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MY GRADUATING DAYS

DEDICATION

First and foremost, my dedication goes to Almighty Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful for without Him I nor my worth and that of this book would mean a thing.

I dedicate this book also to my teachers (starting from all in primary all the way up to the end of high school) and my lecturers, for without them and most importantly their teachings – academics and moral, and for their supportive hands (whenever, wherever and however) I wonder how my life would have turned out to be.

To my course mates (#teamGeology), this goes to you all, thanks for your support and kindness to me and for showing me totally why seeking for the stars isn't so difficult after all.

To all my friends; far, near, old, new, young and elderly, this book I dedicate to you all – for your supports, advices, critics, good nature, believe and trust in me, and friendship to mention a few. Among the lots are; Habeeb Dolapo Yusuf, Akeem Abdulganiju, Faima Kemi Abdulazeez, Muhammad Sheu

Tijani, Alu'az Aderemi Adediran, Alisbahu Abdullahi, Muhammad Shehu Balarabe, Yusuf Ishola Adegboye, Lukman Amin, Alusa Dahaya Faruk – this book goes especially to you.

To my family, this book I dedicate to you; I'm not dedicating it because I feel I need to or have to, everything I do, get, win, achieve are for you all because without you present a meaningless life would be pretty much an understatement. To my mum, dad, sister and brother, this I dedicate to you including all, my achievements before now and others still to come for without you all, they are but useless.

Finally to seal things up, this book I dedicate to you. Time has passed and memories have destroyed what forgiveness could mend but my heart chooses what it feels presently and that is, it feels the pains no more nor does it linger on the hurts, who am I to object and try modifying? Thank you for being part of my life and thank you for you will always be there.

Friday 3rd July, 2015

First day as an undergraduate was one remarkable hell of a day for me; I can still remember the joy, the enthusiastic jumps of my heart, the uncontrollable cheek-to-cheek smiles and the uncensored laughter at but the slightest amusement thrown at me or anyone at that.

Today marks another one of those rare days earth provides and God in His Infinite Mercy allows me to enjoy to the fullest each time; my convocation locks around the corner and with each thought of it my heart skips a bit, not leaping due to tension or fear but because of the extreme joy which reaches the highest possible layer in there.

Finished my final exams yesterday and jumped out of my bed to write out all the dreams I had afterwards. If any word can describe this satisfaction I feel deep within, or any words could describe the smiles my face grow naturally in my sub-conscious state I would gladly welcome and embrace it, adding it to my personal dictionary (don't really have one yet though) and never forgetting nor intending to till death says that's enough.

Four solid years passed already and thinking of the beginning of the journey makes me want to tune back time and watch the whole scene over again because it looks to me now like a blockbuster movie I had once watched, and watching it once more won't at all stop me from watching it one more time, the next day, next week, next month or even next year.

I can't have enough of the memories, I can't control the flow and honestly I don't intend to; I can't be less happier than this, why should I?

They say '*time flies*'; I honestly don't disagree with that and I don't think in some part of my earlier life I didn't pray for the flight myself or for it to be a little faster than it was, but at this moment, with the thoughts of yesterday feeling so fresh and making me feel intoxicated with sweetness I wish time takes a break and come share in my merry moments.

To think of it, I think it did for a couple of minutes because the feeling of love and happiness that flowed through me and all my graduating mates yesterday was indeed *timeless*.

Saturday, 17th July, 2010

“Good morning to me today” feeling so fly I could reach for the stars

Finally done with secondary school which for the better half of day let's me stay in school in my uniform (plain white cotton shirt, thick off-white trousers, jacket and coat with a black tie and light brown hat to match) at a regulated price per term for the better half of eight hours, sometimes less, a few other times more; makes me to spend the better half of my week also at a regulated price; the better half of a month, if not all of it, and most definitely to sum it all up, the better half of a year.

Finally done with waking up by six every morning (sometimes weekends too forgetfully), many times earlier; cleansing myself inside-out; observing my prayers as a typical Muslim child which I happen to skip a lot but usually suffer the consequence not so long after; taking my breakfast in the best ideal African kid's possible way; disturb a few people, most especially my mum (bless her Lord) on a very good or bad day before heading to school at first with my elder sister, then came my junior brother, after her turn ran out she left remaining me

and my brother with the same boring routine every day, blessed or not.

Today marks the end of all those days when I wake up from sleep just to reset my alarm but unfortunately find my mother already three feet away from the door to my room coming in for that annoying as always reminder knock which always had a way of whispering into my heart “*Wake up son, it’s time for school*”

Secondary schools; another world of its own – different people, different nature, different characteristics, different ages and class. Every student in senior classes wants to be a boss, while every student in junior classes either try being brave and suffer severely for it or accept the cowardly nature school inflicts him with and stay most times out of trouble; I was more of the latter and I did avoid troubles on countless occasions; at home was a different case though.

Dressing at my best in a nonchalant teen’s point of view, with my attitude flowing at its peak all round me as I headed to school for my day. In school, we the graduating students were the lead acts; applauds, cheers and congratulations from

different angles were thrown at us and we all received them graciously again and again.

After the ceremony came the direct congratulations from different angles till my hands got sour due to excessive handshakes; cheers, joyful leaps, hugs, teased laughter and jokes from my graduating mates, friends in lower classes, and friends; then came the taking of memorable still photos which I took till I started feeling ugly in front of the camera. It indeed was a day to remember.

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After spending more than a year at home due to the country's educational policy that students with only a specified cut-off mark in their Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination would be allowed to enter tertiary institutions starting from the University systems being the highest, the Polytechniques and Monotechniques, the Colleges of Education and lastly, Innovation Schools.

Learning my lessons the hard way and putting more focus on what I'm doing at the moment and not in some other

thoughts for some other time; finished and after a week got quite a shocker from my results. My first Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) results came with an unexpected blow, a blow I failed to imagine possible and lacked foresight of, a blow which charged me with a full year at home.

April, 2011

Settled in for my next UTME exams and tackled all my defects head-on after a couple of months of preparation for that very day when you would have to leave home as early as seven A.M, if not earlier; line-up on a very long queue with people you have most probably never seen (that depends on the exam centre though); a few friends and co-mates might be there as well but with the tension so high and tight it most probably could be cut by a knife, I'm sure you'd barely notice, even if you do, you had probably forget minutes later. That was my case, I was as tensed as you could possibly imagine, not because I was afraid of the clearance that begins shortly after the line-up or the biometric verification which comes afterwards, the inspection that follows or finally the supervisors that would come to invigilate us the participants when the exams finally reaches kick-off by nine A.M.

The fear wasn't because of the exams I was faced with, my rules are; *I don't know, think for five seconds; nothing, mark and move on*; so simple, less stress and little anxiety. My memory kept racing back to the same events which took place last year in the same venue; my memory kept me on constant alert, the alert which had kept me thinking all year round, the same thing that brought fear then and after my first year as an undergraduate I failed still to understand '*Negligence*'.

I had a rough first year, not proud about it then but not shy about it now.

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“How could life be so cruel? How can I face all these at this age? I'm naïve and young, maybe stupid and very ignorant but still ... Why did calamity choose me to befall on? Why did it choose me to hurt? Why don't the tears stop flowing? Why doesn't the pain ache less and less till it vanishes? Why doesn't the agony go and never return?”

A story for another time; now let me give instead my account as a freshman (or fresh boy as a few might prefer) in

my new school I happened to transfer to so as to start indirectly afresh.

December, 2012

Resumed exactly on the tenth, having a new identity, academic-wise; a new life to face, new people to meet, new environment to adapt to, new schoolmates to get along with, new policies to follow, new course mates to get close to, new lecturers, academic and non-academic staffs to start obeying, regarding and respecting, new friends to hunt for and a new course to start afresh with; story of my life.

Starting my second year as a geological student was life changing for me, although I didn't want to be changed; I still held on to old bonds and as I drew myself on the mud trying to understand what really went wrong, I threw my new life along with it and as expected history nearly repeated itself. I just got lucky maybe because I was a geologist in making I guess.

March, 2014

“I’m so going to map my study area; North, South, East and West” smiling to myself as the childish thoughts kept me from dozing off as we rode to foreign lands for serious academic business; story of a geologist life. Although, the path on becoming one wasn’t far it might be still in its larva stage but all-in-all it is still wonderful.

On our arrival we were split into six; I and my group were to map Erinmope-Ekiti and other neighbouring towns Irepodun Local Government Area, Kwara state, about thirty square kilometres was the total mapping length. Other groups mapped other areas with similar distances but not intersecting ours by chance or luck.

Day one; we arrived, settled in at our base, after which we were briefed and thought the necessary things to be done in the field when we finally take off by early morn the next day. I was chosen as leader for my group and even though I later regretted not running for my dear life as soon as I was pointed out when mapping got over all of us and we had only but one prayer which was *“God make this end as soon as possible”*. I still

enjoyed being in front, gingering my team, giving the directions, being the spokesman on most occasions, and making friends and acquaintances first.

After spending twelve very uncomfortable but surprisingly pleasing days over at Odo-owa, about five kilometres north from Erinmope-Ekiti where our base was located, we left the very hospitable people and their town; leaving but never forgetting the experiences gained, friends we had to leave behind and the town which made us feel at home even though we were very far from it.

Mu'azu, a course mate, friend and icon once posted jokingly as a comment on facebook "*The best geologist is the one with the highest numbers of field trips*"

On a similar ground I agree with him wholeheartedly because if the excessive trekking, extreme heat/cold, abnormal hunger and taste don't bring out the best in you, I wonder what would.

November, 2014

Beginning my forth and last year in Al-Hikmah University, aiming at bagging a degree in Geology; afterwards serve my country for a year under the body National Youth Service Corps (N.Y.S.C), then finally enter the labour market or get back to school to shoot for stars beyond the ones shining just above me at the moment. But all these are still but faraway, at the moment I got three major issues which needs addressing; my Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (S.I.W.E.S) report and defence, my seminar and most importantly, my project in the Engineering Geology.

First semester was long, boring most times, extremely tedious especially when we finally started field work for project in order to gather samples for laboratory tests and geotechnical analyses, but with every look into the future which didn't seem so far away, if we rested on the wall, we gathered ourselves upright; if we sat on chairs or even bare floor, we kicked out the laziness and tried all possible means to stand upright and move forward.

Like the old saying '*forward ever backwards never*' this was the time our lives automatically took control and we knew every striving steps it took and rewarded it back with enthusiasm and dedication.

April, 2015

Just began my last semester as an undergraduate and nothing made my journey's end more memorable than remembering my last days spent and how they were filled with unforgettable memories. Many are still to come and many have come and gone but at this moment I feel it is just me and my pleasant sweet thoughts against the world.

May, 2015

On the road to my final field trip as an undergraduate; on the road to the heart of Nigeria's solid mineral deposits; on the road to the epicentre (one out of the three) of Nigeria's buried treasures (My Nation, My Pride); on the road to being the geologist I have been so destined to be; on the road to my home town; on the road to my Native land; on the road to Kogi state.

Field trips take me and my course mates to foreign lands to study foreign grounds and meet foreign people; finally it takes me *back to my roots*. I'm not much of the homeboy but like the saying "*there is no place like home*", I really testify to that '*there is no place like home and never will there be*'.

On my way with an intention to spend just five days (although I would have wished to spend more); my light luggage and thrills trailing behind me threatening to overtake every now and then as I head to school to join my mates as others imagine and put up a positive mind "*It would be fun*" we all tell ourselves.

Spending almost a day on the road due to unnecessary delays and after what seemed to be a bad start turns out pretty nice eventually. There wasn't much fun or time to engage in one when idle but it was fun nonetheless.

Back from the short trip and now preparing for those forgotten boring lectures, speedy times and project which doesn't seem to have an end no matter the late nights; if it was possible I would have sued it to court for overstressing my life (funny how I'd look standing before a judge).

Sunday, 5th July, 2015

Now at this journey's end, I'm imagining how it would feel if I didn't write this; would I feel miserable or otherwise, I guess I would have no moment of peace internally because with the race my heart takes each time I take my thoughts to that day when I would stand in front of everyone and be awarded with whatever qualifications I have so worked hard for and the crowd and cheers would be so loud as each and every one of the graduating students steps forward to be handed theirs as well.

The race into adulthood has just exceeded its first lap and entering into the second where only the persistent and strong-headed can keep up the pace. At the very moment time stands still and a new hero is embraced by his family and loved ones; a new graduate is embraced by the Nation as a whole; a new man is embraced by the world at large.

The strength to embrace such new responsibilities might be thrilling, a few might be cunning, and most would have hurdles up front of jarring heights, but with great responsibility comes great power and vis-à-vis, it is left for us all to choose how

powerful we want to become by choosing how responsible we need to get.

VOTE OF THANKS

This vote of thanks goes to all students in tertiary institutions within and outside Nigeria; it also goes to all graduating students this year still within and outside Nigeria but most all I give my thanks to my fellow graduating mates in Al-Hikmah University, my course mates friends and family. Without their roles to play at different moments in my life I would not have in anyway be half the man I'm today.

I want to say thank you; thank you for always being there, for always giving a helping hand and for the challenges and lessons gained afterwards. Thank you for the love and care shown; thank you for bringing out the best in me and making the best from the best still evolve within. My appreciations and thanks can't be enough without mentioning my beloved teachers guardians and lecturers without them where would I have been I still try to wonder sometimes.

*As a Proud Muslim I would say to all
 جزاكم الله لکم 'Jazakumullahi Khairan' (May Allah reward you)
 امين (Amen!)*

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Thanks!