

The day I was born I had no voice,
only a scream,
only a cry,
a coo,
a smile and a laugh,
but I was heard.

If only by a few, they heard me.

Then I got older and I began to form words of English,
soft and curled in small lips with big thoughts.

The audience grew bigger.

I was heard.

As my eyes started to see and my legs grew longer, I became invisible.

A little girl uncomfortable in her skin with no understanding of where to begin.

So I left those words and thought only to breathe...

But how can my world function if I do not have a voice? If I am the only one who knows my thoughts are they not important?

They would shut me up.

I became silent, thoughts banged against the cage that was my mind and I held them in, sorting them into boxes and keeping them in my pockets.

They formed into
opinions and
songs and
poems and
stories of love and struggle and war.
I exploded.

A pen to a paper was not enough.

My mouth opened and I spoke,
maybe it was more of a mumble but somebody heard me,
all the others hiding in the corners,
unseen they heard me.

They understood and they spoke too... So our voice became louder, the strength of one may be able to move a rock but we moved mountains.

Once our mouths opened they would not shut.

People saw us with their minds rather than their eyes and heard us with not merely their ears but they heard us like a scream in silence deep in the confinement of their lonely hearts.

That is powerful.

We became a way of being a government of the people.

For a voice can strengthen everything it touches and a hand can help anyone who hears it.
That baby who cried and screamed was aching for a voice.

For a say.

For independent unity and internal beauty.

Our voices bound together like the roots of a tree.

Becoming one.

That is the strength, my strength in our *democracy*.