

The land of the free?  
The home of the brave?  
Sure, I guess that's how America can be described.  
Free slave owners.  
Brave sexual predators.  
Why don't I feel free in this nation? Why am I not brave enough to walk home alone?

I was eleven.  
He lured me in, like a kid in the candy store.  
No didn't mean no no more. Not to him.  
Was I no more than an object? Just a new toy to test out and play with?  
It was...

I was nineteen.  
Roaming free for the first time in my life.  
Then one night, the roaming stopped.  
More than just my sense of security was stolen. My kidney was gone.  
How am I a commodity? How can parts of me be taken away?  
How can you put a price on human life?  
It was...

I was thirty.  
I stormed out after an argument with my husband.  
I told him he was too controlling.  
I didn't know what controlling meant until I was taken.  
Slavery was my new destiny.  
They forced me to work until I dropped to my knees in pain.  
It was...

I was fifty-three.  
Surely no one would harm an elderly lady.  
Not once.  
Forty-three thousand.  
Not the number of calories I'd eaten that month.  
Not the number of steps I'd taken this week.  
The number of times I was raped.  
It was...

But I'm a boy.  
It doesn't happen to boys.  
I tried to take my own life. Twice.  
I'd rather die than bear the shame of being abused and forced into labor by the man I trusted the most.  
It was...

It was sexual exploitation. It was organ removal. It was slavery. It was rape. It was forced labor.  
It was objectification. It was commodification. It was exploitation.  
It was...it was human trafficking.

Indescribable.  
Unexcusable.

I never thought it could happen to me.  
I never knew people could be so evil.

I was an object.  
I was a commodity.  
I was exploited.

Am I not human anymore?  
Can I be bought and sold?  
Must I obey orders?  
How can I live in a prison?

I never knew how weak I could be.  
I went from a lively young child to a lifeless person.  
A commodity, bought and sold like sugar. An object, played with like a brand new toy.  
But the exploitation does not define my existence, I am so much more.  
I deserve respect.  
I deserve equality.  
I deserve to choose where I want to go.  
I deserve to choose what I want to do.  
I deserve to be at peace.

I must speak out for others.  
I must act to stop slavery.