

# My word should be enough

by Gladwell Muthoni

My heart rate changes,  
my diaphragm pushes against my lungs  
making it difficult to breathe.  
Is it a dream or something is pushing against my groin?  
Tears well up in my eyes as I gather courage to open my eyes.  
I reach out to check and he pulls his hand away pretending to be asleep.  
I shout and everybody is angry I woke them from their sleep.  
We still have an hour before reaching our destination.  
Shame and guilt fill my heart.  
Why did I sleep? I should have sat at the front or maybe next to a lady?  
Should I report? How do I prove it?  
He changes his sit and lives me crying.  
At the police station the officer smiles as he writes the statement,  
selecting what to and what not to include in the report.  
I begin to question if this was worth all the trouble.  
I leave the station and go on to work  
and choose to forget what happened.  
I talk to women about their rights but I did not know how to defend my own,  
no, I cannot talk about it for they will ask me questions  
why didn't you talk about it earlier, aren't you an empowered woman?  
why didn't you report it? what were you wearing? questions that will only tear me apart.  
I may not have evidence but my word should be enough.

*Gladwell Muthoni is a 27-year-old Sexual and reproductive health rights advocate and founder of Women for Sustainable Change, a community-based organization in Kenya. Gladwell is passionate about empowering and enabling young people especially women and girls to make informed choices regarding their sexuality through sexuality education and referral to services.*

*As a youth advocate, she has worked with different stakeholders at the county and national level in advocating for review and development of policies that enable young women and girls' access SRH services including legal and safe abortion. This includes writing poems on different challenges women and girls face. Gladwell has equally been able to train young people on advocacy and offer technical support to different community-based organizations on youth programming.*

*Gladwell believes in empowering young people to take leadership roles and offer sustainable strategies to address violation of SRH Rights.*