

Speak Out Issue -3 Bravery- Plain Text Version

Welcome

The vulnerability and courage that went into this work is an example of the incomparable strength of survivors.

The Speak Out newsletter was first printed in 1990 when Survivors' Network was set up by a group of survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

There are over 100 issues of Speak Out in our archive! Speak Out was a way of keeping our supporters updated about our work, as well as a vital space for survivors of sexual violence, abuse, and harassment to express themselves and their experiences through articles, letters, poetry, artwork, and more.

We have revived this amazing project with brand new issues of Speak Out, transforming it into an online zine solely dedicated to showcasing the poetry, artwork, and messages of love, support, and solidarity of survivors in our community.

Thank you to all the contributors for bearing their souls to help us create this beautiful collaborative piece of work.

We commend the bravery it takes for survivors to share themselves in this way.

True Bravery

The quality or state of having or showing mental or moral strength to face danger, fear, or difficulty.

Trigger Warning

Some of the content includes emotionally challenging and potentially triggering content; we have used this symbol to give you a trigger warning. Please look out for it next to the title on each page.



BRAVERY

Bravery is knowing and being on this horrific island alone.

Bravery is daring to remember and not pretending it didn't happen.

Bravery is facing the snakes spewing out of a masked wooden face, the invasion by spiders and feeling trapped. How small, scared and stuck I was.

Bravery is holding on to the hope that one day the island might somehow be integrated into the safer mainland and that I can consistently trust someone else to sit with me in the dark places.

Bravery is choosing to stay alive, speaking my truth.

By *Polly*

TW: Sexual Abuse

Another door - 25/8/2021

Today is one of those days where I feel weak and so lonely
I know I am in my winter and it's getting darker and colder
I feel like nothing I do is good enough and nothing is ever going right
I know this is all part of my healing journey
And I will be kinder to myself
It does not make it any less lonely
When winter comes around
It's like all the energy has been drained from my body
I am barely in my body
My body is too painful to be in
The memories are so distorted
And I know my inner children are trying their best
To show me what they have
But in winter, it's too much
I struggle with daily tasks my children push all the buttons
When I'm just trying my best to function
In a place where I feel lonely and abandoned
Like nothing I do will ever be good enough
I'm doing my best
I know now that this time will pass
But it does not make it anymore bearable
I'm like a heavy sky
Dark clouds gathered round
Waiting for the rain
But all that comes
Is the rumble of thunder, a flash of lightening
And tight air that makes it hard to breathe
I want nothing more than to feel my pain
But I know,

the way I function
My protectors are holding back my rain
I am afraid
It chills me to the core
To know I have opened up
Only to find another door
I will not be silent
I will not give up
There's just so much unsaid
So much still stuck
I know I feel this more in winter
It brings to light what I can mask no longer
The truth is,
I am sad and lonely
And I don't even really know me.

- Yellow & Green



CAN I COME OUT NOW? (2021)
Copy of 2020 original by same artist Yellow & Green
Self-portrait oil on canvas
Survivor of childhood sexual abuse after 20 years of
silence

TW: Abuse

BUT I LOVE ME MORE

I have never met anyone as brazen as you.

But then, maybe,

there are many people like you.

Men who come and touch women,

Without permission,

without consent.

Who criticise us,

Insult bodies,

Minimise.

Make us small.

I am not alone.

Maybe I should remember that when I feel undeserving of this healing.

But I change the focus.

I tell myself this healing is for me,

This healing is so that I can live.

That you are not part of the equation,

And that is true.

But I change the focus.

I try so hard to take accountability of my healing,

That often,

I have to move away from my anger that you are not taking accountability,

For the pain, the fear, the lasting effect you've had on me,

And I cry many nights wishing for this to end,

And it makes angry.

That you, small, brittle, insignificant, and unworthy,

Still have this ongoing hold on me.

I wonder if you ever think of me.

I don't want you to.

But I can't help but wonder if you think about how you treated me,

And the continued impact it's had on my life.

I wonder if you feel sorry.

I would not accept it if you did,

Because whether I like the thought or not,

You must have known what you were doing.

Is this just some part of a wider game,

Where you can do what you want.

Man?

Do you think you have more power?

Because I do not think you would have carried this as well as I have.

Man.

You throw

And we, as women, catch.

We walk, we smile, we laugh, we cherish,

We carry children, that is if we want to.

And I will not let your voice dictate what I do with mine.

Because our bodies are ours to own.

And we may shrink to feel safe,

Big room full of men.

And although we may walk afraid at night,

Do you think that means you have more power?

What I see are warriors standing in the face of a storm,

And I will be a stone in the tide.

And you may think this is to spite you.

No.

It's despite you.

This was meant to be a letter to you,

But I think there are only a few things to say.

You are a shadow.

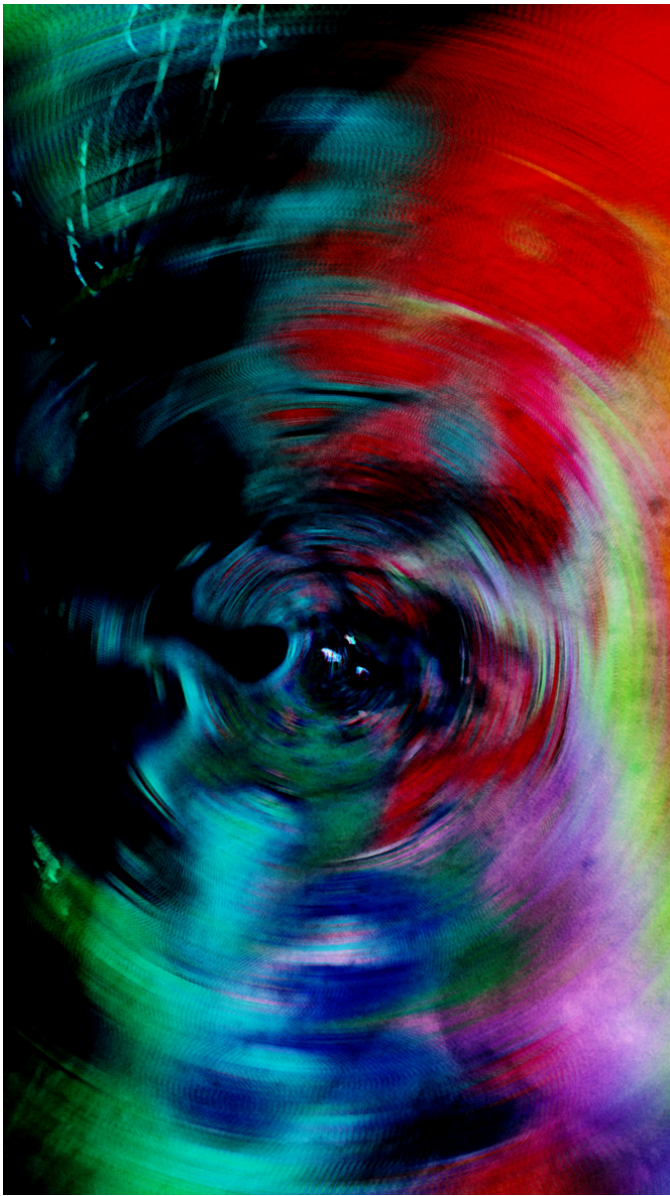
And I have the power to change where the light shines.

I am angry at you.

But I love, Me. More.

By Vee

Message for other survivors: It takes a lot of work to heal from this. I have been in the exhaustion, the anger, the grieving. I have sat and wondered what has become of my life, where is the "sorry", and why was it me that was chosen? But we're not chosen. We love deeply and we have a relentless persistence to fight. And it just happened to be for a person who thought they had too much power and we have too little. But I want to send a message of hope to you. You are not powerless. He didn't appreciate the unwavering power you have. It is hidden, deep, under the skin. I only need to know you are reading this to know you are strong, because you have survived it. You can survive it. Your fight has not left you. You simply left the ring, and all that energy we sent to them, all that drive, all that love, you still have it. Turn it inwards. You powerful, beautiful, strong, relentless, radiant woman. You are not alone.



Tim Adwick



It's Bravery to regain hope.

Revival

She had dreams you know,
This little girl, a long time ago,
But she lost them in all of the despair,
In fact, no, they were stolen from her, and that really wasn't fair!

She wandered through life, lost and alone,
Struggled to do it all on her own,
She didn't know who she was or who she was meant to be,
But all the time she was here, she was protecting me!

It is time to let go, but she doesn't know how,
She needs to know she is safe now,
But it isn't that simple when you've struggled for so long,
She's frightened it will all go terribly wrong!

I need to go in and love her like she's mine,
But I am worried about what I may find,
The wounds are so deep and hidden and dark,
But I owe it to her, to bring her dreams back!

by *Lorna Kimpton*

SOPHIE OLSON / THE FLYING CHILD

TW: Words relating to sex, SI and the harmful pathologising of CSA survivors

I didn't find the words for forty years. Saying these words I thought I'd never say was the hardest, and bravest thing I have ever done. It helped me find my way out.

I AM NO LONGER LOST. I AM LIVING.





En büyük uçurumun neydi Viv?
Uçurum kenarlarına,
Salincaklar kurmayı kaç kere düşündün?

What was your biggest cliff Viv?

How many times have you thought about building a swing on the
edge of the cliffs?



İşaretleri kaybettiğinde yolu nasıl buldun Viv?
İşaretleri olmayan bir (bu?) yolları nasıl yürüdün?
Yollara işaretler yerleştirmek nasıl bir his Viv

How did you manage to find your way when you lost your trace?

How did you walk the roads that don't have any traces?

What kind of feeling is placing traces on your ways?

Çocukluk fotoğraflarımızı yanımıza alalım dediğimde.
Ben de bebeklik fotoğrafımı alayım dedin...
Hissettiğimi anlatamam...
Bir bebeğin cinsel istismar görmesi ne demek?...
Belki hiçbir zaman bilimeyeceğiz.

When I suggested to bring our childhood photos with us,
You said that you would take your baby photo too...
I can't tell how I felt...
What does it mean for a baby to be sexually abused?
Possibly we'll never know.



Yokuş yukarı çıkmayı sevmiyorum
Ama yokuş yukarı tırmanmayınca
Bu manzarayı da göremiyorsun

I don't like climbing uphill
But when you don't climb uphill
You can't see this view either.



Gerçek hikayene ulaşmak için
ne kadar toprak kaldırmak gerekti?
Kaç katmandan geçmen gerekti Viv?

To get to your true story
How much soil did you need to remove?
How many layers did you have to go through, Viv?



Su başında durmuş ezanı dinliyorum. –
Bütün sesleri bastırıyor ezan.
Bizim seslerimizi nasıl bastırdı ezan

I am listening to the azan standing by the water.
Azan suppresses all sounds.
How the azan suppressed our voices



Kaybettim seni Viv ! Neredesin?

I've lost you Viv!. Where are you?



Bizden önce yürüyenlerin ayakizleri.

Footprints of those who walked before us

Göremiyorum seni hala, neredesin?

Still, I can not see you, where are you?



Gördüm işte! –
Deniz orada!
There I've seen!
That's the sea there!

İşaretler silinmiş.
Biz de kaybolduk.
Yolu kendim de açabilirim.
Rehberden önce buldum doğru yolu
Hayatta kalanların güçlü sezgileri...
Traces have been disappeared.
Also we got lost
The guide is looking for the road but I'm not scared
I can pave the wave myself
I've found the right road before the guide finds it
The powerful intuitions of those who survived ...



Sigara er misin?

Sigara en eski yoldařım.

Yıkıcı bir yoldař.

Ne ok yıkıcı yoldařlarımız oldu deęil mi Viv?

Do you want to smoke?

Cigarette is my old comrade

A disruptive comrade

Haven't we had a lot of disruptive comrades

Viv?

Sirtüstü uzandım.

ok rahat.

Bu uurumun bir parasıyım sanki...

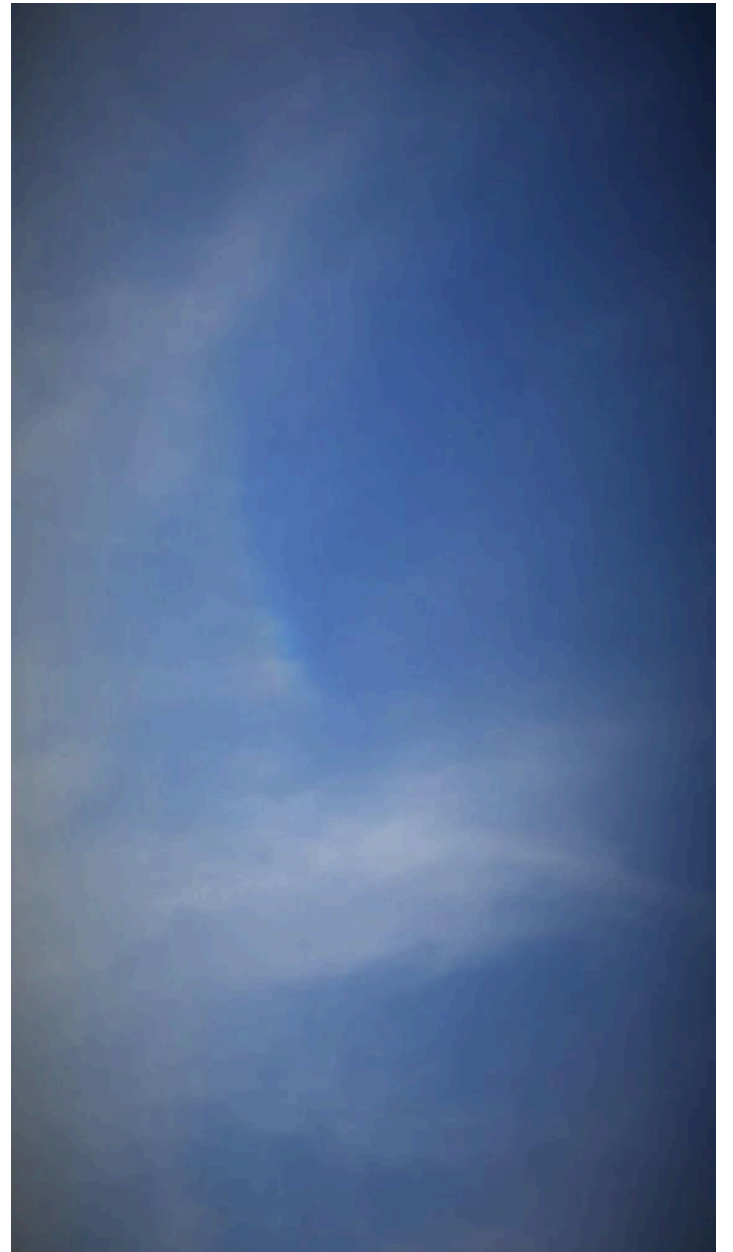
Bir gkkuřaęı mı var orada?

I lied down on my back

So comfortable

I feel like I am part of a cliff

Is that a rainbow there?





Bu kıyı nerede?
Türkiye mi İngiltere mi?
Cinsel istismarın ülkesi var mı Viv?

Where is this shore?
Is it Turkey, is it England?
Is there a country of sexual abuse Viv?



Az sonra bitiyor yolculuğumuz.
Yürüyüş öncesinde günlerce süren kaygılar...
İnsanı düşünmek yoruyormuş
Hiç düşünmeden yürümek gerek bazen.
Sadece yürümek...
İyileşmek için yaşanan hiçbir deneyim
Cinsel istismar deneyiminden daha kötü olamaz.

Our journey is ending in a bit
Prior to the walk, many worries that lasts days...
What makes a human tired is to think
Sometimes all we need is to walk without thinking
Just to walk...
Nothing that we experience to recover
can be worse than experiencing sexual abuse

Yolun sonunda yine martılar karşılıyor bizi –
Varış yerlerimiz hep liman
Limanlarda martılar...
Kuşlar insana umut veriyor.
Aklımda meşhur şarimizin dizesi
“Hayat kısa
kuşlar uçuyor”

At the end of the road, seagulls welcome us again.

Our destination always is a port
Seagulls at the port...
The birds give hope to the humans

I've got a wellknown poem in my mind from our famous poet
“Life is short
Birds are flying”

By Meliha yıldız

SIMPLY ME

Can I ever be
Simply just me,
Without reason to discuss
Or fanfare and fuss?

Pay no heed to those who may scorn,
Wink at the serpent, concealed in disingenuous form,
A ruse for provocation, words spoken in jest,
In fanciful tongue, yet hard to digest.

Have wisdom of courage, no matter how small,
A voice to be counted, arise and be tall,
Unapologetic for what I've been through,
I am enough, undiluted, and true.

© Written by Elizabeth Shane – Author & CSA Survivor
(From Rainbow of Promise)

www.elizabethshane.com



LISA BLAKE

"I never thought there would come a time I would be able to leave my house let alone go on holiday even just an hour and a half away.

I WAS SO BRAVE I FINALLY FELT FREE"

Bravery ,
That Portugese cap



I wear between the stoccato sentences .

Who am I ?
To question over the candles
What a person does to me
After they are lit .

In between you ask me to be normal .
Who am I to be asked that ?
After what happened to me .

Yet you are strong and who can decide
You or me?

We can go to Florence when we need to .

By Andy Strowman

Written 11.11.2024

This poem is included Andy Strowman's book "Feelings",
available by contacting them at:
andy.strowman1@gmail.com



When I took this photo, (even though I didn't realise it at the time), it was an act of reclaiming control over my body and my sense of self after going through challenging experiences. Looking back now, I feel proud of what it represents – my unapologetic identity as a survivor.

We fight, we endure, and we rise stronger together. I couldn't have come this far without the support of fellow survivors, friends, and feminists who have stood by me.

As feminist rapper Gata Cattana powerfully expressed in *El Plan*, a phrase that has become a rallying cry in feminist protests: "Nunca me sentí sola porque estábamos juntas."

By *Nyeleti*

Bravery is this - By Anon

Bravery is finally
Learning to relinquish my shame
Nurture my sweet soul
And put right what was done
To me by someone else
Someone who made a moment
And it's lasted forever
For me anyway

Bravery is the tears
That I hold in my throat
It's the reel playing
Behind my eyes
It's the dampening
comforting
Weight of accepting.

Bravery is a bookmark in time
Letting the world roll over
For a while
Waiting by the window
And whispering into the wind
"It's over now
We can come home"

Bravery is this.

TW: Sexual Assault, Rape, Depression, Heartbreak

Maybe it is the writer in me...

Rape isn't poetic. It's not a metaphor. Yet when I revisit the event, the pain, or when it decides to rudely revisit me, it can feel like a brutal poem. Maybe it is the writer in me. A symphony of painfully beautiful moments that led to my soul death. The night I died and survived, all at once. The night I walked into that hotel a young woman full of what life could offer, her bubbly, happy and trusting nature, to a ghost who left that building. A shadow floating out the front door.

I didn't know immediately that I had died.

I did know something was more wrong than it had ever been when I looked into the mirror and saw nothing. Like a horror movie where you see a girl looking in the mirror to which the viewer sees no reflection at all. I got scared. I took a double take. I squeezed my eyes shut in the hopes my blurry eyes would suddenly reveal the girl I had seen every day, the girl I knew.

What broke my heart years later

And when I say broke my heart,

I mean the fact I have recently discovered and has destroyed me,

Is that the girl that walked into that hotel would not have done half of the things I have done.

Don't get me wrong, I have achieved an incredible amount and from the outside it looks like I'm quite successful for my age.

But I have hurt people in ways

And it has made me colder

And more numb

Than I ever realised.

I thought I had just... healed...

But I don't think I have,

I think I'm more broken than I ever realised

by *Liv Amber Rose*, from her book *Lover girl*

THANK YOU!

Produced by Survivors Network community members, the team at Survivors Network, and Caz Houghton and Annie Cross from Brightec.