



**16 Women.
16 Stories.
16 Commitments**

A photo exhibition



SRHR Africa Trust
GENDER EQUAL YOUTH HEALTH



AMPLIFYCHANGE



16 DAYS
OF ACTIVISM AGAINST
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

16 women, 16 stories and 16 commitments is a concept that uses the 16 days of activism mark to address the real Gender Based Violence stories happening in the community. 16 women, 16 stories, 16 commitments is about creating a safe space for young women to share their experiences. Through performance and poetry reading storytelling and monologues, young women get a chance to express themselves fully regarding their bodies and sexuality. This initiative seeks to bring women from different backgrounds in life together to share their perspective and stories about Gender Based Violence.

Once the lived realities of women have been told, the main focus is around enhancing the advocacy work that is already being done and also finding mechanisms to prevent and end Gender Based Violence and ensure full support for survivors. 16 women, 16 stories and 16 commitments provides social commentary on women and girls' daily struggles and victories through the use of the arts and photography for social justice.



From the faces we have never seen to the memories that stay with us

December 17 is the day he raped me. I burnt the rug but the memory of this still lingers in my head.....

I was 12. My father was a builder and he had gone to Marondera. It was just me and my brother at home. I left the door unlocked since my father was coming back that night. We slept. My little brother woke me up because he wanted to watch tv. I went back to sleep a few minutes after he had woken me up. I remember waking up with a rug forced against my face. A man whose face I did not see was pressing me down. I could not move. I could not scream. He forced his penis inside me. I could only let out a sound when he was already finished. My brother ran. I was bleeding. We ran to the neighbors. They took me to the police. From the police we went to the clinic.

I was treated, but no one believed me..... *(starts to cry)* How did I not see his face? Even my father said I was lying. Two weeks later I started itching. Peeing was unpleasant. I went back to the clinic. I had gonorrhoea. They said my uterus was rotten. Conceiving was going to be hard. I was treated and went back home. I had no more friends. No one wanted to play with the girl who got "raped" I tried to hang myself. What hurt me the most is that no one believed me. Even the police

My rapist was never found.
I still don't know his face.

The curtain in between

Tell me about your self

"I am 15 year old girl . I sell sex. (Giggles) I am making money. Short time is \$3"

So you're making money!

"Yes! I went to town and bought plates and cups yesterday" (shows clear excitement)

Who do you stay with?

"With my friend who sells sex too, she is 14"

When you both have clients at the same time what do you do?

"We divide the room with a curtain"

How do you block the noise?

"We play the radio. I can still hear them sometimes"

Where is your mom?

"She is away in South Africa. I ran away"

Why do you sell sex?

"Ahh I don't know"

Do you know that the men you're sleeping with are violating your rights

because you're a minor?

"Ahh I don't know"



These streets abuse me

I was walking along fourth rank. I was not even wearing a short skirt.

They made remarks about my skin. One of the guys said he wanted to “taste me.” I felt disgusted. The other one ran to me. He pulled my hand. I tried to resist. He pulled it so hard, he twisted it. He insisted I say hello to him and give him my number. That was the only way he was going to let me go. I could not think of a fake number. I just gave him because I was feeling uncomfortable. He called as soon as I left. I did not pick up of course. My phone kept ringing. He called and called.

I blocked his number.....




The hate they give

We sell sex here at the mine. It is hard. They beat us up saying vagina is not business. (*One of the women being interviewed has a deep red scar*) When they take our money, they rape us. The women in the community hate us. Today they promised to beat us up because one of the men woke up with an STI. We do not fetch water when they are there. They beat us up. Even the children. When we report them to the police they can easily bribe them and a few moments later they will be walking free.....



Squashed rights

The police found us at
the bar. We were
arrested and locked up.
Midnight they took us
outside behind the trees
and they raped us telling
us to keep dancing. In
the morning they
released us.....



Locked down

During lock down I was coming back from selling sex. I had \$2 on me. Soldiers were beating up people who were outside . They beat me up. Once they knew I was a sex worker, they said they wanted my services. The first one had sex with me with a condom. The second one refused to use protection. Instead of paying me, they took my \$2. I went home after. I got an STI....



Shattered dreams

I had my bf from school.
He said he did not want sex.

He loved me. We were
walking one day from
school. He started touching
me. He slid his hand inside
my panties. I tried to stop
him. He said he couldn't.
He said it hurt. He too away
my virginity. A few month
later I found out I was
pregnant. He ran way. My
father demanded bride
price but never got it. I
stopped going to school.....



Menstrual pains

I had terrible period pain “jeko” I was sent to our church leader to be treated... “healed” He raped me saying after this I was not going to feel any pain. I got pregnant. My father sent me back. I was married when I was 14. I had another child with this man. The man had other 2 wives. There was never peace. Social Welfare came and rescued me.

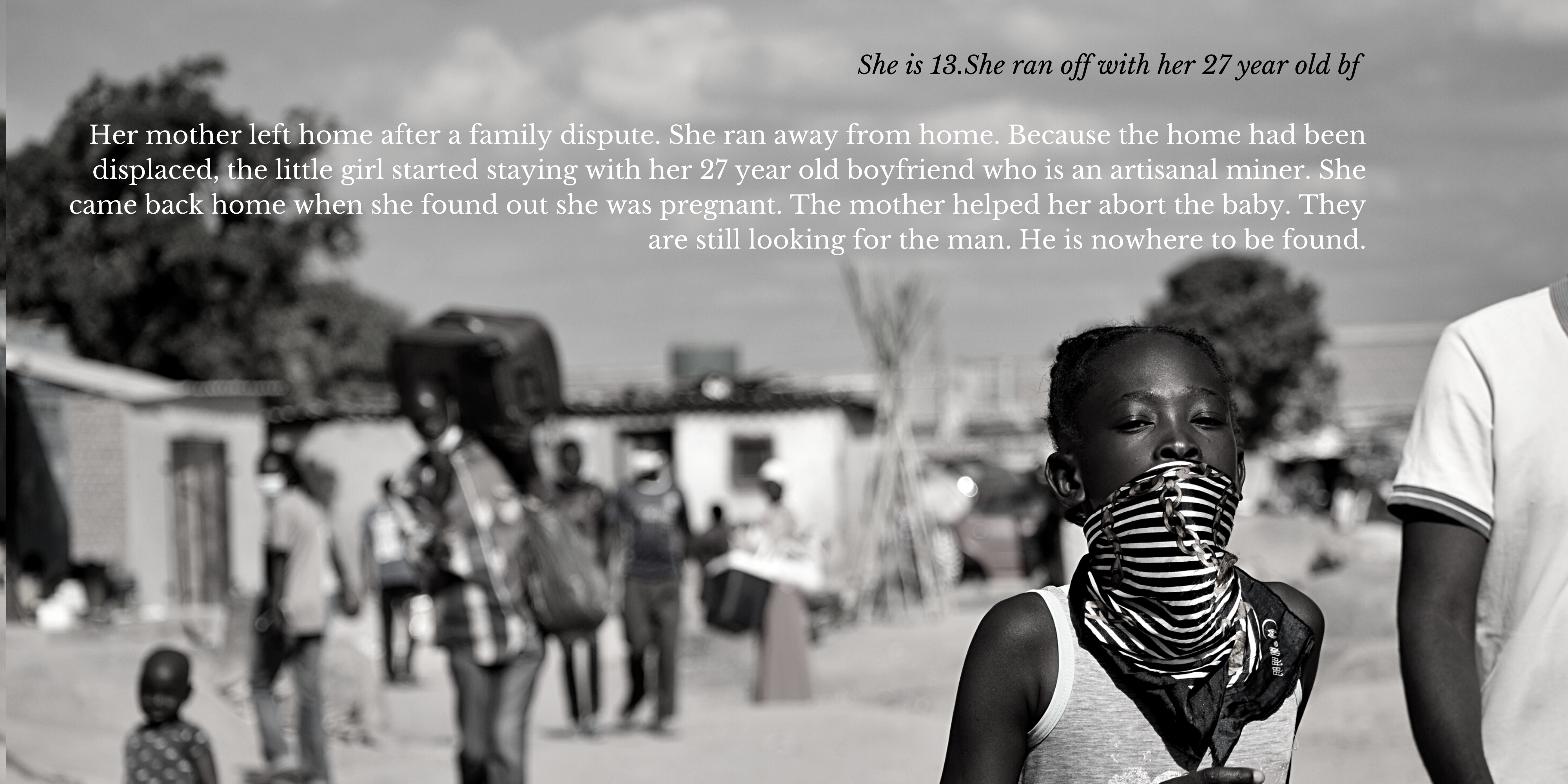


The story of a 13 year old

My boyfriend is 32. I am pregnant. I love him. He said he is going to come back for me. I want to keep the baby

She is 13. She ran off with her 27 year old bf

Her mother left home after a family dispute. She ran away from home. Because the home had been displaced, the little girl started staying with her 27 year old boyfriend who is an artisanal miner. She came back home when she found out she was pregnant. The mother helped her abort the baby. They are still looking for the man. He is nowhere to be found.





Justice denied

My bf slapped me when we were in school. I reported him. I had bruises. I took pictures of them. He came from an influential family. The senior lady told me to delete the pictures. She told me not to ever speak of it again. Nothing happened to him



He made me his punching bag

I wedded him soon after I had graduated from college. We were in love. He pampered me. He stopped me from going to work. Things started to change 6 months into the marriage. He said he did not like how I was getting fat. He started beating me up. He would buy me flowers the following day. He emotionally abused me. When I told my friends, they would say " at least he pampers you and buys you fancy things. I started drinking a lot. One day I thought about overdosing pills. This is the very same day I decided to divorce him.

I left with nothing



I found out I was HIV positive .

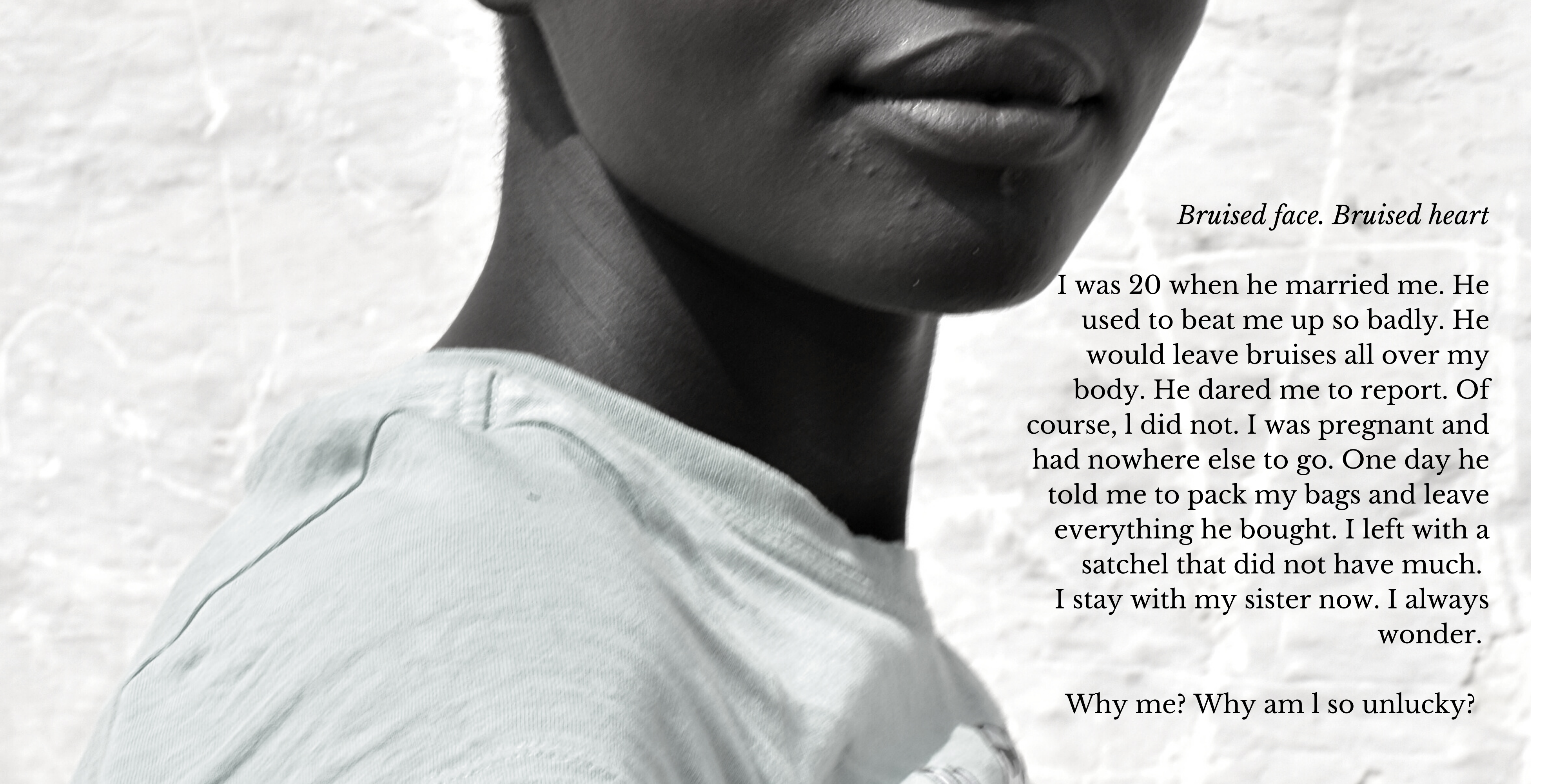
I was pregnant. I told my husband .
He accused me of infecting him
with the virus. He used to lock me
inside. I could not go outside to get
medication. Women Affairs came
and rescued me. It was too late. I
was sick for a very long time.



I hate dresses

I hate dresses. Every time I wore a dress my father took me to the car park at 3 am with my sisters. Him and his friends would have sex with us. I was 9. I did not understand what was happening. When I was 15 I got married to an abusive man.

Now that I am grown I ask my mother if she knew about what father used to do to us. She says she doesnt know anything....



Bruised face. Bruised heart

I was 20 when he married me. He used to beat me up so badly. He would leave bruises all over my body. He dared me to report. Of course, I did not. I was pregnant and had nowhere else to go. One day he told me to pack my bags and leave everything he bought. I left with a satchel that did not have much. I stay with my sister now. I always wonder.

Why me? Why am I so unlucky?

Harmless

He slapped my buttocks and gave me a cunning smile. I felt violated and looked to my sister for help. She shyly smiled and shrugged its part of culture, "chiramu" they call it. It started off harmless, so to speak and my family never minded. It was something not worth paying attention to. Meanwhile, I felt alone, defiled. It was like screaming in a room full of people and no one would turn a fraction. They did not know about the silent battles I fought with this man. The relentless dodging of calls, changing direction, the late night visits and how much I feared looking in his direction. It was all harmless, maybe. But, ever since then I have never been able to look a man in the eyes because maybe I will be asking for that "harmless".

**NO
TO SGBV**