

Celebrating

THE LIFE OF
WILFRED MAINA OLWENYA



FADE IN;
18TH JAN
1988

FADE OUT;
4TH JULY
2022



ORDER OF SERVICE

**FOR THE LATE WILFRED MAINA OLWENYA
16TH JULY, 2022**

06.45 am: Arrival at Ruaraka Uhai Neema Funeral Home and viewing

07:30 am: Short prayer.

07:45 am: Departure from Uhai Neema.

08:45 am: Arrival at Gacharaigu Primary School Grounds.

10.00 am:

M.C – Tash Mitambo

- Welcoming guests
- Administration
- Eulogy; Antony Ndung'u

11.00 am: Mass commences;

Hymn readings; - 1st reading.

- Responsorial

- Gospel Acclamation.

- Gospel.

Homily.

Prayer of the faithful

TRIBUTES - Mother

- Adams

- Ray

- Mutha

- Friends' representative

- Industry representative

- Industry representative

- Cousin representative

- Uncle

Vote of thanks.

Recessional hymn.

Intermittent at family home.



SYNOPSIS

THIS IS NOT A EULOGY. It's a story. A story about a legend. An icon. A story told in an abnormal way because, what is normal? On the morning of 4th of July 2022, no one, absolutely no one, could have imagined that we'd be here today reading this. Mourning the great Wilfred Maina Olwenya. But here we are. The great Maina had not prepared us for this. Well, no one ever prepares for this passage. But one thing we're sure is, Olwenya would not have wanted his last story to be normal. He'd wanted a

different kind of feel – kind like **A THREE ACT STRUCTURE of a Play.**

Olwenya's **ACT 1** starts on January 18th 1988 – a Monday, at 2.am. Coincidentally, he passed on on a Monday.... Anyway, born at the Westlands Hospital, Maina was and is the second born of Papa John Ligoti and Mama Pauline Nyambura. A younger brother to Adams Olwenya – one of his favorite human beings ever. Separated by only two years, these two looked like twins – they were inseparable. Maina always respected and loved his brother Adams. Fun fact – Olwenya is Adam's name – Maina loved it, adopted it and turned it to be his. He always referred to his brother as 'Adams wangu'. Mama Maina remembers the interesting years of Maina growing up. She specifically remembers how she would leave Maina to rush to the shops but on coming back, anapatana na yeye kwa barabara. Crawling in the mud. Following her. That's how adventurous the young Maina was – something he held on to the end. Growing up in Kangemi, Ungem number 23, Maina's childhood is filled with lots of memories. Mum remembers the communal kind of upbringing that was in Kangemi. She laughs when she says that even though Maina and Adams were her biological sons, she was a mother of many – thanks to Maina. Almost half of Kangemi called her Mum. Akina Fidel, Freddy, Wesley, Alex, Sebo, Erick Moenga, Mhesh Samson Mundia, Dan, Moses Mutha Gatheca and Clyde Jesse are just some of the sons that she 'adopted' through Maina.

Anyone who knows Maina, knows how staunch a Catholic he was. This started at the St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, Kangemi. He received the sacraments of Baptism in 1998, Holy Communion in 1999 and Confirmation in the year 2000. He was a dedicated Mass Server from 1999 to 2006 and later joined the parish youth group and young adults respectively until 2013. He always wanted to become a priest... sijui kuliendaje. The church, specifically the catholic church, was his

safe space. He would regularly go to the sanctuary during weekdays to pray and sometimes to meditate. He would even, knowingly, take a nap in the church, pray, then leave. It gave him so much peace. "*Hio ni nyumba ya baba yangu na nikitaka kulala nitalala*" he would retort. '*Mimi nimetakaswa*', he would say after attending a mass. Catholic hymns were some of his favorite songs. Even later in his career, when performing, he would sing or ask for a Catholic Hymn to accompany his performance. '*Uninyunyuzie maji, bwanaaa....*' was one of his favorites. Ray remembers how he would teach her the songs while teasingly telling her '*Wewe gaidi haujui hizi wimbo?*'. During his last minutes on earth, while scaling that dreadful staircase, Olwenya was joyfully singing a Catholic song. Mama Maina was also, unknowingly, humming to '*Rekei akahuruke, tigai kumuririra...*' – a Catholic dirge, at almost the same time. Premonition? Maybe. But that was Maina Wilfred Olwenya – the Cradle Catholic.

Apart from a few incidences, Olwenya's school life was smooth. He was cheeky, but also bright. Olwenya alikua wale wa kudanganya watoto wengine wacheze na kumbe yeye ameshasoma. When exams came, his '*playing friends*' would be nowhere close to him performance-wise. Mum remembers a time she was summoned to school because the rate at which students, led by Maina, were playing football, was of concern. She remembers how his school, Kangemi Primary School, had to ban football ndio watoto wasome. His secondary school years in Gacharaigu Secondary School and Akiba High school shaped him to be the man he was. He was at one time a school captain at Akiba High. His influence and charisma date from back then.

In plays, **ACT 2** is always the longest and the heaviest – and this is not different to Maina's life. His second act begins after high school. Maina didn't go to a normal University, he attended the most important one.... The University of Life! His brother Adams, who had cleared school before him and had started acting in his early years, literally dragged him to The Kenya National Theatre immediately after he cleared high school. And that is all that he wanted! Someone to hold his hand. He instantly propelled and became the most sought out Actor in the world of set-books. Name all the famous set books performed in schools between 2006 and 2007 and you'll find Olwenya's performances engraved in memories –

Shylock in the Merchant of Venice, Dr. Stockman in An Enemy of the people, ODI in Shreds of Tenderness just to mention a few. And that was just the beginning. He transitioned from set books to Public Theatre in 2008 and joined Heartstrings Kenya. This is where he cemented his acting and voice career. He was working among industry giants at the age of twenty, was being tasked with being a main character and was commanding a great audience. He was a master in his craft. His peers remember how fluid and spontaneous he was on stage. Alikua ana-surprise watu during performances, making them laugh even when they're supposed to be serious. While acting on stage alongside Olwenya, you would for a minute forget that you're an actor and start watching him. Maina was great!

It is from that same stage that he was picked as Radio Jambo's station voice – replacing the legendary Sam Otieno. You might be familiar with... *"Tuliwaulizaaa..." 'Ni mbusi na Lion ndani ya teke teke....'* That was Maina! Deutsch Welle-Radio Drama, MTV- Shuga 2 radio drama series are some of the other voice-acting projects that he was involved in.

He trained with - One Fine Day Films, Voice and screen acting by Chun Mei Tan, Institute of Security Studies - Addis Ababa, National Organization of Peer Education among other art workshops. He always said that he wanted to go back to school and acquire a degree... Si mnaona kitu degree inafanyia Sakaja?

His big breakthrough came in the form of NAIROBI HALF LIFE where he portrayed the character OTI. Maina became an international talent. Arguably the best in Kenya and the whole of Africa. If we were to state all the Films, TV series, Artistic projects and plays that Maina has featured in, we would run out of pages. He has worked with The Festival of Creative Arts as an actor and a director, The Phoenix Theatre, has been in over 30 films, short films and commercials all over Africa. Painful Prick, East, Terra Firma, Shades of Love, Fifth Estate, Shuga, Mali, Poacher, Kingz, Guy Center, Tumaini Centre, Gunpoint, Mali, Dead end job, Thankyou Football- Barclays Premier League commercial, Airtel Zambia commercial, Sheria Music video are just a few of the projects that he was involved in. His most recent TV project being Country Queen – currently on Netflix.

Apart from being an amazing human being and actor, some of his other accolades are Best Stage Actor, Sanaa Awards 2016, Nominated for Lead actor Kalasha Awards 2014, Nominated for Nairobi Half Life Africa Movie Academy Awards 2013, Nominated for Nairobi Half Life- best supporting

actor- Kalasha Awards 2012, Nominated for Nairobi Half Life- best supporting actor- Africa Film Development Awards 2013, Featured in FilmBiz Africa magazine 'crème de la crème of acting in Africa' 2012.... Kalasha Awards, this guy needs an award!

Maich was a lover of life, a friend, a funny man, a mysterious dude, an Arsenal and Gor Mahia fan. At least when disappointed by Arsenal, he would find solace in Gor... Arsenal tafadhali shindeni kikombe sasa! He was adventurous and loved travelling. He would take long walks when in need of his alone time. Maina was also a great cook! Vyombo tu ndio hakua anapenda kuosha. He would spend his free time reading huge novels, weird stuff like the Indian Bible na *'vitabu hazimake sense'* as Ray put it. When not listening to Catholic hymns, we would probably be listening to FELA KUTI. If you're unlucky to be close to him at this time, he would give you a whole lecture about 'Fela Anikulapo Kuti'. *'Huyu ni Mbaba...'* he would say. A term that he, alongside *'Adams Wake'* coined. Anytime the term **'MBABA'** is mentioned, it is likened to Olwenya. *Mbaba, Kaka, Banyenje, Maich, Olwenda* are just some of the names that he answered to.

Banyenje spent his last years in the company of Rachael Saitabao. Ray. She remembers the last few years as pure bliss. They were conjoined at the hip – did everything together. Fourteen years after Maina did his first show at Heartstrings, he recently made a comeback. He had been working on a play, assisting Sammy Mwangi in directing it. He was excited to be back. His glow had resurfaced. Ray says he was happy and was always looking forward to the next rehearsal. On the 4th of July 2022, he was scheduled to attend a rehearsal, he never did. Ray sighs when she remembers the fateful day. Still surreal. She recalls him singing a Catholic Hymn. Playfully dancing. Then there was silence. And just like that, Wilfred Maina Olwenya had exited the stage, though prematurely.

This is an unusual play. One that doesn't have an **ACT 3**. One that ended too early. Unexpectedly. In the middle of ACT 2! Ni sawa tu Olwenya. 'Every story has an end, but in life, every ending is a new beginning'.

You will forever live in our hearts Maina. Uroma ma kwega kuraga.

PICTORIALS.







Maina Olwenya

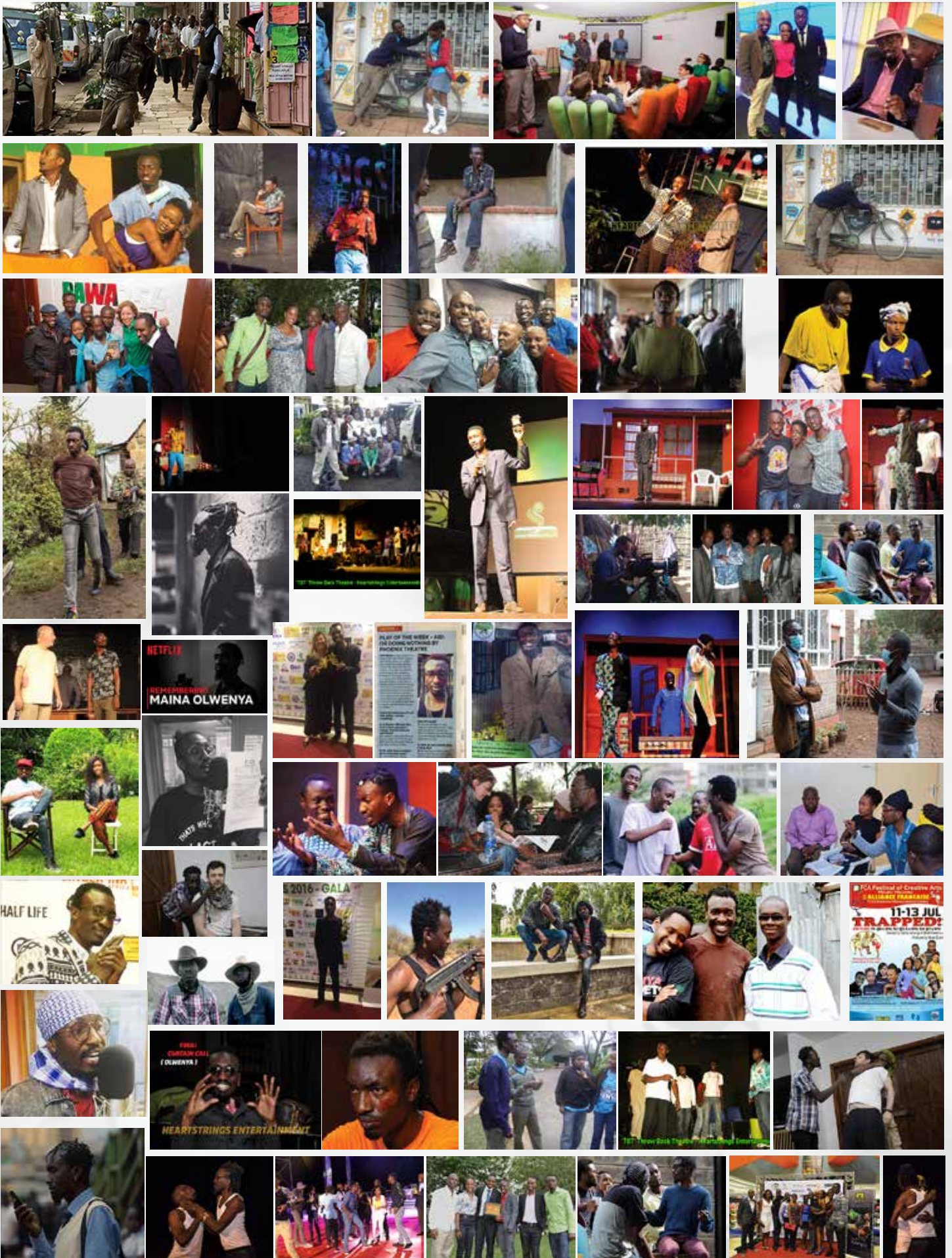
There's nothing new under the sun,
but there are lots of old things we don't know.

-Andreas Bierce

www.mainaolwenya.com



Career



TRIBUTES.

My dear son Maina.

My son, when I gave birth you, you were a source of joy and happiness. I will miss your humbleness and the respect you had for the young, old, short, tall, everyone. You accorded respect to all. You were a jovial child. Always trying to find a way in this world.

I remember how you used to bring your friends at home and have them sleep over and tell stories the whole night. I will miss your impromptu home visits. How you used to enter the house silently and shout 'MUM'. How I used to count you for dinner even though I knew you were not going to show up and wait on you to come home. I will miss your sense of humor, laughter, kindness, respect and above all the respect you had for me and for everyone around you.

My son you promised me a lot of things, a better future, taking me for trips and shows. You promised me to put up a business for me. Now that you gone, where do I start? You had said you will take me to Nanyuki and surprise me with a fully furnished house. Where are you now my son? I remember how you were so hopeful that one day you would make it in life and improve all our lives. You used to remind me that I am your mother and father and I was the only one who would stick with you no matter what situation you were in.

You used to call me ' MAITU NYAMBURA' asking me 'KATOTO KANGU' WATINDA ATIA'. I will miss those phone calls and text messages asking me about my whereabouts. Since I got that call on that Monday evening, I have been hopeful and praying you would wake up and I will take you home and cook for you.

I will greatly miss you my son Willy.

May you rest in eternal peace until we see each other again that early morning.

I love you, my son.

Bro,

It hurts heavy, it's burdensome and a bitter pill to swallow knowing you'll never be here. Knowing that you are gone and that I'll have to accept that fact. Am broken and I can't fix it. We've been brothers. People thought we were twins, some even said you are my elder. We were more than friends. I hope you've noticed that today I'm in a suit. You know I've never loved suits but this one is for you. I know you are gone but I can't say goodbye. You will forever live in my heart as you've always been. Our growing up, our happy moments, our sad, disagreeing and hard

moments will forever remain with me. Your memories will live forever Maina.

Fare thee well bro! You'll be missed.

Ray's Tribute.

I have written you countless poems and notes, yet it took me forever to write this. Maybe because if I write a tribute, then I would be admitting that you're never coming home. I found a song I like yesterday and the first thought was, I can't wait to play this song until you like it too. You have broken me in ways I never thought possible and I don't think am ever coming back from this. You taught me a love so pure, you didn't give up on me, not once, despite me being really hard to deal with. You taught me how to love you and I hope I loved you right. I hope even as you took your last breath you knew how much I love you.

Mutha's Tribute.

There are people who nikiwaambia that you're not my blood brother watasema ninadanganya. We are not related by Blood but in you I found a brotherly love that I never had. In you I found a teacher. You gave without limits, without expecting anything in return. No matter how annoying you were at times, I still got your back and you got mine.

As you fly with the angels remember to watch over us, to protect us, to spread your spirit to us. I promise to make you happy with your teachings, to create like my life depends on it because it surely does.

I'll miss you so Much My Bro, My Mentor, My Best Actor of all times, My Fam, My Best Friend, The Best to ever do it, The Legend! Sleep well Mbaba.

I Will Love you forever Bruv.

Clyde's Tribute.

The life given to us by Nature is short, but the memories of the days we've spent are eternal.

Fare thee well Kaka. You'll be missed.

Wesly's (Wisoo) Tribute

Maish, bro, it's been a while. I may be in denial coz I keep hoping to wake up from this nightmare. It's unimaginable that we have to go from playing soccer together, to me saying goodbye. How do I say goodbye to a brother, a great friend? How do I replace you? How do I complete a tribute, while you've left us incomplete? I will miss you, terribly, but you'll always be in my heart, and thoughts. Rest in peace bro, forever love.

Sammy Mwangi's Tribute on behalf of The Industry.

The universe called for an audition.

A casting call.

A casting call for a project of the play entitled life. Requirements were that one must be tall dark and Olwenya-ish.

Must be dedicated present and available for the entire duration of the project.

You came for the auditions, even before the directors.

In a matter-of-factly way, you told them with your to-die-voice, 'siwa-need, nyinyi ndio mnani-need'.

The universe then gave you a monologue to recite. Swiftly you pulled out your own dialogue of life.

The hundreds of the artists you met there were thrilled.

The delivery of your life's monologue left everyone wordless and inspired.

Your talent, encouraging: your dedication, admirable: your zeal, unmatched: your discipline, exemplary and your commitment, dependable.

So the play of life was finally on stage.

You came, you performed and you conquered. As in like any great play, the curtains have to be closed and leave you behind as everyone in front of you, watches.

Everyone who admired you, loved you, looked up to you.

With heavy hearts, we now release you to take up your next performance, alone.

And now, friend, all of us gathered here will stand on our feet and give you our last standing ovation for your life's sterling performance.

Tonnin - Radio production Manager Radio Africa Group.

We at Radio Jambo are deeply sorry for the Demise of Wilfred Maina Olwenya. Wilfred served as our Station Voice for Radio Jambo for close to 10years. He was a creative guru and had the greatest Radio Voice. On behalf of Radio Jambo and Radio Africa Management we condole with his Family, Friends and Loved ones. RIP Aturkan (How we used to call him)

Tina Kaggia's Tribute.

When I saw the trailer for Nairobi Half Life, I had to watch it. I went to the cinema at Nakumatt junction and when I watched it, I fell in love with Olwenya. He was powerful. He owned his character. I found him on Facebook and was shocked when he responded to my message. I ended up watching it 5 times on big screen hadi the popcorn lady asked me if my partner was in the

movie. Eventually, we got to meet. This man! We instantly hit it off. He became my friend and hang-out buddy. At some point we both worked at Radio Africa. He always came to say hi after he was done with his voice overs at Radio Jambo. We had great times at Bavaria, Sip n Lip and literally any place we met. One thing I will always treasure about Olwenya is his heart. This man was so brilliant and all his energy flowed from his heart. I remember our first meet up; he'd promised me an autographed DVD. Maina I never got it but I know you'll have one for me on the other side. You will be eternally loved and missed. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for the Magic you did on screen. Thank you for teaching me that everything is possible.

May the industry learn and live through you. Your authenticity flowed through your work and your personal life. I miss you

Aunt Nellius

My nephew I could not believe the news that you were no more. You went without saying goodbye. I wish I had the last moment with you. I remember how I used to call you my father and how you responded back by calling me 'NDUNGE'.

I remember how you were so full of life; I remember your laughter and how you always encouraged me when you found me low.

I will forever miss you

Rest in peace

Tata Wanja

Maina, níngíenda múno útúre míaka míngí. Úratúire úhete gítío na kúnjíta 'TATA' ngaigua ngenete.

Ria múico kwaria waugire níuríuka gwakwa únjerere. No Wendi wa Ngai naguo ní úngí. Ngútúra ngwendete muno Maina.



HYMNS

Nimevipiga vita vizuri,
Mwendo wangu nimeumaliza
Nayo imani nimeilinda
Natarajia kupewa taji na Bwana.
Nikitazama nyuma sijuti hata
Nimejifunza kusahau yaliyopita
Sasa najisukuma kwa yaliyo mbele
Nikimfuata Yesu mwokozi wangu
Nimevipiga vita vizuri,
Mwendo wangu nimeumaliza
Nayo imani nimeilinda
Natarajia kupewa taji na Bwana
Japo imani yangu imetikiwa
Mimi nimeshikiliwa na Yesu wangu
Hata wakiniacha rafiki zangu
Siri mimi niko na Imanueli
Nimevipiga vita vizuri,
Mwendo wangu nimeumaliza
Nayo imani nimeilinda
Natarajia kupewa taji na Bwana
Nifuateni, nifuatatavyo Yesu
Yeye ni mwanzo na mwisho wa imani yetu
Msishawishike na ulimwengu upitao
Tuvipige vita vizuri
Nimevipiga vita vizuri,
Mwendo wangu nimeumaliza
Nayo imani nimeilinda
Natarajia kupewa taji na Bwana

Bwana u sehemu yangu,

Rafiki yangu, wewe,
Katika safari yangu,
Tatembea na wewe.

Pamoja na wewe,
Pamoja na wewe,
Katika safari yangu,
Tatembea na wewe.

Mali hapa sikutaka,
Ili niheshimiwe,
Na yanikute mashaka,
Sawasawa na wewe.

Pamoja na wewe,
Pamoja na wewe,
Heri nikute mashaka,
Sawasawa na wewe.

Niongoze safarini,
Mbele unichukue,
Mlangoni mwa mbinguni,
Niingie na wewe.

Pamoja na wewe,
Pamoja na wewe,
Mlangoni mwa mbinguni,
Niingie na wewe.

Dunia hii imejaa dhiki na vikwazo
Jipe moyo katika bwana×1
Dunia hii imejaa chuki na fitina
Jipe moyo katika bwana×1
Umesingiziwa jambo ambalo hujalifanya
Jipe moyo katika bwana×1
Umefutwa kazi hata bila sababu
Jipe moyo katika bwana×1
Jipe moyo
Jipe moyo
Bwana yesu amekuona×2
Kusoma umesoma lakini huna kaazi
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Kulima umelima lakini mavuno hakuna
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Moyo wako umejaa mafikiria mengi sana
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Utakula nini, utavaa nini, utalala waapi
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Jipe moyo
Jipe moyo
Bwana yesu amekuona×2
Umekaribia harusi, mchumba wako amegeuka eeh
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Miezi tisa sasa mume wako hayuko nyumbani
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Jipe moyo maana mkombozi wako bado yuhai
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Usife moyo ndugu
Usife moyo dada
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Hujapata mtoto kwa miaka mingi sana
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Hata biashara zako zote zimefilisolisika
Jipe moyo katika bwana
Jipe moyo
Jipe moyo
Bwana yesu amekuonaaa×3

Ni Hari Mucii

1. Ni hari mucii twetagiria guthii
Na tutingihota kuingira tuhu
Tutakuite miti itu ya kwambiro
Na thutha turumirire Muhonokia

(Yesu) Yesu niaraturia, tumurumirire
na twambe twirege na tukue mutharaba.
(uguo riu mundu wothe ukwenda)
kuhonokia muoyo wake, niaute niundu
wa Mwathani, ningi aute niundu wa in Ijiri
yake.

2. O mundu ari na muoyo wa kuhonokia
No angika atia niguu akiuhonokie?
Mwendi kuhonoka ta -niambe we erege,
Ningi akue mutharaba wa kwambirwo.

3. Ona thi yothe ingituika ni yaku,
Ndungihota kuhonokia mwoyo waku.
Ungigunika nikumitiganiria
Niundu wa Mwathani na Injiri yake.



Life is a brief intermission between birth and death.
Enjoy it.

