

# A RAPIST'S NAME

By Yinlaifa Edolo

## WHY WE LIKE IT:

*The inequality of the sexes is no more starkly shown than in the case of rape—especially true in third world and developing countries. The reasons for the shocking numbers of sexual abuse to females are many and conditioned by the culture and society in which they take place. But no culture where this happens can be excused or forgiven. In this compelling CNF the situation is laid out in baldy human terms and it puts a face on a crime. This is exactly what the best CNF is for and the presentation is both moving and powerful. The prose is 'outsider' which mainlines strength and beauty to the writing. As is usual in this case, we don't correct or edit it in the interest of authenticity of voice. Think wabi sabi on the page.*

## Quote:

On the last trip into her house, he closes the door behind him when he enters. He pins her to the bed that she hasn't been able to leave all day and goes on to rape her burning body, asking her how much she likes his breath on her skin.

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Genre: creative non-fiction

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1

It isn't new anymore, that we get raped. Every girl in my hostel knows at least one girl in another room or on another block who was raped. We know the girls by their names, by what they wore. We know what their fathers do for a living and the rumors about the looseness of the women who come from their part of the country. We know what they're studying and all the days they stood too long beside the lecturers after class. We know everything about these girls. Everything that is, apart from the names of their rapists. It was 'one boy like that from engineering' when Adanna Nwagwu, the girl in A-block screamed for help at two in the morning, the other day. People gathered to watch, few helped, some took pictures; of the girl of course. Two weeks later, the boy was forgotten altogether and the girl was called, 'that girl who was raped in A-block'.

2

My mother has two daughters. Both have been raped. We don't talk about these things. They are the wrong kind of heavy. They are the heavy that leave a taste on the tongue that is impolite and a sound on the ears that will be covered quickly to save face. If we talked about it, the questions would be, 'what took you there in the first place?' or 'at your age you have started having boyfriends?' Instead we talk about what Mrs so-and-such wore to service last Sunday and whether or not to soak beans for moin-moin for dinner. We don't talk about the heavy stuff and so we never say the names of the men who put their weight on us and raped us.

3

Every girl's boyfriend says he is not a rapist and neither are his friends. The boyfriends condemn rape on social media and in real life every day. They say all the things they would do if they ever caught a rapist. If all the boys are innocent, who is raping all the girls in my hostel who now bear the name 'that girl who was raped?' My boyfriend says he cannot imagine ever laying with a girl against her wish. I believe him, he's always so gentle with me. One day I go out to the mall to have a chat with a friend. A male friend. My boyfriend shows up on the scene and asks to steal me away for a minute. It's an emergency, he says. I go with him and he drives to a dark, lonely road. He gets down from the car and pulls me out. He says I'm a cheating whore for talking so shamelessly with other men. Then he rips my clothes off and forces himself on me like a beast, ignoring my pleas and my screams. When I get back to the hostel, I lie that I was robbed. I don't say I was raped. I don't say his name. I don't want to become 'that girl who was raped.'

4

My friend lives in a compound with three one-bedroom apartments. She is the only female tenant. One day she's alone in the compound with one of the other tenants, a devout Muslim boy who says his prayers on time and preaches fairness and peace. She is ill. She asks him to help her draw water from the compound's only flowing tap by the gate. He does. He fills her storage drum. On the last trip into her house, he closes the door behind him when he enters. He pins her to the bed that she hasn't been able to leave all day and goes on to rape her burning body, asking her how much she likes his breath on her skin. She moves out a week later, traumatized and too ashamed to tell anyone what he did. When she's gone, he tells everyone she's a karuwa, a little whore who tried to seduce him.

5

Every girl in my hostel knows a girl who has been raped. Every girl who has been raped knows the name or face of her rapist but in the end the name from the rape comes to her, the girl who was raped.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *This piece was inspired by the stories of girls I see every day, who could have been broken by their experiences but weren't. The piece speaks about the injustice of victim*

*blaming and shaming and the ridiculousness of society's reaction to rape. I hope to with this piece, awaken conscience and maybe even common sense, to advocate for accountability and the proper shouldering of responsibility. The wall of silence around rape should be broken but unless women feel safe to speak, it might be impossible to bring it down. Writing this piece was heart breaking and I hope that it carries in it, the voices of the women for which it speaks.*

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** *Yinlaifa Edolo is a Nigerian writer and poet who strives to tell relatable stories that reveal the underbelly of issues. She is a lover of food, music and the little things of life. She writes a private blog [www.jaymarensworld.wordpress.com](http://www.jaymarensworld.wordpress.com) and looks to learn all forms of storytelling.*