

Permission to be

Dineo Ponde Mafora

Women's month
like many before,
calls us to remember
all women.

Boldly carrying communities
inherited from their mothers.

Air thick and full of chanting and ululation awaiting protests,
raising of banners to mark our survival.

Our wails are dismissed with silence
empty words
and more unfulfilled promises...

This Women's Month,
even if only for a month
I yearn for women to exist without the fear of night or whoever prowls in it.

Permission to lose heart, and grind teeth, curse vile words.
Permission to bark and growl at men who infringe on sacred spaces,
and linger a little longer than allowed.

For streets and alleyways to be empty of scarlet blood
empty of disembowelled and unclothed bodies.

Permission for young girls to not be "imbokodo" just yet,
for women to hold space in their homes
and not be hung from

trees.

Permission to not bear all the sins of the world on
worn-out shoulders.

-Permission to be