

I dreamt of this years ago but it took too long to happen.
I was surprised because I didn't expect to be here now.
I should be filling up rooms.

12.00 pm

Sister help me, give me money to eat please?
The woman looked at me, I locked eyes with her and she turned her face to the window.
My shoulders slacked, my eyes empty, my jaw tight, I wondered at the plea of my voice when I begged her.
I remembered days when I was the "woman".
I turned from the woman that every one wanted to hear to the woman that no one could see.

My daily routine is wake up early from the side of the road, go to a car wash close by, try dipping the hem of my cloth into any water I can find, then perform my daily hygiene there.
After that, I cleanse my money plate and say words from the Bible.
You will supply all my needs.
I set out into the streets of Kaduna looking for a messiah.

I came to Kaduna in the year 2006 for NYSC, I hated the idea of it.
In the media, Kaduna is the Afghanistan of Nigeria, I didn't have a choice but to just manage this "war zone" for a year.
I expected to always be in touch with terrorists or for my work place to be bombed on a hot afternoon but I guess this is one tale that will never make it out of me staying in the north.
So sad!

I had a strong passion for media, so I got into a radio station.
The radio became my home, my source of worth, the well I drew fulfillment from. I loved going on air, doing my sweepers, answering calls, producing jingles.
I have never felt more alive.
I sacrificed this for everything, I mean I wanted to get to the peak and it was all that mattered to me. Before coming to Kaduna, I was so certain I wanted to be intentional about my relationships with my family and friends. I was deliberate but it was tested by my addiction to sadness.
Loneliness, depression, selfishness.

The first time I felt intense sadness; the sadness that hollowed me out, sorrow that made me feel like I was invisible, sadness that made me cry compulsively without reason, was when I left boarding school and I realized that every relationship we made in there was because we needed to survive and because of proximity, once everyone drifted away the promise of forever and checking up on each other fell apart and I went into oblivion with it.

I wanted to feel better, I longed to feel okay but at the same time I liked how I felt.
I got a kick out of knowing I could just cry at the bat of an eye.
I enjoyed the clench of my chest when it became too much.
I relished how I struggled to breathe when I realized that I might end up alone.
I delighted in how I shook like a leaf.
I took pleasure in how I ate excessively.
I treasured how I could be rude to anybody because what? *Yeah, she's sad!*
Obsessive.

When it felt like I was no longer depressed but was laughing more, I always found a way to beat myself up.

Happiness is not something you should experience!

My brain tells me.

So therefore I go back to the memory of the people that hurt me to feel like the sufferer.

Like an addict getting it's fix.

...

I was a rising star. I was always the youngest wherever I went, bound to be the greatest broadcaster of her time.

I came to be the greatest broadcaster for a few years. Until I wasn't.

And the award for the broadcaster of the year goes to...

These words haunt me every day. They were the words that marked the day I failed.

I was dressed beautifully, I mean I was nominated on one of the best award shows in Africa, cause why not?

My biggest dream!

I was sickly nervous; I was bothered by my neurosis but I realized that no matter what height you attain, you are still bound to be scared of the unknown.

I went up to the stage to receive my award.

I almost got it.

Then

My heart stopped working as I was about touching the award, I fell facedown on stage and the last thing I heard was a cocktail of screams for my win and gasps cause I just fell.

I know that cause I watched this video on and on.

My research skill shows me that it trended for weeks end on until people found other things to talk about. I was there then I was no longer.

...

Fame is fleeting

"Money is not everything, I don't want to sound like a hypocrite, get your own then you will know".

— AG BABY

After serving in Kaduna, I did so well that my employers had to retain me, worked there for 2 years before I moved to Abuja.

Abuja was where I met success, fame, and money face to face.

I was dining with kings. My favorite Bible verse always played in a loop whenever I got a win.

Proverbs 22:19.

I became the celebrity I always dreamt of.

I mean I am having banter with Nancy Isime, what are you saying?

My phone was always on Do not disturb, I was practically alien to my real support system.

I couldn't be reached, I couldn't be touched.

In retrospect, I think I was purely busy, enjoying being needed by people that didn't even give a hoot about me; I was super naïve to think that their quest for me was for me rather it was a quest for my skills and value. I was nothing but an item to get their job done.

I'm so busy.

I was depleted of energy, I didn't even want to talk. Calling back, responding to texts were so hard for me, cause I am so tired.

As a human being, the day will come when your busyness will fly out the window and you wonder at the emptiness of your life, memories of the people you love talking to plays in your mind's eye and you want to reach out to your people, your so called "tribe".

That day soon came for me, gnawing at me, I wanted to talk.

The urge to pour out to another human.

The feeling of having a good laughter with someone.

The sense of sharing an inside joke.

It came on that day, I called 6 of my "friends" and none of them answered.

I thought to myself they were probably busy.

2 hours later: crickets

I laid on my bed and loneliness washed over me.

I tried to push it out, I mean I never feel lonely. It was persistent.

I found myself gasping for air and not knowing how to breath, tears washed down my face in torrents and because I have missed this feeling and I love how sadness makes me feel like a victim, I held on tight to it.

...

My vision was blurry, I couldn't see clearly.

It felt like my eyes were clotted.

I tried raising my hand but it couldn't come up.

I sluggishly remembered a tale from boarding house where it was said that if you slept like a corpse, spirits that stay on air can move into you and make you immobile and the only antidote was to fight back, screaming the name of Jesus.

I tried that tactic but I was soon being held down by a hand, I actually thought I was in heaven.

He told me to stay calm, that I shouldn't be frightened, no cause for alarm, I had just been sleeping for too long.

How long could that be?

Opening my eyes more steadily now, my environment came into view, I was in a hospital.

The male doctor who would obviously still be a resident, chose that moment to ask me how many fingers I could see.

Carry your medical shit out of my way, what happened to me?

It happens that I have been hospitalized for the last six months and I was in a vegetative coma. My curiosity got the best of me and I asked of my family or even friends whether anyone was around. The doctor with so much empathy made a show of telling me that the last time someone was here to see me was three months ago.

No one, No one could even stick around longer to know how I was doing? I had never felt so lost in my life.

...

The second time I felt intense sadness was when the boy I liked, didn't like me back. He rather liked someone else who I was friends with.

I mean all my life, unrequited love is a dish Cupid decided to always serve me in the most spicy way possible but this one hurt so badly.

He was my all, he was my go to friend, I never knew how gnawing loneliness could be because of him.

I got to know when we stopped being friends, when I opened my buccal cavity to express how I felt.

I could have moved on easily if I wanted to but my brain refreshed my memory of how sweet pain was, it reminded me of how uplifting it felt to be a victim, to cry so much and blame someone else for the pain you are going through.

Gosh, it felt so good to be depressed, it felt nice to be so sad.

I held on to it tight.

You know what happens when a person holds on to sadness? They become prideful.

I wanted people to see how much they hurt me so I cut them off from me; I don't need anybody.

Even my family who were blameless!

4:00pm

I'm still walking around Ungwan rimi, looking for who to give me money. I stopped by a Mallam's shop to rest and this rest turned into restlessness because of the voices bellowing from the radio.

I should be the one everybody is listening to.

My career gave me self worth, I felt needed, I felt validated, I loved invoking feelings in people with just my voice, I loved telling stories that people would listen to.

I enjoyed the feeling of having to wake up each morning with a purpose of influencing someone with my words.

...

Heels were my healers but now I can't find anything to take away the pain in my heart.

After I healed from the hospital, it felt like everyone had moved into this new era and I was just trying to catch up.

I went back to my working place and I was already replaced by a "fresher voice" but "Sir, you said I was the greatest broadcaster you have ever worked with".

"That was six months ago, our listeners wants something new".

Life is brutal.

How can so much change in Six months?

I left with a bitter laugh and a shake of my head.

With the way my life is now, the microphone can't even be here for me.

I had to leave Abuja to Kaduna.

I needed an escape.

Who was I going to run to?

My family would take me back but it would damage my sadness to be happy again.

My friends would need a a lot of push to come around but joy is something I am scared to feel?

What's the best rehabilitation centre to cure this addiction?

You could have thought that a deep sleep for 6 months would have cleansed my heart,

But I was the same old person.

Clinging to sadness like a lifeline.

Feeling empty inside yet heavy.

Choosing not to do something better for myself.

Choosing to be tired because I have been abandoned by everything.

Abandoning my own self too and allowing my self pity ride me mercilessly.

6:00pm

I can't lie, I'm very self aware and that's how I know what my problem is.

I managed to obtain 500 naira today, from all my toilings only 500.

You shouldn't be entitled to someone's money.

I'm going to buy 400 naira Suya and 100 naira bread, best food combo.

I must say that my fellow homeless brethren don't know anything about me, I don't give room to any type of conversation, I just observe them.

I know very well that I can save myself if I speak to someone about my predicament but I choose to keep mum.

What is wrong with me?

I have also noticed that I am not the only one addicted to sadness.

Some people's addiction came from the trend on mental health, because they loved the exclusivity being ill mentally gave you, they decide to make themselves sad, they decide to be triggered by the barest thing.

Things you would have overlooked, you decide to hold on to it, emphasize it, mentally destroy yourself by speaking ill about yourself, victimize yourself and then feel proud telling another person how low in spirit you are because probably their empathy would exalt you.

Crazy life.

This is not me trying to stop anyone though, it's just the reality. I with the sickness can't possibly bring the antidote; even if I know the antidote, I can't get around to using it.

7:00pm

I know you will be wondering how did I become poor, what made me homeless.

Well the bottom line I wanted you to hold on to was that my inability to be alive and be happy and have joy in my heart drove me to poverty.

Prior to my heart giving up on me, I didn't have much saved up because you know at a point in your life you would be so financially secure based on what you think the future has for you.

Forgetting that it can be against you any moment.

I was making money for a year under a week so obviously! I can't ever go broke but my illness proved me otherwise, I spent the whole money on my health, that whole talk about Nigerians being one step away from poverty because of a sickness became my reality.

And now I am too mentally not okay to search for a job, so am on the streets of Kaduna feeling entitled to other people's money.

Poor people have the greatest pride.

A sad person might just be topping that list.

Imagine a mixture of both?

Disaster.

I found myself having to disguise so I can get food to eat.

Why do I even need food?

Why not just starve myself and get rid of myself gently?

I guess I want to still be alive to prove to people how much their actions hurt me.

I'm such an entitled bitch.

It doesn't justify people's actions towards me sha.

I still have hope that something might change but until then

Hey sadness, till we see again, Goodnight!

