

**“No’ In Identity - The Loudest ‘No’”
By Adaeze Udeh**

Remembering in who I’ve always been,
referring to who I am.
The loudest silence follows the firmest loudest no,
engraving space in the ache of unwelcome.
It becomes a margin of emptiness,
a quiet turning
in a simple redirection,
a shadowed escape.

“No” was the only word that stayed,
felt heavier than the rest
and one that needed no guidance.
Wasn’t accompanied,
it satisfied the swift moment
but couldn’t carry the massive weight.
It stood alone, unshaken,
not bitter or cruel,
just unaccompanied,
just not enough.

“No” was the only word that remained
but it did not satisfy the anxiety,
the burden of stares,
judgement plastered on faces.
It seemed clean.
It seemed final.
But was it justified,
was it enough?

Clarity couldn’t comfort,
my emotions were deafening,
doubt lingered.
Still, “No” remained,
it echoed,
making the silence sting.
Didn’t wound,
but witnessed,
but could not stay.
And maybe that is enough.