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Certain Uncertainty

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Certain Uncertainty

Vicki G. Mokuria, Steven F. Austin State University

When news of Covid-19 began to dominate
my family's group text and creep into
my awareness,
I immediately thought of one of my
academic lovers, Gloria Anzaldúa, and
how *Nepantla*
was quickly becoming our collective reality.
We all began living in a liminal space
of neither this nor that, and both this and
that. Our lives were intertwined with
certain uncertainty
about ourselves and others, and the ruptures
began to open as we were forced to take
breaths
of air within the confines of our homes in
isolation—until George Floyd's death

at the knee of a white officer on his neck for
9 minutes and 29 seconds. His death
breathed life into all of us with any
conscience about a long series of events
our awareness
could no longer ignore. White officers killed
an unarmed George Floyd whose last
breaths
were recorded by a courageous young
woman who knew the world must be a
witness. *Nepantla*
is that space even between life and death
that our minds and eyes fear because of
the uncertainty
of it all. Together we watched him die, and
like a tsunami, brave protesters filled up
the space

of emptied cities and passionately made
space
for voices of anger, frustration, and rage—
uniting to recognize that the deaths
of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and
Breona Taylor brought clarity to
uncertainty

we foolishly succumbed to as we clung to
the fear of contracting Covid-19. The
awareness
of our lives' unraveling tapestry brought
some solace because our souls know
that *Nepantla*
exists beyond places and times in an
essential and ephemeral space where
our breath

is both labored and light. And like
childbirth, we entered that sacred
process where breaths
of new life begin and where we will create
unimagined beginnings in a space
unknown just beyond the internal horizon of
the beautiful and blurry *Nepantla*.
2020 was a year cohabitated by Covid-19
and racial unrests borne of awakenings
that death
can signal rebirth. Through resistance that
masks a deeper rage, our awareness
of the interconnected pains of Covid-19 and
a white supremacist ideology that is
certain

to remain—unless challenged and
uprooted—embolden us to face and
unmask the uncertainty
of tomorrow. We will create a future
unimagined—born of the buried seeds
of breaths
long expired. It is in resistance and struggle
and the awareness
that unknown ancestors toiled for us to live
and breathe today in this space
and moment when birth and death
commingle. The struggle is inner, as Gloria
tells us. Embrace *Nepantla*

through the pain. Face it; laugh at it; breathe
through it—for *Nepantla*
is that inner space where we grow through
uncertainty
and unflinchingly face life and death

brought on by Covid or cops or racists who
hate that we breathe
the same air and dance in the same space.
We will not be broken, for what we are
about transcends awareness

of birth and death. It is within *Nepantla*
that the whispers of our awareness of liminal
uncertainty
breathe hope into our beings and cover us
with the floating eternal blanket of our
womb-space.