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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.