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If My Rights Were Clothes...

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By Nora*

Saudi Arabia's [male guardianship system](#) leaves every Saudi female under the legal guardianship of a male for the duration of her life. It deprives women of the ability to make decisions concerning their own lives without the approval of their male guardian. A woman's rights are, forever, left in the hands of men who in many cases are abusive and power-obsessed. The [#StopEnslavingSaudiWomen](#) is a campaign initiated by women inside the Kingdom who have had enough of this system that infantilises and often abuses women.

This poem is a minimal contribution expressing my support for this campaign.

"If my rights were clothes, then I stand here naked before the men who've stripped me of my fabric and then told me to cover when the sight of my skin burned their immoral eyes.

They can't look too long at the bruises that gleam on my arms that they've tied. They can't bear to let me see their eyes that burn, not just with lust that they try hard to hide, but with fear of the woman they've stripped of her rights.

So they cover and they silence because even our voices ring with a strength that they can't stand to hear. And they whisper that we're precious- So precious, they'll protect us from the burning eyes and the fearful ears that they think we don't know are their own as well.

And they've built the ceiling of fear so low. We're afraid now to say what we're allowed to think- In case we upset the wrong man, in case our words fall into the hands of a coward who fears dissent so fiercely, he would have our skin stripped now that he's taken the rest.

So I'll stand here naked, before the men who crave and fear. Who claim to love but don't know how. I'll stand, back straight, arms outstretched, and I'll bask in my nudity until their eyes burn so much they throw rights on me to cover the woman they can't bear to see."

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