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Standard Edition

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Dear Friends,

It's been a long time coming since I wrote something new for Damola's blog, and since the effects of **my last article** have long worn out – here goes nothing:

Over the past few months I've had so much to write about. I moved out of my home for the summer, I got a great summer job, I feel closer to God, I have a very interesting roommate, I made some new amazing friends, and most of all my romance chart has been at an all-time high. So why haven't I put my feather pen on a sheet of crusty paper yet?

The answer is simple – **I've got no time.**

See, when things were just okay for me and my life was kinda mediocre, I'd write about all the things I wished I had or how someone new had broken my heart; I'd write about how I wanted perfect grades and a good job; I'd write about how I felt like I had no friends and I was alone in the world.

A Writer's Dilemma

Well I've figured two things out this summer: The first is that I get inspired when I'm really sad or extremely happy, and the second is that its very hard to write when the latter is the case. As you will all soon learn, having almost everything you've ever wanted comes with a catch. In my case, I've got barely any time for the little things I used to love doing. A nice job means I'm always working; new friends means that when I'm not working (or even sometimes when I am working) my phone and skype are ringing off the hook (sometimes simultaneously); and having a boyfriend means that for at least 25% of a day my head just wants to chill in the clouds and daydream.

I've got a million things on my mind and trying to organize them is a very odious task. In the midst of all this, I've been wanting to write about how I think my roommate is pissed at me because "I'm never around", how I'm starting to read my bible again, how my surprising relationship began, and how I think I might be in love. But all I've been able to spoon out of my head and dish into [LibreOffice Writer](#) (kinda like MS Word for Linux) is this article. **What exactly is this article anyway?**

A Writer's Dilemma

Some days I feel like I'm being spread too thin – I'm just a little knife swab of butter and everyone is trying to get some of me on their large slices of bread. And I want to be on your slices of bread – I really do! But I'm just one swab of butter. I can't be everywhere at once no matter how hard I want to be. I guess this is a cry for help. I'll do everything I've promised I'll do – I'll write, and I'll read, and I'll cook and clean, and I'll run those errands and reply those emails – **I just need time.**

Sincerely,

Ekene May Arinze

Do it Yourself

July's release of Red String articles are quite interesting. They talk about the many changes we go through in life as well as those things that can not change. So with that, I will add my own two cents. There have been a lot of changes in my life these last two months. I have found not just one but two jobs as well as moved into a new apartment with my boyfriend Mike.

It has been hectic, but my jobs fit perfectly with my schedule. Not only do I have weekends off to spend with Mike, but some days a week, I have a few hours before work to spend alone, and he has a few hours alone to spend doing things like programming, and other computer things. We moved into an amazing two bedroom apartment with a backyard and there is more square footage than my budget or time can fill. So I've had a few things in mind.

While time is sometimes flexible, my take home pay remains generally the same at the end of each week. So I have to find a way to make my new home not only functional but beautiful. I always want things that they don't make in stores. Or I see something I would want if only it was just a little bit different. An extra foot or two wider, a different color. Sometimes it's perfect functionally but either plain or just plain boring. So I decided that instead of settling for less than perfect, everything in my home would be custom built.

Do it Yourself

Sounds like a great idea. Except, a few other problems come to mind. I can buy as many fancy tools from a hardware store as I want, but I am definitely not the handiest. Ideas are one thing, but execution is another. I am not a carpenter, and this isn't Nigeria, so I can't afford a carpenter. So, instead of making things from scratch, my new idea is to buy things and change them.

I thought I was being quite ingenious, but as it turns out, real genius isn't handed out to just anybody. With my online search I found out that there is a whole world out there of people buying **IKEA** furniture and kits, throwing away the manual and making what they will out of what they have.

- <http://www.instructables.com>
- <http://www.ikeahackers.net>

Do it Yourself

Check for yourself. Do a little research. There is a lot out there that you can do and feel proud of. You never know, your skills may extend beyond becoming a doctor, a lawyer, or even a scientist. you might have within you different persons that may know how to use a screwdriver, saw, sandpaper, bucket of paint and brush. Maybe even a needle and thread.

You could find out that you're a genius and an inventor. Plus, if you invite some people **it might even be fun**. At the least, it may be relaxing. Here's my latest project that I made in a few minutes, not including waiting for the stain to dry.

In case you can't tell, they are old saloon doors that I turned into earring holders. It keeps them organized, easier to find and I think it's kind of nice.



Backwards Compatibility

As a "computer person," it is an unspoken rule that I need to be on top of current technological events. Frankly speaking, I am terrible at this. I usually learn the latest news, not from tech news, but from friends in related fields. Granted, this is still in most cases, before the rest of you.

Yet it is not very often I hear a news item of technological advancement that elicits more than an enthusiastic "cool," "awesome," or "wow!" But the other day I heard something that evoked an entirely different response - and that response was of concern.

It all started with this headline from [TechCrunch](#) shared by my friend Osas Faluyi:

Yep, Apple killed the CD Today.

Backwards Compatibility

Certainly, this headline was not entirely unexpected. CD's, DVD's, and optical disks in general have been dying a very slow death in the developed world as everything moves "to the cloud."

Outside of video games and computers, buying disks for anything else is not even worth the trouble anymore. Not when you can legally (or otherwise) stream and download media. Not when you can legally (or otherwise) get it on a USB. And certainly not when you can do this for free! ~~Legally~~, or otherwise.

So the death of optical disks in themselves wasn't the issue. The issue was that having spent the last 6 months back home in Nigeria made me examine what that means for this environment. And subsequently, what it means for third world countries in general. It means, the beginning of the end of our backwards compatibility.

Backwards Compatibility

You see for software developers, the idea of backwards compatibility is the bane of our existence. To make something backwards compatible is to make new (and ostensibly better) technology able to handle the products of an older technology. For example MS Word 2010 uses a .docx format but is still able to open the .doc files of MS Word '97. Meaning that despite improvements on the technology, we still have to maintain old code. Why!?

Because the truth of the matter is that backwards compatibility is a necessary evil. It is backwards compatibility that allows old users to use our new applications despite having **legacy data**. It is this support that thus provides them with some continuity, and helps to carry them along.

But even backwards compatibility moves forward eventually. And when that happens, older users (usually by a few versions) need to either move forth, or get left behind.

Backwards Compatibility

Now in my opinion, the technological relationship between the developed world and the rest of the world is of a similar nature. They release new cutting-edge technology and we (the old users) rely on backwards compatibility until we can catch up. If we advance at a decent pace then we will remain covered by the backwards compatible veil and if not... Well time may just tell.

Because while optical drives are dying off in America, they are still very much driving data transactions in Nigeria. Even with our recent advances in broadband and Internet supply, we are still miles away from moving to the cloud. In fact, we are still miles away from seeing the cloud at all.

The majority of Nigerians are still struggling with the concept of integrating the computer into their daily lives. Using word editors, spreadsheet applications, and presentation software, is still a major problem. Talk less of going online to do anything.

Backwards Compatibility

But even for the small minority who are technology savvy, the infrastructure just isn't there to make moving to the cloud a viable choice. It's coming along, but it isn't there yet.

This means that the trailblazing advance of technology in developed nations, coupled with the snail-like pace we have here, is creating an ever increasing technological gap that will soon exceed the competencies of backward compatibility.

Which is to say the we the under-developed world, will soon be at a cross-roads. At which point it is all too likely that we, will all get left behind.

So my question to you is: "What happens then?"

World of Goo

So every once in a while I go through the blog and do things like optimize post tags, review drafts, identify new design needs, etc. In doing so, I often end up going through some of my older posts. This time around while doing that, I stumbled upon an unfulfilled promise.

If you remember back in December I was very much on an iPad gaming high. I talked about [Infinity Blade](#) and [Chaos Rings](#), and then I promised to talk about World of Goo the following month... but I never got around to it. So here are my thoughts on World of Goo.

Frankly, [World of Goo for iPad](#) has been a letdown for me in a way that is difficult to articulate. On the face of it, I think [2Dboy](#) did all the right things. I think the game looks amazing, it sounds fantastic, and it even plays well, as [many others around the world would agree](#). So what's the problem?

World of Goo

The problem is this: When I play games on my iPad and indeed on any mobile device, I usually don't want to think. **I want to relax.**

Unlike gaming on **traditional game consoles** where I aim to engage myself, when I game on mobile devices, I often want to do much the opposite. Be it on my iPad, or my iPod touch, or even my HTC incredible, I find that when I play games on them I am usually looking to kill time or to unwind. This means that games such as World of Goo which require strategy and some forethought become less and less appealing the further I progress in the game.

Because as I advance through the levels, the game becomes more and more difficult – and the more difficult it is, the less likely that I will continue playing it. As a result, World of Goo got shelved barely 3 weeks after I purchased it. Every now and again I have another go at it - and soon after I return it back to the "shelf" feeling frustrated, and angry.

World of Goo

Now here's where it gets complicated. My two most played games on the iPad so far are **Scrabble**, and **Plants vs. Zombies**. Both of which it can be argued require some strategy, and both of which it can be argued require some forethought. So what is it really about World of Goo that gets on my nerves? I honestly can't say.

What I can say is this: That World of Goo definitely seems like a great game for anyone who loves strategy games. For me however, it requires too much brain power; and it has so far caused me more frustration than it is worth.

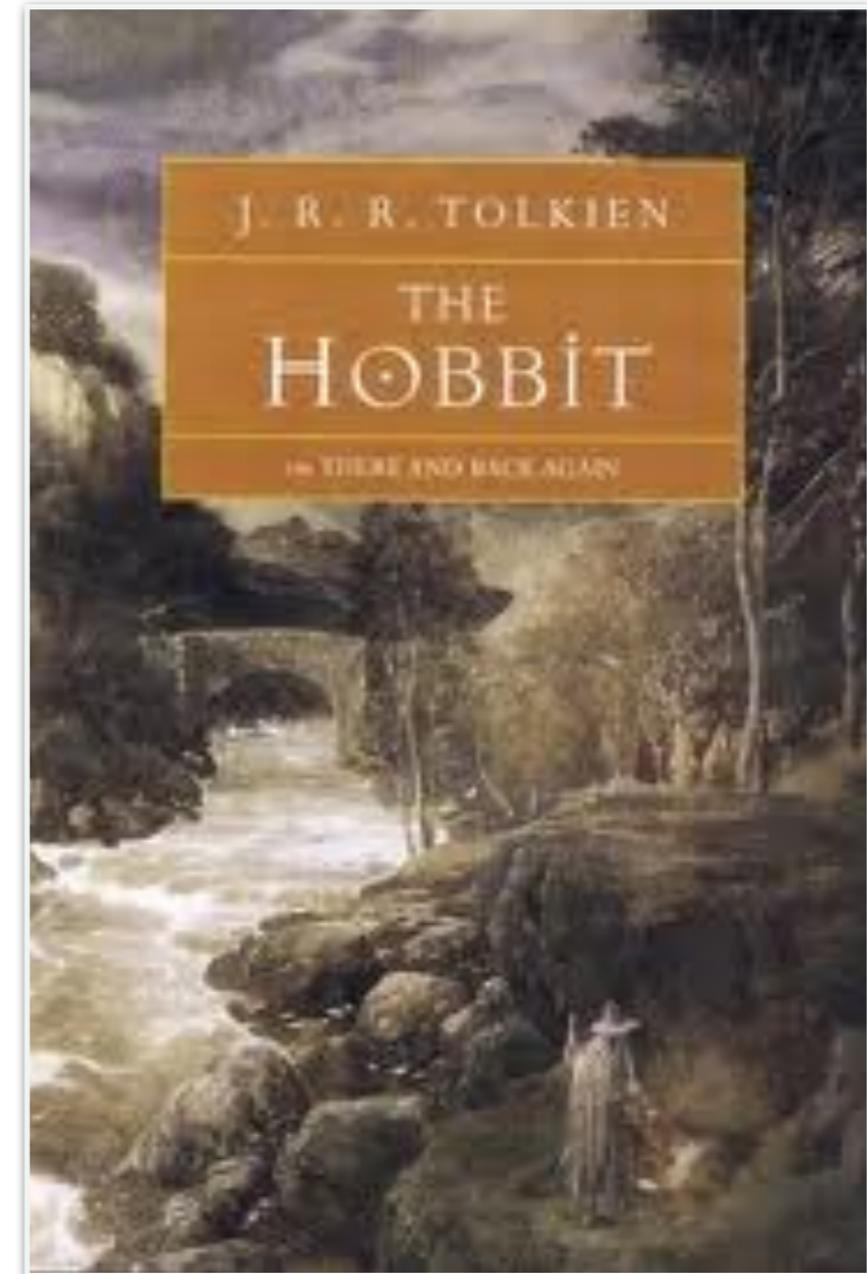
The Hobbit

My latest conquest in the world of Fantasy-Fiction novels is the prelude to the well known **Lord of The Rings** series by **J.R.R Tolkien** entitled, **The Hobbit**.

I gained a whole new respect for J.R.R while reading this book. In it we find an adventure, one might even say an adventure of epic proportions. But it is told in a way that starkly differs from The Lord of The Rings. It is full of song and poetry and mirth - and the contrast despite the similarity, highlights the versatility of the author within this genre.

The book tells the story of Bilbo Baggins of Bag-End (Frodo's Uncle) and his colourful journey from his comfortable home under the hill in Hobbiton, to the bejeweled cave of Smaug the dragon. It tells of how he came to meet Gandalf, outsmarted the creature called Gollum, made it through the forests of Mirkwood, and robbed blind the most feared dragon in all the land.

The Hobbit is as humorous as it is colourful, and in reading it, I was always entertained. At 271 pages, it makes for great reading.



Art for Fun

Every year in New York City, with the beginning of warm weather, – well it's getting warmer earlier, so let's just say the beginning of June – artists of the city take over an abandoned island called **Governors Island**. The island was most recently used as residence for the **United States Coast Guards** and was closed in 1996 for financial reasons. In 2003 they transferred it to the State of New York, who still hasn't figured out what to do with it. The admirals of the Coast Guard who once lived in those now empty mansions could not have imagined that once a year their homes would become a meeting ground for ravers and hippies, hipsters, DJ's, artists and so much more of New York City's "underground" residents.

The event, which lasts a weekend, is free for all to enter. It is an interactive and participatory oasis of art called **FIGMENT**. Figment organizers describe their goal as "celebrat(ing) an abundance of creativity and passion, challenging artists and our communities to create, share, think and dream."

Now, why am I bringing this up?



Art for Fun

One reason is of course to tell you about a pretty cool day I had. But also to ask, being that this is currently a Nigerian based blog, does Nigeria have something like this? Anything relatively organized? Do artists take a whole year to work on pieces, interactive as well as not, for one event? Something that they won't make any money from? That's free? Is there somewhere that people can just go, and maybe they spend some money on food, but really its a free exhibit of art.

I'm not sure, but if there isn't, wouldn't it be nice for there to be one? It's possible. Not just because anything is possible, but because there are so many talented people in Nigeria, so many artists. Maybe there should be one day a year that you don't have to blow N20,000 to have a good time.

I have included photos of that day, so that you can see the type of things that were there, and hopefully, it can inspire aspiring artists as well as professional artists.

Art for fun, not for profit.



Journey to Self

Going down the only road I've ever known

I was drifting off to sleep and contemplating as to how I could manage to accept my fate gracefully. I followed the same steps that I have followed so many times before when constructing my lonely dream world.

It starts off with a modest and cozy home; something I have always wished for. A backyard with a view. Some trees and wild life. A small swing-set - not aluminum - wooden and with only two swings. However only one usually gets used. Then in the far corner is the small pond with fish and a comfortable bench to sit and relax the time away. That is my usual construction. I have been through this many times trying to find peace.

Journey to Self

Like a drifter I was born to walk alone

This particular night as I entered into a deep sleep, slowly constructing my world, it changed. Instead of a pond, it was a well. Not the strictly utilitarian kind. It was a marvel in and of itself. The top of the well was recessed into the ground about three feet. On one side of the recess, a semi-circle of stone steps were built. There were only three steps of such a height that they could also make nice seats for enjoying the view of this magnificent well.

I didn't plan this part of my lonely dream world. I don't even know where the idea came from. But I was ever so curious and the well was magnificent and mesmerizing. I stepped down those three steps. I stood at the edge of the well. The water was so clear that you could see all the way to the bottom.

Journey to Self

I'm just another heart in need of rescue

That was when the scene changed. I was now in the well. But the well had turned on its side so that I was now standing on the wall of the well. I looked down at my feet and saw the bricks that had made up the walls of the well disappear. It was replaced with blue skies above me in a circular shape that conformed to the shape of the well.

The walls of the well to my left had melted away and were now replaced with the regal head of the Phoenix and the tips of his partially outstretched wings. To my right was the brilliant plumage of the Phoenix's tail. I looked down and realized that I was now walking on the belly of the Phoenix. Everything still conforming to the circular shape of the well.

- End Part 5 -

Priceless

Security deposit – \$850

Monthly rent and utilities – \$700

Walking about naked in your very own apartment – **Priceless**

Matchmaker fee – \$200

Wedding hall and dress – \$2000

Always having a date to parties and all that – **Priceless**

Priceless

Used car – \$4000

Regular check-ups and gas – \$400

Singing along to whatever radio station you want – **Priceless**

DUI ticket – \$109

Lawyer fees and bail – \$1600

Having a best friend around after the heartbreak – **Priceless**

Priceless

Gym membership – \$150

Fat-free foods and snacks – \$1500

Giving Queen B a run for her money – **Priceless**