



4-24-2018

I Have Not Lost Someone to Gun Violence

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Wadley, Mattelyn R., "I Have Not Lost Someone to Gun Violence" (2018). *SURGE*. 321.
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I Have Not Lost Someone to Gun Violence

Abstract

On Friday, April 20, 2018, Gettysburg College students organized a campus-wide walkout to protest all forms of gun violence as part of Gettysburg College's first annual Peace and Justice Week. Over the next several days, SURGE published the poems and personal testimonies of the student speakers who participated in the event.

I have not lost someone to gun violence, but

When I hear the word gun...

I *still* picture children's bodies lying lifeless on the floor of a blue-carpeted classroom [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Gettysburg College, gun control, gun violence, domestic violence, race, police

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement

Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

I HAVE NOT LOST SOMEONE TO GUN VIOLENCE

April 24, 2018

Editor's Note: Last Friday, April 20, 2018, Gettysburg College students organized a campus-wide walkout to protest all forms of gun violence as part of Gettysburg College's first annual Peace and Justice Week. Over the next several days, SURGE will be publishing the poems and personal testimonies of the student speakers who participated in the event.

I have not lost someone to gun violence, but

When I hear the word gun...

I *still* picture children's bodies lying lifeless on the floor of a blue-carpeted classroom.

When I see a gun in a man's hand, I can picture the woman standing in the corner of her own kitchen: fear in her eyes, bruises on her arms, gun in *his* hands. And when someone tells me that their mother keeps a handgun locked away in her dresser drawer, I don't think of how that gun might keep them safe in a home invasion. Instead, I agonize over the fact that her son might use that same gun to kill himself.

Will she still keep the gun, after he's gone?

When I see a gun strapped to the belt of a police officer, I don't feel protected. Their guns don't make me feel safer.

Instead... I worry that he will shoot a man in his own backyard, mistaking his *cell phone* for a gun. I think of the black women who lost their lives at the hands of police officers, and I think how many of us don't even know their names. Korryn Gaines, Kisha Michael, Mya Hall... mothers and daughters? ... People.

I recognize that the image of a gun doesn't evoke the same feelings for others. I recognize that when you see a gun on a police officer's belt, you might picture your dad coming home from work. I understand that when you hear the word gun, you might picture a rifle, displayed on your mantle downstairs. You might picture camo, hear leaves crunching under your feet, and see a deer in the distance. I understand that

some people associate guns with their hobbies... not dead people. And, I respect your perspective, but can you respect others?

We are *all* capable of compassion.

Think of the woman who won't leave her husband, because she fears for her own life. Who was held at gunpoint, and was paralyzed with fear. She is one of the *one million women* in American who have been shot **at** by their own partner.

Think of the 12,979 people whose lives we sacrificed while the country was "busy" debating the right to bear arms. In only *one year* we lost 12,979 people because we *continually* choose guns. Since 2015, this number has only increased.

Mourn with me.

Think of those those who took their own lives. The twenty two thousand eighteen people, who pulled the trigger in 2015.... representing nearly half of all who we lost to suicide that year. Almost 60 people a day, who didn't have a chance to reconsider their fate, the bullet having already left the barrel.

We are all capable of empathy...

So, please *try* to understand the pain of those who have lost a loved one due to gun violence.

Can you recognize that when some people hear the word gun... they picture their brother, lying dead in a hospital bed?

Others might still hear the echoes of bullets ringing through their classrooms. They might walk into the hallways of a building meant for learning and growth, and *instead* think of *horror* and *death*.

Have you thought about their mothers? The ones who dropped their sons off that morning, backpack bigger than the six-year-old himself, lunch box in his right hand, she watched him walk inside his classroom. And, a few hours later, she was forced to look at his lifeless body.

Have you at least tried to understand how she feels?

How can a hobby, someone's 'need' to practice a better shot, outweigh the potential of *another* 20 mothers losing a child?

Another 13 fathers who won't attend their graduation ceremony.

Another 13 high school students, who won't have the chance to go to college.

The lives of children, *people*, versus the right to own assault weapons? Literal machines of war.

What is the purpose of *any* gun besides to kill? If not animals, then people. Guns were *made* to kill. They are tools that we created to kill people more *efficiently*—which means more people dead in less time.

We all are capable of compassion...capable of empathy.

I have not lost someone to gun violence. But, sadly so many others have.

Who are you loyal to? Guns? Or people?

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