

When Idriss Was Nine

G *D* *A*
 They came to the village in the night when Idriss was nine
G *D* *A*
 The Presidential Guard with their engines off and lights on low
G *D* *A*
 The sparks from the burning huts mingled with the stars in the clear black sky and the screams from his
G *D* *A*
 father and his mother and his brother as they burned rang high

G *D* *A*
 The rebels gave him food and a gun when Idriss was nine
G *D* *A*
 They told him he would never stand alone and they would help him fight
G *D* *A*
 The smoke from the burning cars rose above the noise to the clear blue sky with the screams from the
G *D* *A*
 soldiers and the rebels and the animals as everybody died

G *D* *A*
 he said: I will have a life, or I will die trying
G *D* *A*
 I will have a life, or I will die trying

G *D* *A*
 I met him on the shores of the Med when he was twenty-nine
G *D* *A*
 His boat went down with everyone on board but Idriss survived
G *D* *A*
 The diesel and the shit in the water in the boat burned their skin and their faces and their eyes
 and they cried as the
G *D* *A*
 helicopter flew away and left them in the burning sun to die
G *D* *A*
 I asked him what he figured he would do he said another try
G *D* *A*
 He said I know I probably won't make it but this is not a life
G *D* *A*
 The sparks from the burning huts were echoed in the gleam in his flashing dark eyes
G *D* *A*
 and the screams he carried with him in the silence and they drove him every day of his life

G *D* *A*
 We'll sink or we'll stand but our lives are our own
G *D* *A*
 You don't get to say who we are
G *D* *A*
 We only demand that our lives are our own
G *D* *A*
 You don't get to say who we are

