



My Father, My First Love, My Hero, My Mentor.

Daddy O,

I've spent many days imagining how to begin this tribute to you. How do I begin? Where do I start? You were my very beginning. They say you start to think about the beginning at the end, and I have spent many days since you left us going back into the matrix of time, trying to imagine the beginning...my first smile as you were there. My first words, my first steps, The first time I heard your voice....you were my first hero even from before I had memory. You were my hero and remain my hero through life.

My father, my first love, my hero, my mentor... The Captain!!! It's still surreal to refer to you in the past tense. But, you still very much live in my heart, in all our hearts and in my iPhone! Lol! The videos, the pictures...the messages, I go through them like a morning ritual smiling as I see your smile... crying as I hear your voice... stroking your forehead as I look through the pictures.

Your smile... your contagious smile that warmed any heart. I can still see it... You smile, and your face will light up and warm the heart of anyone that looks at you. So I play the videos to hear your voice. I miss your laugh!! I miss your singing!! I miss your dancing!! And so, I go through the videos to relive those memories.

"My Ivie! My Iye!" was what you called me. I wore it like a badge of honour, with pride and dignity. Even at this moment, I still do. I am now *"Iye"* to all my siblings, and we will ensure that our bond as a family continues to be strong. It was almost like the name was forth-telling, I am now not just your *Iye*, or *Iye* to my siblings but *"Iye"* to a people, and I look to the heavens with a smile knowing that I was deeply loved and fathered by a great man. You saw me and called me before it manifested.

Until the day you transitioned, I was your *"little girl"*, and although I did not enter the world through your body, I entered through your heart. Growing up, mummy would always say I was just like you. It was hard to understand because I didn't understand how a girl could be like a *"boy"*. But as I grew up, I came to see what she meant, and I



dubbed myself “*Capitano’s seed*”. I proudly say now that I am just like my father. I am a true Daddy’s Girl. I am a Daddy’s Girl who has now become Daddy’s Queen, and I know you’re looking down from heaven watching over me.

Our similarities often meant we fought a lot, but we loved each other even more as we fought. You were my safe space. We didn’t have to say much. I’d sit in your presence, and you’d look at me and say, “*you know I love you very much.*” And that was enough for me. You loved me very much. You loved all of us very much and were committed to ensuring our peace and well being. You were infallible in my eyes, incapable of doing any wrong. I hung to every word you said like it was a treasure. I still remember your advice on patience, forgiveness and hard work. You did not just preach these words; you lived by them.

As you danced with me on my wedding day, we both burst into tears, knowing that things were about to change but understanding that our love would always be there. Our bond was unlike any other connection: marriage could not erode and one that death can never erase. We are connected by a heart that doesn’t stop beating.

Daddy, I love you for an infinite number of reasons. First, I feel so blessed to have had you as my father. . You were a father like none other to us, your children. I am deeply grateful for the solid foundation you worked tirelessly to give us your children. You lived for your children, so no matter how grown we were, no matter how busy you were, you knew what we needed every time, and you provided without restrain. You were our protector, our shield, loving us with your entirety. Your heart of love was pure and perfect, a blessing to us, one we will never take for granted.

The love you shared for me extended to my husband. You didn’t treat him as a son-in-law but as your son. Embracing him with heart and hand, bringing him so quickly into the fold. And when your grandchildren came, you did the same. Your Tsemiaye still speaks to grandpa. She says since you’re in heaven with Jesus, she can talk to you as she does him. So I’ve borrowed a leaf from her book and speak to you through my day as well. It has been helpful.

And although I would have hoped for a little more time to make even more memories, I’m thankful for the time we spent together as a family in the past year together. I’m grateful for the months we spent together in London, the prayer meetings, the dance-offs, the laughter, the advice you gave us, the mornings you would request for



your special *Akara* and the afternoons you wanted your special beans porridge. I'm thankful I got a chance to show you how much you meant to me in those months of caring for you.

You would often say a good name is better than money. You were a man of many outstanding achievements; you dominated every sphere you stepped into. And what an achievement you made in your transition; we have come to see the fullness of the blessing God gave us in you. Your heart and heritage span across many waters. Your most significant achievements were never the businesses you owned or the houses you built but the lives you touched and transformed just by being you. You were a great man and have left indelible footprints in the sands of time that will outlive many generations to come. The Bible says, "*the memory of the righteous is blessed...*" (Proverbs 10:7). You were a great and righteous man indeed.

As one who believes that mantles never die, I am fully convinced that you live on through the lives you changed and the hearts you touched. You live on through my siblings, myself, and our offspring. Daddy, your love, patience, understanding, wisdom, sense of humour, and fantastic dance skills will live with us forever. Thank you for living your life in service, for leading by example. You lived your life in service to God and to humanity. You would be remembered in this lifetime by all the people that knew you and shall be consumed by history for generations to come in our lineage and beyond.

Thank you for living and creating a clear roadmap for me to follow. I will keep you like a lamp that keeps burning and ensure your legacy lives on.

On that day, when the fullness of my time has come, you will be the first person I look for once I enter the pearly gates. Until then, sleep well, Papa bear. Until we meet to part no more.

I miss you so much.

I love you forever,

Your "Iye",
Always "Your Ivie"