

uNeXpecTed ChaNGe

Mabadiliko Yasiyotarajiwa

by Shema Asifiwe



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Ever since I was a kid I had a whole lot of dreams. But the dream that seemed unrealistic was coming to the USA. It seemed like we needed miracles for the dream to come true.

Tangu nikiwa mtoto nilikuwa na ndoto nyingi sana. Lakini Ndoto ambayo ilionekana kutokuwa ya kweli ilikuwa nikuja USA. Ilionekana kana kwamba tulihitaji miujiza ili ndoto hiyo itimie.



I was one of the good kids at the camp we were living at and everyone knew that I was a church kid, so they would always look up to see if I was making bad decisions. I wasn't just a church boy, I was also a class president for most of the classes and I always hated the title they would give because every mistake I would make, you could hear them saying "aren't you supposed to be teaching the right way to do things." Sometimes I would just take 3 hours of sitting at the front door thinking of how life is going and I would reach my dreams in life but at the end of the day the only thing that cheered me up was my mom's favorite line, "God will provide." I couldn't dare to ask my friends for help since we both know I don't know how to ask for help and I am too used to being the problem solver.

Nilichukuliwa kuwa mmoja wa watoto wazuri katika kambi tuliyoishi na kila mtu alijua kuwa mimi ndiye mtoto wa kanisa, kwa hivyo wangetafuta kila wakati kuona ikiwa nilikuwa nikifanya maamuzi mabaya. Sikuwa mvulana wa kanisa tu, pia nilikuwa rais wa darasa kwa madarasa mengi. Kilichonichukia zaidi ni vile walivyoniwa ma Title, kwani kila kosa nililofanya nilisikia wenzangu wakisema kila mahali nilipokwenda. Mambo kama vile "Je, hupaswi kuwa unafundisha njia sahihi ya kufanya mambo?" au "Wewe si mtoto mzuri na mwerevu." Kila mara ningechukua saa 3 nikiwa nimekaa kwenye mlango wa mbele nikifikiria jinsi maisha yanavyoenda na kivihi nitatimiza ndoto zangu maishani lakini mwisho wa siku kitu pekee kilichonifurahisha ni mstari kutoka kwa rafiki yangu wa karibu, Mama yangu "Mungu atajibu." Sikuweza kuthubutu kuwauliza marafiki zangu msaada. Nina hakika wote walijua sikujua jinsi ya kuomba msaada. Nilizoea sana kuwa mtatuzi wa shida.

I started seeing beautiful changes when we started going to interviews and tests in order for us to take the airplane to the United States.

Nilianza kuona mabadiliko makubwa tulipoanza kwenda kwenye usaili na kuchukua vipimo. Ilihitajiwa ili tuchukue ndege hadi Marekani.

When we found the day that we were coming to the United States,
we were as excited as a chicken seeing its food.

Tulipopata siku ambayo tulikuwa tunakuja Marekani, tulipata
furaha kama kuku kuona chakula chake. Ilikuwa ni wakati waku
jibiwa.



Saying our last goodbyes was not as easy as we thought it would be, but those moments were the moments that I actually said I am living in my dream life. I got the chance to speak to my mother only once because she was busy getting stuff ready for us and saying her goodbyes as well, I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I knew I wasn't going to let the chance go away so I had to start my conversation even though she was kind of busy. I cleared my throat twice and started saying "mo.. ma.....mu....."

I stumbled over my words for quite a moment and she finally replied, "Yes, what is it?"

"Our lives are going to change, we have prayed, we have waited, we have worked hard for this moment."

Then she looked at me with her emotional face. And then she took a good big breath and she replied,

"I know son, God has blessed us so well to see this experience that millions of people would give a hand or a foot for but we didn't pay anything he gave us this blessing because he loves us so much."

Kusema kwaheri zetu za mwisho haikuwa rahisi kama tulivyofikiria, lakini nyakati hizo ndizo nilijisemea mwenyewe.

"Ninaishi katika maisha ya ndoto zangu"

Nilipata nafasi ya kuongea na mama mara moja tu kwa sababu alikuwa bize kutuandalia vitu na kuaga pia. Nilijua haingekuwa rahisi lakini sikuiacha nafasi hiyo iondoke kwa hivyo ilinibidi kuanza mazungumzo yangu ingawa alikuwa na shughuli nyingi wakati huo. Nilisafisha koo langu mara mbili na kuzama ndani

"Mimi..si...kunywa..."

Nilijikwaa kwa maneno yangu kwa muda mrefu na hatimaye alijibu, "Ndiyo, ni nini?"

"Maisha yetu yatabadilika, tumeomba, tumesubiri, tumefanya kazi kwa bidii kwa wakati huu."

Kisha akanitazama kwa uso wa hisia. Na kisha akashusha pumzi nzuri na akajibu.

"Najua mwanangu, Mungu ametubariki sana kuona tukio hili ambalo mamilioni ya watu wangetoa mkono au mguu lakini hatukulipa chochote alitupa baraka hii kwa sababu anatupenda sana."



Days went by and I started becoming more and more emotional. Saying goodbyes was not exactly as easy as I thought. Knowing that I am not going to see them again for a very long time, I had to say my goodbyes even to my enemies. Some of my friends were also going to the USA the same day. It was a week before the journey and my friend came up to me with this huge smile on his face and said, “I can’t believe we’re going to the USA together, we should definitely be hanging out till the day we go to the city to wait for the airplane.”

I knew better than to just say yes so quickly so I took some time and finally got it off my mind, “Yes we should but only for 1 hour because I have to hang out with my other friends (kaka, obama, totobe, and benjamin) and you know I have to hang out with them. We have been friends for a long time and it wouldn’t make sense if I didn’t hang out with them.”

He wasn’t too happy but he knew the code:

Kadiri siku zilivyosonga, nilianza kuwa na hisia zaidi na zaidi. Kuaga haikuwa rahisi kama nilivyofikiria. Kwa kujua kuwa sitawaona tena kwa muda mrefu sana, ilibidi niwaage hata maadui zangu. Baadhi ya marafiki zangu pia walikuwa wakienda USA siku hiyo hiyo. Ilikuwa wiki moja kabla ya safari na rafiki yangu alinijia na tabasamu hili kubwa usoni mwake na kusema “Siwezi kuamini kuwa tutaenda pamoja Marekani, lazima tuwe na mapumziko hadi siku tutakayoenda jijini kusubiri ndege.” Nilijua afadhali kuliko kusema ndiyo kwa haraka hivyo nilichukua muda na hatimaye kuliondoa akilini mwangu, “Ndiyo tunapaswa lakini kwa saa 1 tu kwa sababu ni lazima nikae na marafiki zangu wengine.(kinyesi, obama, bonyeza na Benjamin)na unajua inanibidi kujumuika nao. Tumekuwa marafiki kwa muda mrefu na haingekuwa na maana ikiwa singeshiriki nao.” Hakuwa na furaha sana lakini alijua kanuni:

*Friends code : code Number 15
My friend squad comes first and nobody can break us apart*

It took some time and a big breath for him to say “ok, it’s fine.” After telling him his energy was totally changed and he became calm. I understood he wasn’t happy but I had to go with the flow. I turned and walked passed him and as I was walking my heart was a race.

*Nambari ya marafiki: nambari ya 15
Kikosi cha rafiki yangu kiwe kwanza na hakuna anayeweza kututenganisha*

Ilichukua muda na pumzi kubwa kwake kusema “sawa, ni sawa.” Baada ya kumwambia nguvu zake zilibadilika kabisa na akawa mtulivu. Nilielewa kuwa hakuwa na furaha lakini ilibidi nifanye hivyo. Niligeuka na kumpita na nilipokuwa nikitembea moyo wangu ulienda mbio.

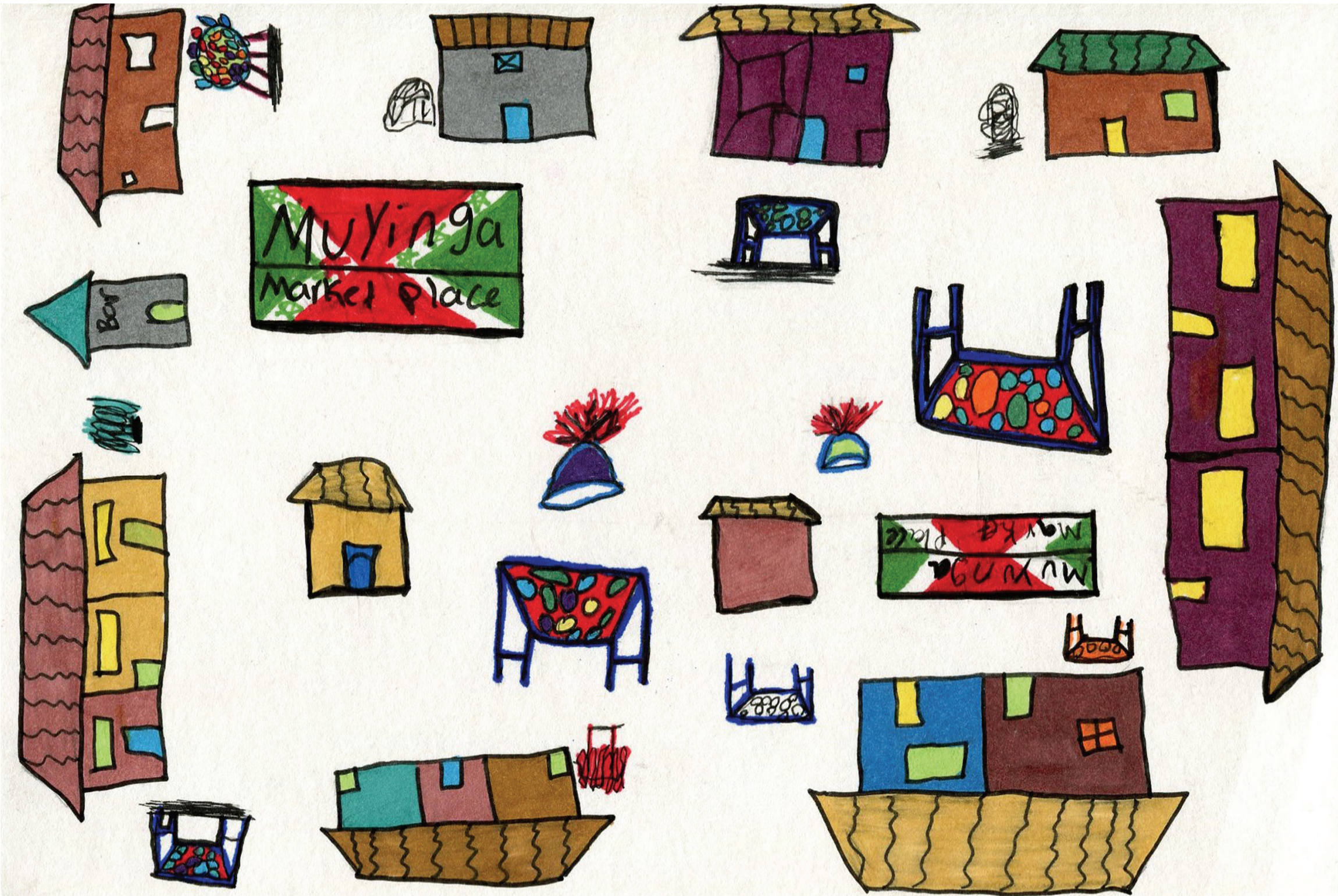


Days and days had passed and it was 2 days before the trip began. I woke up that fateful morning with joy in my heart, went to church, went and played with my friends. And in the evening my mom had the whole church come and throw a churchy goodbye party and I got to spend time with my friend. “Erne, I know we are going to be apart for a while but don’t be sad, I promise I will remember you no matter what.” He looked at me and suddenly his face was like the face of an angel and tears started dropping. The only words that came from his mouth were “Do not forget me and do not forget where you came from.” I couldn’t blame him for feeling sad after he heard all about how people get to the USA and they would forget about their friends and just enjoy life.

Siku na siku zilikuwa zimepita na nilikuwa siku 2 kabla ya safari kuanza. Niliamka asubuhi hiyo ya maafa nikiwa na furaha moyoni mwangu, nikaenda kanisani, nikaenda na kucheza na marafiki zangu. Na Jioni mama yangu alikuwa na kanisa zima kuja na kufanya sherehe kanisa kwaheri na mimi nilikuwa na kutumia muda na rafiki yangu. “Erne, najua tutatengana kwa muda lakini usihuzunike, naahidi nitakukumbuka hata iweje.” Alinitazama na ghafla uso wake ukawa kama uso wa malaika na machozi yakaanza kumdondoka. Maneno pekee yaliyotoka kinywani mwake yalikuwa “Usinisahau na Usisahau ulikotoka.” Sikuweza kumlaumu kwa kuhuzunika baada ya kusikia yote kuhusu jinsi watu wanavyofika Marekani na wangesahau kuhusu marafiki zao na kufurahia maisha tu.

It was finally the day that we’ve all been waiting for. I woke up at 5 am and it seemed like on that very morning our house should have been 10 times bigger. I had to say “Excuse me” a zillion times for me to be able to pass and go to the bathroom to take a shower. I was all ready and prepared and right after I went to my friend’s house and we both walked to the market to bring some snacks for the trip. We walked around the city for quite some time and it seemed like we were famous because everywhere we passed everyone was looking at us.

Hatimaye ilikuwa siku ambayo sote tumekuwa tukiingoj. Niliamka saa 5 asubuhi na ilionekana kama asubuhi hiyo nyumba yetu inapaswa kuwa kubwa mara 10. Ilinibidi kusema “Samahani” mara zillion ili niweze kupita na kwenda bafuni kuoga. Nilikuwa tayari na kujiandaa na mara baada ya kwenda nyumbani kwa rafiki yangu na tukatembea wote hadi sokoni kuleta vitafunio kwa ajili ya safari. Tulizunguka jiji kwa muda mrefu na ilionekana kama sisi ni watu maarufu kwa sababu kila mahali tulipopita kila mtu alikuwa akitutazama.

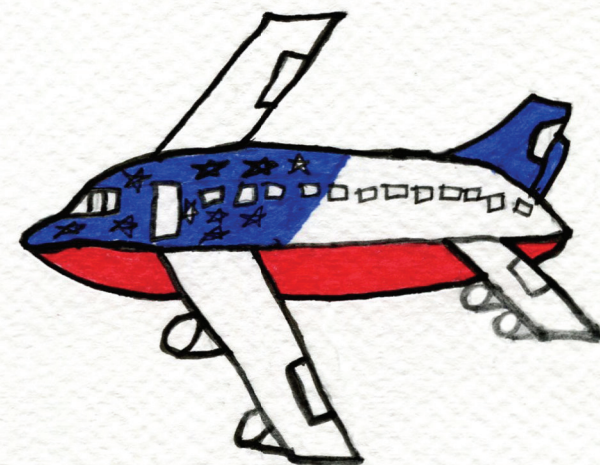


The trip began and I fell asleep and when I woke up we were already at our hotel where we would stay for a week. A week passed and I was so nervous but I knew it was going to be a great day. We got into the bus and they took us to the airport.

We had to wait for 2 hours for our plane to be ready. But right then I couldn't believe it. After dreaming for years and years, my foot finally stepped in a plane. I was so excited but also nervous, I knew it was gonna be the longest days of my life but at the end of the day I will still step foot in The United States.

Safari ilianza na nilipitiwa na usingizi na nilipoamka tayari tulikuwa hotelini kwetu ambapo tungekaa kwa muda wa wiki moja. Wiki moja ilipita na nilikuwa na wasiwasi sana lakini nilijua itakuwa siku nzuri. Tuliingia ndani ya basi na kutupeleka uwanja wa ndege.

Tulilazimika kusubiri kwa saa 2 ili ndege yetu iwe tayari. Lakini hapo hapo Sikuweza kuamini. Baada ya kuota kwa miaka na miaka, mguu wangu hatimaye ukaingia kwenye ndege. Nilifurahi sana lakini pia nilikuwa na wasiwasi, nilijua zingekuwa siku ndefu zaidi maishani mwangu lakini mwisho wa siku bado nitakanyaga Marekani.



We got there and it was the first time that I saw a house like that with a kitchen, bathroom, and a basement.

Tulifika pale na ilikuwa mara ya kwanza kuona nyumba kama hiyo ikiwa na jiko, bafu na basement.

A few months passed and we finally got a TV and I said “Thank God, never in a million years would I have thought that my Papa could buy a TV. Now I don’t have to worry about paying to watch movies or videos or anything.”

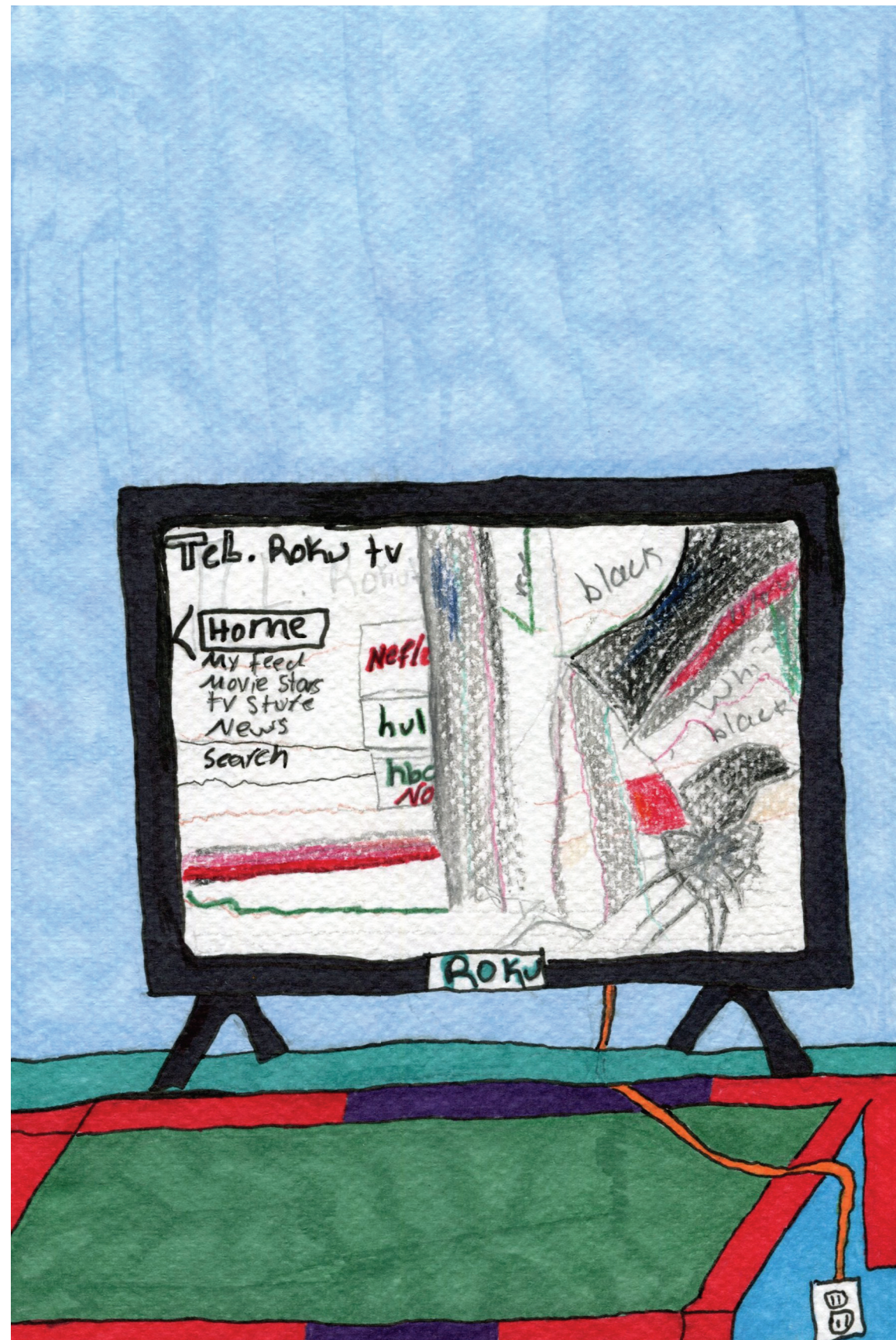
Miezi michache ilipita na hatimaye tukapata TV na nikasema “Asante mungu, kamwe katika miaka milioni moja nisingefikiria kuwa Baba yangu angeweza kununua TV. Sasa sihitaji kuwa na wasiwasi juu ya kulipa kutazama sinema au video au kitu chochote.”

Days passed and my dad decided that they will walk down the street to visit our friends that are from Burundi also. I started cleaning the house, just so I could help my mom and my sisters. Then I accidentally pulled the wire when I was moving the chairs and the TV fell and cracked.

When mom and dad heard about this, they sent my brother to call me and little did I know it was time to get questioned. They always want me to help out with cleaning, but in this case it seemed like they didn't appreciate my help at all. When I sat down, my whole body was shaking knowing that I was in a hot seat.

Siku zilipita na baba yangu aliamua kwamba watatembea barabarani kutembelea marafiki zetu ambao wanatoka Burundi pia. Nilianza kusafisha nyumba, ili tu niweze kumsaidia mama yangu na dada zangu. Kisha nikachomoa waya kwa bahati mbaya wakati nasogeza viti na TV ikaanguka na kupasuka.

Mama na baba waliposikia kuhusu hili, walimtuma kaka yangu kuniita na sikujua kuwa ulikuwa wakati wa kuulizwa. Sikuzote wanataka nisaidie kusafisha, lakini Katika kesi hii ilionekana kana kwamba hawakuthamini msaada wangu hata kidogo. Nilipokaa, mwili wangu wote ulikuwa unatetemeka nikijua niko kwenye kiti cha moto.



My parents gave the death stare and I knew in my mind that was their way of saying “what happened?” I looked at my mother and her eyes were just like shining flowers that can’t be touched. I looked at her eyes closely and knew that If I lied just a bit, it would cause me even more trouble. So I started the conversation before they could.

“ W.....wha.....what....haa...” I was too scared that I didn’t even have the strength to speak. After a few seconds of me trying to speak, my dad shouted “Speak Up.”

“I’m sorry, okay I was cleaning up and I accidentally pulled the wire while pulling the chair. I never meant for this to happen please forgive me.”

They both listened for a while, then my mom said “Who told you to clean up?”

Then I whispered quietly “If I cleaned up and nothing happened, you would be thanking me.”

It seemed me and my parents were in a battle and as soon as I noticed it I backed off and let them have the victory. My mom noticed how sorry I was and she told my dad to see how sorry I am.

My mom said “We know how sorry you are, but please be better next time.” She said it in her angel voice and then my dad joined in, “We all make mistakes, that is part of life. Nobody is perfect, all we wanted is for you to feel sorry and accept your mistake. You should understand that your mistakes define who you are.”

I didn’t know what had happened to my parents. It seemed like I was talking to other people. I don’t how or when they change but that change was the change I wanted to see in my parents. In my heart I whispered, “I just love my parents.”

Wazazi wangu walitazama kifo na nilijua katika akili yangu hiyo ilikuwa njia yao ya kusema “nini kilitokea?” Nilimtazama mama yangu na macho yake yalikuwa kama maua yenye kumeta ambayo hayawezi kuguswa. Nilitazama macho yake kwa karibu na nilijua kwamba ikiwa ningesema uwongo kidogo, ingeniletea shida zaidi. Kwa hivyo nilianza mazungumzo kabla hawajaweza.

“W.....wha.....nini....haa...” Niliogopa sana hata sikuwa na nguvu za kuongea . Baada ya sekunde chache nikijaribu kuongea, Baba yangu alipiga kelele “Ongea.” “Samahani, sawa nilikuwa nasafisha na kwa bahati mbaya nilichomoa sime huku nikivuta kiti. Sikuwahi kukusudia hili litokee tafadhali nisamehe.” Wote wawili walisikiliza kwa muda, kisha mama yangu akasema “nani kakuambia ufanye usafi? ” Kisha nikanong’ona kimya kimya “Ikiwa ningesafisha na hakuna kitu kilichotokea, ungekuwa unanishukuru.” Ilionekana kuwa mimi na wazazi wangu tulikuwa kwenye vita na mara tu nilipoona hivyo nilirudi nyuma na kuwaacha wapate ushindi. Mama yangu aliona jinsi nilivyosikitika na akamwambia baba yangu aone jinsi ninavyojutia. Mama yangu alisema “Tunajua jinsi unavyosikitika, lakini tafadhali uwe bora wakati ujao.” Alisema hivyo kwa sauti yake ya malaika kisha baba yangu akajiunga na wimbo “Sote tunafanya makosa, hiyo ni sehemu ya maisha. Hakuna mtu mkamilifu, tulichotaka ni wewe kusikitika na kukubali kosa lako. Unapaswa kuelewa kwamba makosa yako yanafafanua wewe ni nani.”

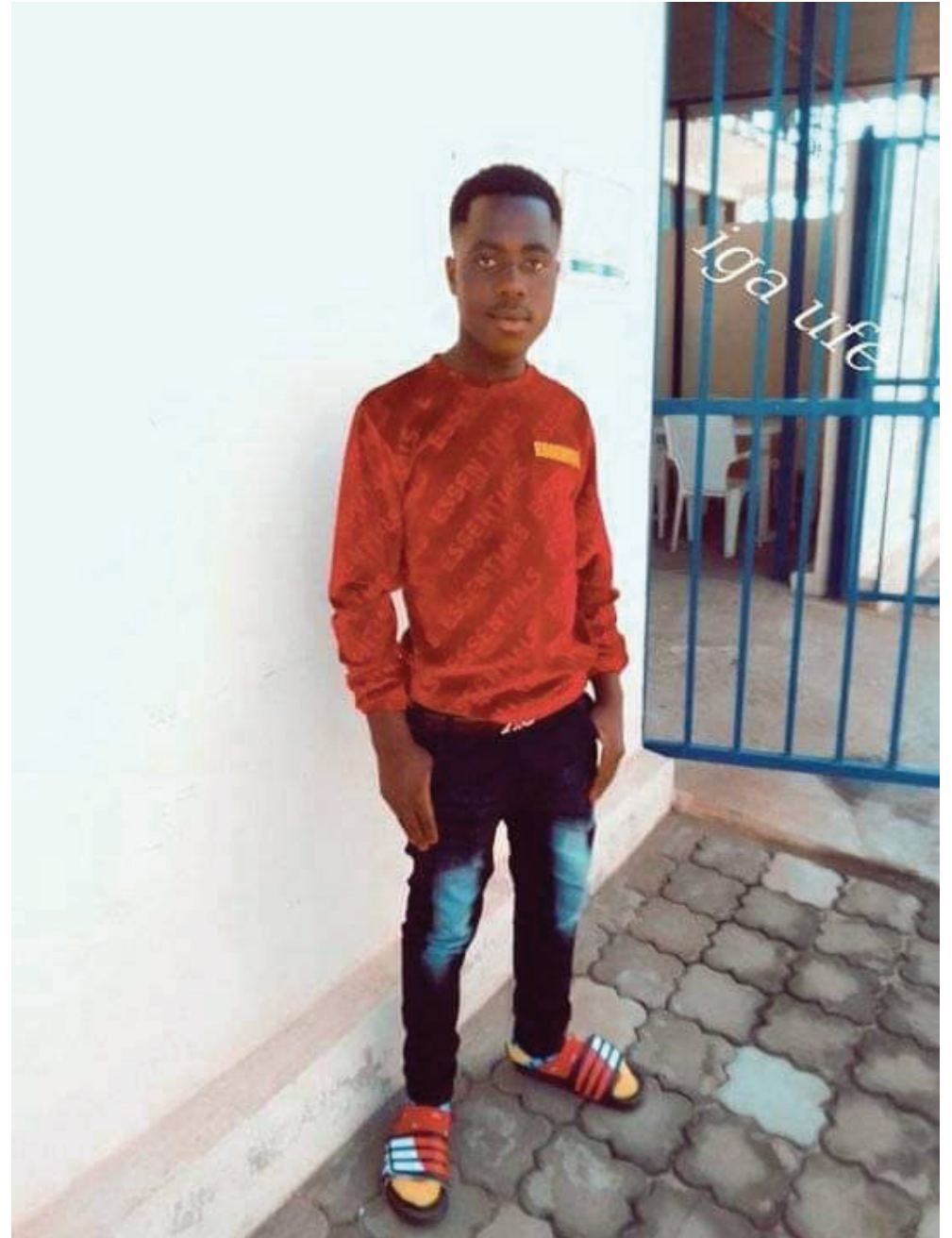
Sikujua ni nini kilikuwa kimewapata wazazi wangu. Ilionekana kana kwamba nilikuwa nikizungumza na watu wengine. Sijui jinsi au wakati wanabadilika lakini mabadiliko hayo yalikuwa mabadiliko niliyotaka kuona kwa wazazi wangu. Moyoni nilinong’ona “Nawapenda tu wazazi wangu.”





Names for the friend group I have. The one thing we would love to do is training to defend our selves.

Majina ya kikundi cha marafiki nilichonacho. Jambo moja ambalo tungependa kufanya ni mafunzo ya kujilinda.



The friend that told me never to forget about him.

Rafiki ambaye aliniambia nisisahau kamwe juu yake.



Me on my church choir album cover.

Mimi kwenye jalada la albamu yangu ya kwaya ya kanisa.



Me (the one with the peace sign) when getting here in 2019.

Mimi (aliye na ishara ya amani) nilipofika hapa 2019.

