



SAVING MY OTHER MOTHER

by *Yesashimwe Néhémie, Rwanda*



Land,

You're my other mother. Through my biological mother, you fed me since I was a fetus. Your food reached me adequate, safe and healthy. Your water sources converged to me to smooth my throat and cool my lungs during the long drought. I never starved in your good times.

You're a heaven sent gift although I don't value your paramount role as I should. You never get tired or bored to have me on your back. As I grow up, I keep adding pressure on you with both my body and property load. You're okay with my regular footprint gullies, my truck's loud-shaky metals, and my frequent cultivation scratches. Despite my arrogance, you're always glad to serve me better regardless my origin.

My gratitude to you is endless. Everything I need is in your hands and you never hold it tight when I need it. Food, timber, gold, termites, and worms are your favorite resources that you let me access without a pay. You're a marvelous teacher that everyone in society should learn "how to change the world" from. In fact, you're an irreplaceable friend. If you lost forever, I would perish!

Today, I'm here for two reasons: regretting and restoring. I regret my misuse, carelessness, hate, and murder that I did to your ecosystem. I'm the one to accelerate stress to you. You show me signs and shout many times that that hurts but all I reply is "I don't care". I'm the best to persuade people to gain from you but the worst in contributing to your safety and sustainability. I injure your veins and flesh countless times which makes erosion your top striker resulting in your degradation and ultimate desertification. Your wounds and blood equal my survival.

I'm so sorry if I made you sad. I'm not trying to twist a knife in the wound I caused you. I want to express my apology and say that I'm changing for now and forever. I want to restore your dignity, your old- green beauty, and your old productive potential that used to keep my stomach satisfied. On the same damaged surface of yours, I see many ways to restore you; and it seems easy because I'm going to use part of you. I'm sure you can't refuse!

I have technology and time, strong people and various methods to do good to you, but most importantly I have you. Now, allow me to use some of your remaining soil and vegetation to halt water that erodes you whenever, wherever. I will avoid nakedness of your areas by filling all places with enough trees. I pledge to never again allow floods to wash you away without your will; I'll make sure you stay stable and strong against both natural and accelerated disasters. Then, I'll ask all your beneficiaries, me included, to give you respect and care that you deserve.

Lucky me to have you as a mother, Land