a proper directive. They agreed to let us leave a for a week until order is restored and emotional trauma healed. We left grieving. I could remember the previous day talking to him on his roles as newly elected entertainment coordinator and he was jubilating how he had improved in performance. I had congratulated him and assured him to work hard to be somewhere in future. But his door to future was shuttered by a petty 32GB USB disk, may he continue resting in eternal power and glory.

We sat for our final papers but memories of few weeks ago hit us hard. We could no longer study well. But eventually everything that has a start must have an end and it was our in high school. A journey of perfect four years. A journey of ups and downs. A journey of smiles and sorrows. It was the end and opening to a new chapter.

Finish “fourth” as it was common to us, was a flex. It was like winning a battle. Getting to touchline isn’t easy, the herd had to be defoliated. I had lost friends on the way. After finishing school, a good deal of friends I knew vacated village joining their aunts, siblings or families in the cities. On 21st December 2018 I received my results and I had retained my primary, ‘B’

On the new year, I visited my former school to do clearance and my results slip and certificate. I met teachers whom I spoke to a couple of hours advising me what I should do next. Their interest was on courses I should on campus. I remember my class teacher handing me a printed copy from KUCCPS with courses against their cut off points to check which I will pursue. I thumbed through trying to understand what each writing and figure meant. I set my eyes on a couple admirable courses I dreamt but there was a super limit—subjects. I returned the copy without a glimpse of the contents because I only had three options no matter what either a course in engineering, business or science as they had been my best. After engaging with them I got a chance to chat to former schoolmates who knew me or I knew. We exchanged ideas and piece of advice. Some later revealed to me they admired me so much, how I worked, led and spoke. I remember speaking to them when I was later invited for thanksgiving ceremony with former classmates who were also in attendance. I was later told by the principal that that was the second-best speech I have ever made while there. He reminded me instances I shined and this made me trek down memory lanes and being washed by sagacity of truth.

In February of 2019, government through education ministry gave a directive to apply for courses in required universities. I had no idea of what to do. I didn’t have gadgets to access the portal, I regret now to have paid sum of money I paid for that easy service. I visited a cybercafé, did my application and settled on the courses I of my choice; analytical chemistry, bachelor of commerce and mechanical engineering. It was then that I learned of other universities in the country. I only knew University of Nairobi, Moi university, Kenyatta university, Egerton university, Jomo Kenyatta university of agriculture and technology, Maseno university, Masinde Muliro university of science and technology among a few others. I had never known nor thought of Dedan Kimathi university neither did I know who Dedan Kimathi was because of hatred towards history. Sometimes I read history books, magazines and articles and in dormitory cubicles I could debate history students and floor them on concepts like slavery and slave trade, colonialism, scramble and partition of Africa.

When I was done with clearance and got the necessary documents, it was time to join my uncle in the coastal city of Mombasa who had sought a teaching job in his friend’s school. I was elated, a time had come to taste coastal life, a life many people dream about. I packed myself with necessary items and caught a bus to a new destination. After travelling for miles, around 6:30am I saw a lit board with words “Karibu Mombasa.” (Welcome to Mombasa). These words resonated in me daily, I have met and spoke to people who travelled there and once there, they’ve never returned home including my dearest cousin whom I have stayed with severally when I am there.

**PRE-UNIVERSITY**

Every human being has a dream and it is one’s responsibility to actualize that dream lest it remains an illusion. Every child when enrolled in a school starts off with fancy dreams of becoming somebody great in future when asked, but a responsibility must follow that dream for it to be successful. I remember while in primary school I believed in myself so much that I promised my family that I will step in the university. Indeed, it happened. In my high school years teachers would motivate me to hold the grip tightly. Their advice was mellifluous fantasizing how university life is. For you to motivate someone you must lie to him/her the way men of cloth dupe congregants of the beautiful mansion in the sky that when they die it is guaranteed to them as their eternal investment or further multi-level marketing cults do to rob unsuspecting masses. You must lie to win your targets, if you tell the truth people will never give in because they wouldn’t like encountering your fate.

I remember how ‘homies’ who went to university behaved when they came for inter-semester breaks or recess. You would feel the sweetness of studying at the university with your zeal aroused dreaming when will you ever get there. They didn’t tell exactly how university is a hell on earth; that university is not for the destitute nor for the lazy.

Immediately after finishing my high-school I tried to work hard at least to break the monotony of staying in the village where opportunities were limited. Finally, I secured a teaching job in Mombasa at Precious Heart preparatory school in late March 2019 where I had to begin on 6th May as the term was at verge of ending. Boom! A message from Dedan Kimathi University of technology a third option on my selection list. I didn’t know where it was. I was furious and perplexed not knowing where to start. The message noted that I was supposed to report on 6th May the day that I was to report on job, for me I used to believe all university intakes were slated in September that’s why I was dubious assuming that they might be conmen only that they didn’t ask for money.

I revealed to my cousin the news then later to my uncle and my mother. I was to report in two-week time. No basic information about where I was heading just conditions in the message dictating print this or that. I spent that evening researching about the university. One thing that caught my attention was it was in Nyeri a place I once said to myself that I will tour when I grew up. Here it was. Immediately I drew my atlas to research more about Nyeri, its climate especially. Goddamn it is always cold! I was happy that I will see mt Kenya by myself not through tales anymore. I rejoiced because I would hear kikuyus speak to me in their local dialect not as I used to learn few words from people, I interacted with them.

I had to notify my employer that I won’t join them in May as I had to report to a distant place for further studies. My guardian released me to join my family in the village so that they can prepare for my departure to Nyeri. I left Mombasa a place I endeared and liked so much and headed west. Earlier, when I had delivered news of my placement in Nyeri mum was shocked wondering who will get me there as she wouldn’t leave her compound with our younger brother to take me to campus. It was a terrible moment as I was fearful to travel alone to a new place. She thumbed through the documents to grasp what’s in also to confirm if I had done the required and eventually packed required materials and on Saturday morning she prayed and wished me journey mercies as I vanished in a cold frosty morning to an unknown place. I remember she told me at 18 years with an ID I was a man enough to take responsibilities and take care of myself. Luckily, they had connected to fellow named Wanjohi from Nakuru who would take to campus on Monday 6th. While travelling I was palpitating and cursing myself. I asked myself questions which I never solved. I cried slowly in the vehicle. When I got to a point I had no option, thanks to strangers that day were willing to help. What followed all that is still a nightmare to date.

**FIRST YEAR**

Finally, it dawned. At around 4am Mr. Wanjohi whom I had been referred to by a family friend left Nakuru for Nyeri. At the stage in Nakuru I could hear kikuyu folks greeting each other in their dialect hoodwinking travelers, I was happily following their talk even though I didn’t grasp anything. It took shortest time to fill the moving metal box as majority of travelers were parents admitting their children to same campus as I. We left rift valley and drove off towards the heart of Kenya, native land of kikuyus. Along the way everyone in the matatu had dozed off but Mr. Wanjohi and I were the only awake just discussing about places. Mr. Wanjohi was an outgoing man he would explain to me about every place, reminding me we are now crossing over Nakuru county to Laikipia, Laikipia-Nyandarua- Laikipia. When he said we are now from Nyandarua to Laikipia, I was mesmerized. How come? I asked. I thought we had crossed over from Laikipia to Nyandarua? I added. He explained to me that it was the road that crossed north Nyandarua. He later referred me to check in the atlas which I later did and understood. As the journey continued, I felt like I was a tourist enjoying the undulating plains, plateaus, hills, rainforests Kenya’s topography. The view was captivating, I told myself why can’t the driver stop so that I can have pictures of this blissful scenery? My eyes settled on pair of alternating hills, I immediately turned to Mr. Wanjohi and asked what’s the name of these many hills? He answered calmly with dizzy eyes as he had been dozing, these are Aberdare ranges I am sure you must have read about them somewhere. I responded, yes! He revealed to me that we were in the bowels of Nyeri county.

From afar I could see a raised feature with three peaks arising from it and I guessed it must be Mt Kenya. Before I could finish doubting my instincts, Mr. Wanjohi woke up unscrupulously and told me that’s Mt Kenya and we are few miles away from Dedan Kimathi University. I was elated seeing the mountain as I could not read it from books or atlases again. It was sunny and cold, the driver slowed down and it was time to alight and I saw a wall with name Dedan Kimathi university of Technology in caps... a well-build gateman directed us to collect a ‘gate pass’ and it was number 766. The place was busy like a beehive or termite’s anthill, feet competing for space and trampling the surface hard. No one talking to each other. Ushers directed us where to head and it was in the freedom hall then to student’s mess for admission. In the nearby fields, fleet of cars of all kinds with parents, families, siblings and their children alighting a number of them fat others slim. I wrestled with words in my head. Maybe I am the only peasant swamp rat here. Later on, I consoled my heart that I can’t be the only one.

Admission went on swiftly and by 5pm I was done. I had made two friends, a lady named Kerubo and Frank pursuing Bachelors in Business administration and Bsc food and nutrition respectively both from Gusiiland and Rollins from Githurai pursuing Gegis. I have maintained these three friends for all this while and I find a blessing in them.

**HELL IN PARADISE**

Trouble in paradise! Where will I curl tonight? I asked myself. I can’t meet people and be a beggar straight away. Mr. Wanjohi asked me. Have you secured a place to sleep today? I replied faintly, no! he relieved my worries by offering me a place to sleep and it was his rented room in Karatina where he worked. We boarded a vehicle from Nyeri town I place I had been during the day banking fees. We headed east, finally around 7.50pm we arrived. He tapped me let’s go gulp down something and entered a dim lit café and served chapati and ndengu stew, he offered to pay which I couldn’t desist. We headed in his room on second floor to rest. He had missed to report on job that day guarding my bags as I soldiered with admission. He switched on his 32-inch tv and flipped on channels to watch some news before resting. I sat in the couch sailing in an ocean of despair thinking how will I get a room. I resolved to thumb through my phone to wipe off worries from my head, I settled on Rollins’ number whom I had met at the gate while leaving for Karatina. I called him that night to confirm if where he stayed there could be a free room or anyone who stays alone so that I can be his roommate, he offered to reply after 15 minutes, he wrote me a message with simple words ‘SMS this number’ I felt calmness wash over me. I immediately texted the number and the guy on the other end confirmed he was Jonathan and he wanted a roommate. I begged him not to slate that chance to anyone as I would meet him the following day and he agreed not to.

I met Jonathan the following day after orientation and we travelled to his house in Jutimar-Embassy. We related well and stayed together for a month and mutually agreed that I have to live on my own. Classes started and they ran from 8am-7pm on some days. I wondered why would they ran so in a university yet in junior schools we were promised a class can take two hours a day it is over. Navigating first year was pernicious, it was like a jungle where the strong makes it and the weak ones get eliminated. I lost a number of classmates in first semester and they submitted that “university education is not for the weak or destitute” it requires perseverance, endurance and patience to move from one year to another.

It was around late May or early June and we had a new lecturer for communication skills, Prof Osotsi. An old man with bushy white head as peak of mt Kenya and uncombed beard. When entering the lecture hall everyone was mesmerized struggling to subjugate the urge to laugh, most couldn’t hold, they had to break into laughter. Who might be this? Can he be a professor? Why would he have a bushy head and uncombed beard? Is this old man serious? Questions bombarded my mind, I wrestled most of them that evening as I buried my head to hold laughter but I couldn’t. He introduced himself as Dr Ramenga Mtaali Osotsi with a fine, deep, astute, eloquent and perfect voice but many couldn’t get his name right especially ‘non-Luhyas’ because of sound ‘ts\_’ he had to write it for their sake. He immediately introduced topic of the day and it was AGENCY. He held discussions and QA session to familiarize us with the topic. He defined it as ability to do things on your own. He went on alternating between Africa and Europe, whatever he taught never touched us as we were chronically brainwashed. He blasphemed Europe the whole lecture how they denied blacks agency and send them into servility home and away. The lecture wasn’t what we expected, it was against our course outline. We lamented and he addressed the reason and we welcomed it warmly.

The lecture adjourned around 6:20pm. We left the room in herds laughing at his bushy head. Others discussing how they had been touched by the lecture and others vowing never to attend again due to attack mode aimed at white. I bet myself if there could be a white student, he could abandon classes and hate him. Someone once said if someone tells you truth don’t hate him, blame the person who rammed lies into you. As days advanced, he would assign assignment which were to be submitted by email. Assignments included; spiders web, Marshal Sahlin and Walter Rodney’s book in groups. Communication skills class was superb I wouldn’t imagine missing. One-day after class I asked him a question, he gently asked for my name while reminding me to learn to introduce myself. I said I am Cornelius. He said, is that how I taught you. I corrected. I am Shitsukane. He replied, I have been looking for whose name is this. We shared a chat and it turned out he knew my background and after inquiring his from my granny I also had a glimpse on his. He reminded me that my grandfather was his teacher and indeed he was. It was a pleasure being taught by my grandfather’s pupil.

I struggled to acclimatize with Nyeri climate. It was heavily raining and extremely cold to an extent of freezing. I cursed my choice of Dedan Kimathi university. I hated the environment so much. Myriads of assignments were administered, CATs among others in all units. Pressure was mounting, I almost gave up to. Every day I got home exhausted with due assignments, cold season, starvation and sometimes empty pockets. It was unbearable, a hell in paradise. That semester I learnt a lot and the following semester I had to take strides towards improvement.

It was during second semester that I got to know friends whom I have maintained to date. Getting to know people is a great thing. Human beings are social creatures therefore they have to interact. I remember during second semester while staggering to stay on my own, when things would go south, friends would chip to aid me. Despite the hardships in life which shapes a human being I still believed in myself that there is a destiny due to be achieved. Lectures we getting tougher having to wake up every day at 0630hrs so that I can be on campus by 0730hrs ready to start lectures. I navigated the semester blissfully but one event that still lives in me was at semester end and I had prepared well to tackle the papers but the only juggernaut was, I hadn’t cleared fees as stipulated by the university to sit for papers. Exams were due the following and I had not cleared a fee balance of ksh.6000. I knew well that I had no option and the only remedy was to take ‘special exams.’ I resolved to write a letter to registrar academic affairs to convince her to allow me. I headed to her office. I met two long queues one headed to registrar’s office and another to finance. Next, it was me. I knocked the door and a short man with a distended belly welcomed me. I explained my issue and he took my letter and read through and angrily replied, “and this is the reason you won’t sit exams. Leave my office and be serious young man.” I have never known my fault to date. I left heartbroken unlike others who left smiling. During all these happenings I was lost in a labyrinth of thoughts figuring out how I will sit the papers. I couldn’t call back home neither would I call anyone because I never liked sharing difficulties with relatives or friends except for the few I trusted. I shifted from gazebo to another, bench to bench, one shade to another. It was hell. Nowhere to go. Better I go to hostel and die there.

An idea crossed my mind and I paid Mutua a friend in internal hostel a visit to share my problems because he was like a brother to me. When I knocked, they were to with another friends, Muchiri whom I met in a group discussion. While tired I said, “I won’t sit papers tomorrow guys.” Mutua exclaimed, “why?” I replied, “I have ksh.4000 balance.” They replied, “that is a petty reason. We offer to help.” They asked how much I had on account and I replied, “500” they offered to contribute said amount and I accepted on a condition that I refund them next. I knew I had lied the balance but I was still optimistic I will convince registrar to allow me. I paid the money and wrote another letter to registrar’s office tagged with payment received. This time, it was accepted. The short man told me that is what he wanted because some of us eat school fees and go there and lie. He wrote me an acceptance letter. I left in jubilation headed for an exam card. It was around 0230hrs, I visited Mutua and Muchiri to thank them. I found them busy preparing for papers and I joined them. Eventually they would tell me exams had been pushed for a day head. I couldn’t hold my because I had been under immense pressure meaning I wouldn’t do well in following day’s examination. I believed my gods had done a fabulous miracle to me. I managed to sit for the papers hopefully that I would excel.

It was December inter-semester break and I travelled to Mombasa to join my family and also hustle so that I won’t be back broke and living at the mercies of others. All was fine, I spent my time well doing odd jobs and supplying Taifa products in a quest earning a living and also be able to cater for my fare and rent the following year. During December of 2019 a word went going round that there was a deadly disease overseas that was contagious but African ministries of health had not paid attention as it wasn’t that serious only would it find its way into our motherland and halt everything including religious centers which boasted of capability to cast away anything by the power of their omnipotent demiurge.

It was in March 2020 and Kenya’s ministry of health cabinet declared that the monster had creeped into our country. A tense mood swooped the whole country. People fearing for their lives as they heard overseas people were in lockdowns and curfews were put in place to curb the spread of the monster. Curfew became a common word yet it was the first time most of us including me were hearing it. Overseas in countries like Italy, media houses were saying situation was out of control. People were dying like insects. It was a most horrific experience ever. Nobody wanted to associate with anyone for fear of COVID. Governments had tightened belts tracking anyone who seemed to disobey rules. On social platforms people were refuting claims of this deadly disease terming it a conspiracy of distant worlds to threaten ‘global underdogs’ to be subservient to them. They called it a ‘plandemic’ a boogeyman to frighten the world.

Big pharmas were toiling hard to manufacture vaccines and the so called ‘global prefects’ directed how vaccines will be distributed especially to global south countries who didn’t contribute anything. Madagascar had made a vaccine from her indigenous trees but global community refuted it as being ineffective. I kept wondering why is it that anything made in Africa seems ineffective but when someone does exactly as we, he’s adored and showered with praises as being a messiah? A lesson for us Africans. Tanzania’s president JP Magufuli who later succumbed to heart attack as alleged refused to comply with WHO’s guidelines and opened economy saying corona is a conspiracy to threaten the world. His counterpart in Burundi pres. Pierre Nkurunzinza who also died in midst of the pandemic also followed his beliefs to refute corona. Surprisingly people thronged their funerals despite cautions from WHO. Was it a pandemic or a hoax? Anyway, one day truth will be known. Many notable people died. The destitute of the society were buried like animals no proper burial procedure to respect them. It was chaotic. No peace.

Staying at home for over five months was boring and tiresome. The university had switched to online classes. Poor network connection in villages made most of us to miss classes. It was cumbersome for destitute families to navigate through the pandemic, only relief food elevated them from the pit of ravaging hunger and economic hardships. The government closed and reopened the country severally with protocols in place but most Kenyans defied the protocols of keeping social distance, washing hands, sanitizing and wearing face masks. Eventually in October 2021, schools were reopened and prepared to receive students. We were to sit for two semesters exams. I had not prepared but I did my best but when I collected my transcripts I had terribly failed scoring 58.73(C). Seeing the transcript, I was stressed battling questions in my head. I left for room to sleep and relieve stress but I couldn’t sleep instead I cried figuring how I will my mother that I got a C because I knew she couldn’t buy in easily.

In January 2021 I joined third while motivated to make it. I did my best and excelled third year by collecting 66 points (B). A number of classmates had failed terribly. Some even regretted specializing where they could fail. Before sitting exams, we had had a strike protesting over high fee charged by the institution. In-person learning was suspended for indefinite time. We stayed away for some weeks and we were notified to resume on 31 August. The cream of the strike had been requested to face the senate I remember one of the creams had sought my services as his lawyer but I reminded him I had been directly involved in strike plans and I won’t risk being trapped? I backed off fearing to face the senate. But I had done my best despite the hardships in computing complex calculations to excel. It was time for a three-month internship as required by the department. Some began their internships way before were sat 3.2’s exams. I had no clue where I will end up. After exams a number began their internships except a few of us who were struggling to secure an opportunity. A friend referred me where he was attached but I had no interest staying in Nyeri. As they say “where your heart is, your interest is there.” I had seen myself trekking down the coast to be interned there. I send several applications. Some were answered with negative responses while others have never been responded till date.

I had to make a call to my family and I got a place to be interned. It was a Catholic hospital, Mother Amadea Mission Hospital, Mombasa. I was warm welcomed by sister in-charge, Sr Veronica Wanjiru. She was elated to learn that I was from Nyeri. She asked how Nyeri was. I explained to her everything. I later learned that there were a couple of workmates who studied in Nyeri. I was joined by senior accountant Sr Regina Syombua who was also new from Nairobi. We collaborated well and ensured our department was the best performing. I remember a lady named Kina asked how old I was and told her I was twenty-one. She was perplexed and asked how I landed accountant job at 21. “I bet you are a fresh graduate” she said. I accepted. Little did she knew I was only an intern. Workmates knew I was a colleague because there were no interns there. I interacted with a number especially cleaners and store manager. They were my closest friends. I could help them clean especially my office which I had been assigned. Jamal whom I enjoyed his company would tell me he has never seen a humble person like I was who can even wash his office. Another one, Mvule, would tell me this is how to behave because soon you will own your office and assume there are no cleaners what will you do? They would complain much about female nurses who cared not with their job. They could walk on wet floors leaving footprints and their bosses would lecture them. They would ask me to funnel their grievances but I reminded them that there was a proper channel to do that, I may be assuming somebody’s tasks yet I was temporarily there.

Some days Sr Syombua would delegate all tasks especially when she attended seminars. She had trained me in a short span and I was able to carry out tasks without flaws. She would audit everything and comment on my accurateness and cleanliness. I remember on my third week she left for a function that would take a week. Every activity was under my control, she said. “Call me when there is a problem. This office is under you now. I have trained you enough, right?” she said. I agreed. I handled the tasks and confirmed when there was a problem. Sr Wanjiru and Mr. Mtsonga the HR were mesmerized how I conducted duties without errors. Sr. Wanjiru regretted that if it a huge organization she would have re-hired me. Everything that starts must have end. I was at the verge of finishing my internship of two months. Everyone had a prayer partner whom he/she was to surprise with a present at AGM, mine was Kadzo. On 31st December 2021, Friday, it was AGM. A time for strategizing the new year and correcting flaws. It was present time I surprised my partner Kadzo a vacuum flask. I was Jamal’s partner. He bought me three admirable drinking glasses. Everyone had a present for/from his/her partner even those on leave joined in thanks giving.

During the internship I was entangled to a lady named Winnie who was also interned to a nearby hospital as a nurse. I met her at a mall and struck a conversation which later graduated to an affair. After knowing each other for about two weeks, we would spend our free time together and, on some weekends, when we were free, we would go out on nature walk together as she was from a nearby estate. I learned a lot from her. She introduced me to places, books and concepts I had never thought off. She was a book-worm as her room and laptop suggested. Stacks of books everywhere. I pirated on her library and she never relented to lend me some maybe because of our affair. We were together for a couple of months until later on I would learn she was a drug addict. She smoked cigarettes, reefers and chewed khat. What a turn off! I couldn’t convince myself why I never saw those red flags earlier enough as I am used to in previous affairs. I regretted. I never spoke to anyone even to my brother and cousins who asked about the welfare of the affair. I counted my losses and swallowed the pain and resuscitated hope that I will be ok. Finally, I was ok but we never talked or met after that realization. I bet she was remorseful about her secrets.

**FINAL LAP**

It was a new year 2022. A time for a final lap. A joy washed through. Thinking about the battles, the hurdles I jumped to be in final year on campus. Friends I made while here; Muthukumi, Omosh, Irene Munjiru, Wanjiru, Kabucho, Mumo, Rotich, Kipyegon, Mutua, Wanyoike, Kilyunga, Mukami to name a few because I can write the whole campus enlisting them. Muthukumi a brother I have liked from second year when we met in general studies class has made me read a number of books he recommended, watch documentaries he recommended and when I visited him, we will debate about Africa, share book titles, book reviews, listened to speeches from great men together. Ladies are not exceptional. I am who I am today courtesy of ladies—Virginia Kabucho and Quinter Akinyi. My advisers are ladies. They have always offered a shoulder to lean on whenever things are heading south, I laud them. One of the most fascinating is—Malcolm X. Whenever I meet Muthukumi, we must share a chat on him, analyze his speeches, outline his teachings and his downplaying of Martin Luther King Jr teachings about non-violence as an integrating tool for so called ‘negroes’ into a furnace of fire of American white man. I remember when I bought a copy of ‘autobiography of Malcolm X’ he begged just to touch it and be contented. He pointed out that he had read the soft copy of it and needed to touch the hard copy. On Thursday 6th October 2022, after writing our final papers on campus we engaged in a talk with him and he revealed to me that the day he visits USA, he will head direct to Ferncliff cemetery where Malcolm X was laid to rest. I have enjoyed company of friends on campus. It has been a great moment participating in several clubs, interacting with diversity in unity. A friend I will never forget is Jacob Mumo, a project mate, a teacher, an immediate brother. To be where I am, I credit him for his immense support. He has always sacrificed his time to be with me, teach me class work and sometimes attack me anyway that is brotherhood.

While finalizing my undergrad studies, my greatest hurdle to beat was communication skills. I remember how I struggled in my second year and third year to catch up with others. I am sure it was laziness that saddled me. I missed classes. Failed to do assignments but thanks to Prof. Osotsi who helped me to get over. He taught me how to write well punctuated messages rid of dysphoric emojis a syndrome among youth. Most exciting was CV and email writing classes. I have written several emails and CVs which have been accepted thanks to him. In communication skills classes I have learned, unlearned and relearned myriad of things that a school will never teach. I am able to research as opposed to days. I am able to read and grasp a lot. I have handled fourth year projects, classes, assignments among other things in a timely manner thanks to him. Prof has been an eye opener to me, he has changed history. I am able to think and appreciate my motherland Africa.

Fourth year is like a peak of a mountain only the focused and devoted ones will get there. It is like a promised land where the herd is defoliated to sizeable squad to get there. I am almost on the banks; will the crocodile drown me? As a veteran soldier who is about to finish his mission will I die before finishing? I have fought hard and it is time to be rewarded. It is like a farmer who prepares his farm, plants, weeds properly and awaits harvesting. Crops are due to be harvested, will it be a worth harvest? Even if hope isn’t a strategy with all these efforts, I expect to reap a good harvest. I have handled project the hardest part in final year. With my team we defied the odds and beat a panel of interviewers during defense. Everything is readily drafted for submission. I am from far. I am still far. I am headed far but I must reach the destiny I promised myself on 6th may 2019.