

Echoes of the Beginning: A Memoir to Papa

Prologue: Because I Must

I write because I must.
Not because I have the words, or because I'm ready.
I am not ready.
But time is not asking for my readiness—
only my obedience to the ache that insists:
This story must be told.

I am running out of time,
and the program must be done.
Deadlines pull at me like gravity,
but something heavier sits on my chest:
You're gone, Papa.

And now, how must I live?

I sway with so much wonder about what the future holds—
plans I once thought we'd toast to together.
But to linger there feels selfish.
This story is not about me.
It's about you.
And to tell it right, I must go back.
Back to the beginning.
Back to the 90s, when I first witnessed coming to life—
not just mine, but yours.

You were more than a father.
You were the quiet engine behind everything I understood to be strong.
And though you're gone,
you left fingerprints on everything I touch,
echoes in every room I walk into.
I write because I must—
because I am afraid if I don't,
I will forget the sound of your laugh
or the way your wisdom sat heavy in a single sentence.

So let this be the record.
The tribute.
The altar.
Not a perfect one—but a true one.

I'm writing you home, Papa.
One memory at a time.

Chapter One: The Boy, The Father, The Becoming

In the 90s, there was a boy—naughty, wide-eyed, and full of wonder. That boy was me.
With my best friend Komu, we jumped from one avocado tree to the next, daring the sky,
breaking arms, and earning bandages like badges of honor.

But every mischief had its reckoning.

Your parenting, Papa, was a mix of a firm pinch to the ear and a story—a tale of caution
wrapped in wisdom, a voice both thunderous and tender.

You weren't just correcting me.

You were raising me.

I remember how you tried to expose me to good toys, to ideas that sparked curiosity.

One day, you brought home a remote-controlled car—with a string attached.

To my young mind, it made no sense.

Who was driving this car?

I asked you to open it up for me so I could see the driver behind the black-tinted windows.

You refused.

Everyone refused.

So, I did the only thing that made sense to me—

I took a big stone and cracked the car open.

And then, joyfully, brought it to you:

"Look, Papa! I found the driver!"

You knew then—I was different.

Curious. Stubborn. Full of wonder.

I was the boy who opened radios, who climbed roofs to fix the TV signal so you wouldn't
miss your favorite news channel.

You let me.

You taught me to try, to fix, to take responsibility for what I touched.

You tried to turn me into a farmer.

There were rabbits, pigs, chickens, cows.

You taught me to feed them, care for them, respect the rhythm of life.

And when it wasn't animals, it was coffee bushes—pruning, planting seedbeds, fertilizing.

You made sure I worked.

Even on school holidays, when I wanted to laze, you pushed me to explore, to visit towns, to
bring back stories in the evening like a little reporter.

You ignited something in me.

Today, my travels have given you glimpses into foreign places—yet somehow, you always
seemed to know more about them than I did.

National Geographic was your passport.
From wildlife to remote lands, you traveled with your mind and made the world feel small.

There was that one fight.
My last CPA exam.
You asked me to blend mangoes and pineapples. I refused.
It became a battle of wills.
I disappeared from home, afraid of your discipline.
But that fight, Papa, was the turning point.
We never argued again.
And I finally understood the depth of your love: always teaching, always correcting, never withdrawing.

You believed in my choices—even when we couldn't afford them.
When I wanted to switch classes, we sat together and reasoned.
You explained the value of science. Of staying the course.
You never dismissed my dreams—you helped refine them.

Your first cheque from the commercial chicken venture...
I still remember the joy on your face.
It worked.
And from that venture came a name so simple, so perfect: Big Kuku.
Your confidence in it became our legacy.

From the 90s into the 2000s, you juggled coffee, macadamia, livestock—
and you built something even greater: Aberdare Peaks Academy.
Thousands of children passed through it.
Our upbringing became shared.
You mentored not just us, but a whole community.
Even after our studies, you insisted we teach.
"Pass it on," you said.
And so I do.

That school—your framework—guides my work today.
It lives in every program I design, every entrepreneur I support.
It's mentorship, training, instruction, discipline—all intentional.
You taught us to dream into the future, and then step back to create plans grounded in reality.
A method, a legacy.
Your gift to us, and to Africa.

Your love for Rhumba and Jazz—
for Hugh Masekela—
for Stimela, that haunting song about the coal train...
We listened to his son's performance together.

That song.
It shook us.
The sorrow, the struggle, the soul.
It reminded me of your own work: liberating, grounding, beautiful.

Your legacy is undeniable.
From school to farm, from digital ventures to Big Kuku—you left us with more than ideas.
You gave us a world.

And then there was Kahethu.

The day we commissioned the Kahethu Smart Village Project at Kahethu Church,
I saw you once more in your full light.
Mentoring the young, guiding the community—
just as you did during those early Aberdare Peaks Academy days.
Only now, I was standing beside you,
no longer the boy with questions,
but the man you helped shape—
and still, you led.

That day is etched in me.
Joy radiated from you.
Pride. Peace. Purpose.
This project, this gift—you left it with the church.
And I know, deep in my soul,
that it will grow.

From Joan and I,
oh how we shall delight in telling your stories to our children.
Your laughter, your discipline, your love for knowledge and jazz.
They will know of you.
They will grow in your shadow—and find light.

From my siblings, their families, and from Mum—
thank you, Papa, for choosing us.
For giving your full self,
every hour, every idea, every prayer,
to our lives.

And now, as I look ahead,
I do not know how tomorrow dawns—
but I believe it will rise with joy.
Because of you.

You raised boys into men,
girls into women,

and adults into better versions of themselves.
You built more than structures.
You built people.

And your legacy, Papa,
will live on—
forever.

Closing Note from the Author

This is where I close—for now.
The discipline years, the work, the wisdom,
and all the lessons from the land—
those will remain between you and me, Papa.
Proprietary truths, sacred in their transmission,
too vast for pages, too intimate for print.
They are etched instead in how I live,
how I love, how I lead.

You taught me to hold the soil in one hand
and the stars in the other—
to build from below, but dream from above.

And so, I carry your name forward,
not as a weight, but as a wind behind me.