

# Silence

by Hope Netshivhambe

There is always an older woman somewhere trying to teach herself silence  
Because she was told no one would believe her  
So she's not sure anymore,  
Not sure if it actually happened  
Wonders if maybe she made it up in her mind somehow  
Doesn't know how to tell away her bruises  
Or the trauma of her memory  
There is a younger woman somewhere, learning to inherit that silence  
Because she has seen how abused women are treated  
She knows she will be interrogated more than her perpetrator  
Will be made to feel like she was the accomplice  
That she asked for it somehow  
That her body is a bate  
That her body is his trigger  
That her body is a sin  
That her body caused a scene  
There is always an attempt to explain away a man's deeds  
To suggest he was possessed  
To suggest it was a demon's doing  
To suggest he is a decent man at heart  
Forget about a man's apology  
Or his remorse; unless it is advised by his lawyer  
And even then; notice how much of him it takes, to spit it out of his mouth  
You'd swear he's being separated from something dear to him  
something he cannot do without  
Notice how often women are told to learn "how to dress better"  
But never anything to the men on how to behave better.

*Hope Netshivhambe is an international storyteller and Voiceover Artist who grew up in Venda, South Africa. She has a marketing diploma from Vaal university of technology and a certificate in Radio and TV presenting from Oakfields college. She has shared her work in 8/9 South African provinces and has performed at some of South Africa's most prestige Festivals. Hope has been featured widely on radio and television. She is a Co-creator and cast of the award winning short film #WeAreDyingHere, also nominated for best short narrative at this year's Pan African Film Festival(PAFF) in Los Angeles(LA) the film is also the 2021 official selection for the 11th Charlotte Black film festival in Charlotte, North Carolina. Netshivhambe is an Alumni of the "Black Girl Live fellows" under the mentorship of Koleka Putuma. Hope lives by her self coined mantra; "Do what you came for" which speaks of purpose.*