



Stanford Lake College

Valediction 2009

Mr. Jack [Programme Director], Mrs. Baleta [Chairman of the Board of Trustees], Mr Malherbe [Guest Speaker], Stanfordians

Valediction is an exceptional occasion. As always, I find myself hovering between emotions of sheer joy, tremendous pride and complete depression as I say thank you, congratulations and good bye to a wonderful group of students.

Last year I recited the poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling. On this occasion it will be the Auden poem “Funeral Blues”, which came into its own again after the movie “Four Weddings and a Funeral” – one of my all time favourites.

I have amended some of the words of this famous love poem to suit our feelings regarding our guests of honour today.

*Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.*

*Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.*

*They were our North, our South, our East and West,
Our working week and our Sunday rest,
Our moon, our midnight, our talk, our song;
I thought that love would last forever; I was wrong.*

*The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:
For nothing now can ever come to any good.*

GROWING TOGETHER FOR LIFE

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Let us rather look at it as a wedding. We will recall the footprint you have left for many years. I will miss the eloquent and intelligent speeches of outstanding debaters: Mosima, Panashe, Lulu; the genius of Sesitwa and others and the sound of the many goals the boys and girls have scored this year; both our u/19 relay teams dashing for the line during inter high; our girls destroying the opposition in the most exciting continuous relay; our spirit; the guts of Nicky, Ross, Sean and Kelsey winning last year's adventure race; our Limpopo rugby champions, the excitement of watching Kgoshi and Ryan scoring one brilliant try after the other, Kgosi with gladiator like strength, a la Pierre Spies and Ryan, a la Brian Habana.

We are indeed looking forward to the excellent results you will produce in the coming examinations. This will be the cherry on top of the cake of a good year! Good Luck and knuckle down!

Thank you to our excellent teachers, who have worked with you all. Thanks to our parents for their support!

I will conclude with some verses of Robert Browning's "*Rabbi ben Ezra*", one of my Matric poems.

*GROW old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"
Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"*

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*So, take, and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!*

Thank you

Johann Ueckermann)
HEADMASTER