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## STORY

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### **Abstract**

The poem is about a young person's vision and their recollections of their life in activism. They yearn to include children, so that they can start defending their rights and join the field, but they debate about whether it's too early for them or rather whether there is no actual right age for activism. The poem tries to explore the various forms of oppression in which young people have lately been embroiled in Kenya and their activism against it. It also dives into the various ways in which young people can be a part of a movement in order to get their stories written and voiced, based on the strong assertion that he who controls the stories controls history and how people come to know it.

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I walk down the sun filled path  
Rained on, sun scorched, dust filled, it looks worn out  
But on the side the grass is green and the bushes thick  
I stare at the children playing on the grass  
Carefree, laughing off into the skies  
Chasing lone dragonflies and rolling on the cool grass  
Oblivious of what the world holds for them  
They don't care; all they care about is their game  
I smile, maybe I'll get to tell them my story.  
  
Maybe I'll tell them of the streets  
Chanting, singing, dancing  
Donned in red, black, green and white  
Freedom is coming, freedom is coming  
Today, not tomorrow

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I still remember the chant we sang  
Children, as “they” said we were  
Marching down the empty streets  
Trying to get a better country for ourselves  
Save our generation, save our country, save us  
Still, they called us terrorist, labelled us as thieves  
Idle children with nothing to do  
But I smile, one day I’ll get to tell them my story.

Maybe I’ll tell them of all the days dressed in red and white  
Marching down streets with our moms  
Our sisters and our friends  
No woman has to die for any reason  
No girl has to miss school for any reason  
“End femicide and any form of gender violence  
Menstrual shaming should stop  
Better health care for our mothers and sisters  
Teenage moms should be allowed back in school”  
We walk and chant  
Braving the hot sun, the police batons and bullets  
Government unleashing its strengths on its children and mothers  
We don’t stop we go on  
One day they will get to tell my story.

Maybe it will be told like that of Wangari Maathai  
Remembered for brains and brawn  
Standing tall even when doing it alone  
Or maybe like Rosa Parks  
Defiant in the face of oppression

Sticking to what I believe in  
Ready for whatever might happen, not flinching  
Or maybe Martin Luther king Jr.  
Speak out irregardless  
Be staunch courageous and brave  
Or maybe everyone will have their own unique way  
Of telling my story.

Unless, I let them play  
They are still young, barely in their twenties, they should live a little  
more  
But who will fight for us young people?  
If we don't do it ourselves?  
Who will be the next Willies Oeba  
Fighting impunity through art and using creativity  
Who will be the next Hanifa Adan  
Rally the masses against oppression  
Who will be the next Nelson Ameyia?  
To not keep quiet when they come across corruption  
Who will be the next Kerry Mwita?  
Fight for the marginalized groups?  
Who will control our history?  
If we don't do it ourselves  
Who will tell our story?

### ***About the author***

**Rolex Odhiambo** is a 21-year-old Kenyan from Suba, Mfangano Island. She is currently completing her time in law school and is a passionate child rights activist.