

My T-Shirt

Written April, 2005 @ The Clothesline Project, where survivors are encouraged to hang a shirt to acknowledge the violence done to them.

I wanted to make a shirt
A shirt that would describe the depths
And the dark power
Of sexual assault
But I couldn't put it on a shirt
It was too much

I wanted to make a shirt
A shirt that gave hope
A shirt that would glorify the God
Who gives me hope
Each moment of every day
But I couldn't put it on a shirt
It was too much

I tried
I used pretty, puffy paints
They wouldn't dry
So I never got to do the other side
My shirt doesn't say what I want
What I need it to say
I can't put it on a shirt
It's just too much

So here I am
Writing, wondering
Here is something
It's not enough, but it's something
Maybe someday I can try again
To put it on a shirt
But I think it will always be
Too much

One, just me
Virgin, innocent, trusting, 13 years old
Little girl
Ten, them
Older, bigger, stronger, faster,
Boys
Nothing I could do could
STOP!!!
Who's next?
NO!!!
Please, no next!

Something deep, deep inside me
Breaks...
I will die
Not survive
Not live through
But I do, I live

No longer me
A rape victim me
My shameful secret
Hardens me
Holds me prisoner
For years, I live

One day, unexpected
Light bursts through
Loosed by all-knowing love
Changed by power
Jesus in me
Anew, I live

Darkness remains
Brokenness hidden deep
Stuck in the middle
Ugliness and devastation
Beauty and glory
This life, I live

Through hellish pain
So, so, so, deep, deep, deep
Touching the broken place
So tender
Almost overwhelmed
I rise up

Gracious, overcoming, hopeful
A survivor
Stronger as I rise
By the power of Jesus in me
Growing, I live