

Pandemic
By Blessing Musariri

I am bone covered with skin
stretched tautly across angles
that were once features you admired.

I see the hope in your eye
that is too shy to step out
from behind your measured look;
a lingering trace of doubt
holding reality to ransom.

There is no mistake – it is me,
this faint outline of human form,
this fading being of failing light,
whose breath is climbing mountains,
leaving me to wait for its uncertain return.

The air here is thin and the view;
of lives long passed – my daughter's
tiny shape, my husband's ailing heap
in a room I scarcely left
and now shall never quit
on legs that would carry me
while air still moves in my body
and luster still shows in my face.

Yet, no one will say it –
such a small word,
a mere morsel in the mouth.

It's been some time since last you saw me,
you left it so late that now
all you will recall of me
is the stench of death too long in one place.
I have lingered longer than the truth
can be avoided, and yet,
no one will say it.
A small word, an intangible poison
bestowed without my knowledge,
a mere morsel in the mouth.

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