My parents told me I was born with a collar around my neck. They said it defined me and no matter how much it hurt, you cannot rebel. I was surrounded with collared people in my neighborhood. They smiled so much, even though they were in pain. My youthful eyes saw it then.

Now, I've moved away from that neighborhood. I have a job, a wife, and two twin boys. All of them have collars around their necks. One day, my eldest came home from school bloody and bruised. Some boys with no collars beat him. As he cried in my arms, I felt his collar tighten.

The news showed one of us being murdered unjustly. My wife and I watched the scene on tv. The collarless hosts tried to empathize. They will never know. At night, my collar tightened even more. I was close to suffocating. I almost welcomed it.

The next day, we called a babysitter for our kids. We were going to do something about this. A demonstration was happening in our neighborhood. A demonstration for the murdered man. As we walked together, I saw hundreds of people, collared and no collared, shouting for freedom and justice. Their cries faded into the afternoon sun.

Officers of the law came to us. They demanded us to disperse. We said no. They did not accept that answer. I heard the sound of a grenade rolling against the concrete. Towards us.

The explosion knocked me down. The only sounds I heard were screams. My wife was next to me. We looked at each other. We understood.

My parents told me I was born with a collar around my neck. That no matter how much it hurt, you cannot rebel or remove it. But at that moment, it disappeared. That was the first time I saw my wife's neck, pure and beautiful.

As darkness overtook us, I smiled. I wanted this to happen. I wanted to be free of being cursed with this life. And now, only death brings us peace. Only death brings us freedom.

Don't cry, my sons.

We
Are
Free.