

Words of a Child Soldier

By Brooke VanHecke

Come with us, they said, you must become one of us.
Tromp through the jungle, the thorns, the heat, the thirst, the hunger.
Bring with you your body, your ears, and your eyes.
Leave behind your life, your loves, your laughs, your freedom, your choice.
Your childhood is over, whatever is left.
You will become a man, but not before you learn how.
At first, you will cry- your tears and screams unseen and unheard.
The next time, you will try to sob, pretend even for show in your heart.
But in time, your eyes will dry, your voice will cease, and you will be ours.
Your ears will not lend to the cries of those like you,
For your heart will be beaten to stone to feel no more.
Your eyes will be ours. Your ears will be ours.
Come with us, young soldier, they said.
Your life is now ours.