

If I could turn the hands of the clock back  
I would.

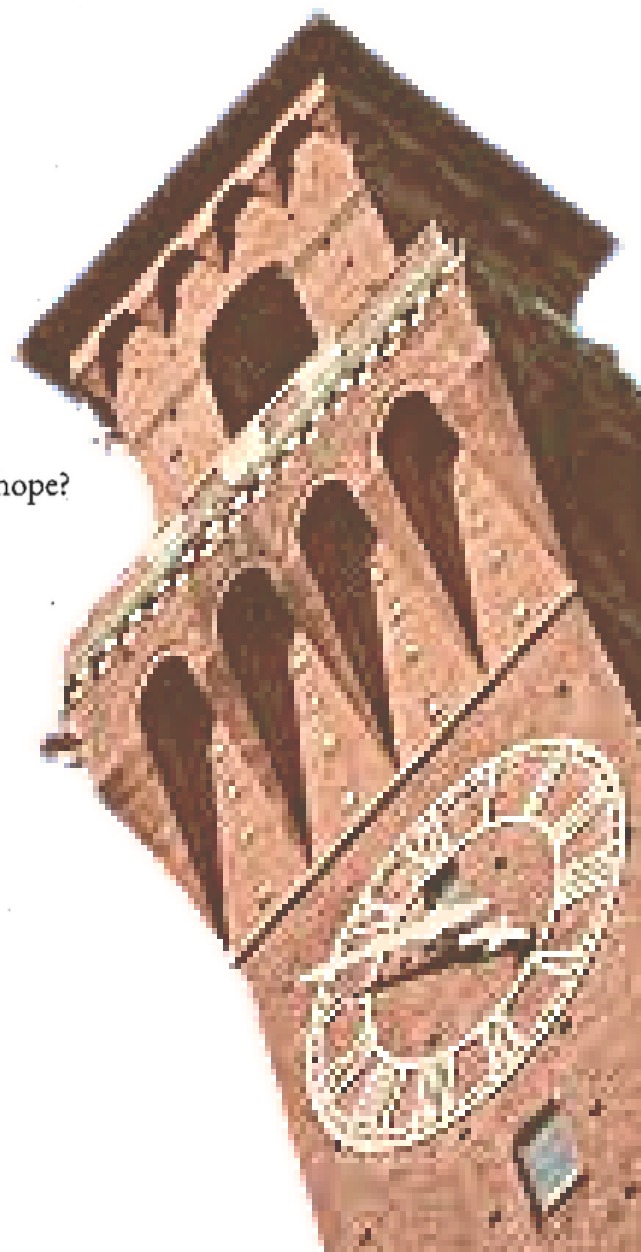
Unaware that its blades will cut me.  
Whispering what will happen to me  
My hands respond with red tears.

If I could speak to myself in the future  
A being who has finally reached their final form  
How would they respond?  
Would they respond with a smile that whispers to me  
"We did it, we proved them wrong."  
Or would they respond with the same look I give myself now.

If I could go back to see that little girl who would stay up all night  
Wondering when it will be her moment  
To be heard  
To be seen  
To finally be loved  
What would I tell her?  
"All in good time"  
"Si Dios quiere"  
Tell her lies when the truth is I don't know myself?  
"I dont know."  
3 simple words that will break her down more than it will give her hope?

The past has followed me into the present  
And it will follow me into the future  
That godforsaken clock knows what will happen tomorrow  
And it wont tell me.  
Every tik is a chuckle, every tok is a cackle  
Amused by my tears and questions  
Knowing I can't do anything but wait.

If only I could turn the hands of the clock back.



"How has the Pandemic Changed Your Life?" By Mercies Owusu

I knew a girl whose  
giggly glee used to pour out of her weary soul,  
a girl who used to play and laugh, carefree,  
crying a big, beautiful, brilliant  
"I don't care!"  
at anyone who doubted her.  
I know a girl who lies here,  
head deep in the clouds,  
she can almost see the moon,  
forfeiting sleep for moments of tranquility found at midnight.

I know a girl who pours her heart out to strangers,  
studying the sands of time that slip through her fingers,  
weary, apprehensive, disconnected,  
trying not to slip through the fragile frays,  
frays that open its crushing maw, every once in a while.  
I know a girl who found that this world is larger than she could have imagined,  
that the devil's grip sinks deeper than she understands.

It has given her hope,  
that despite  
the pain,  
the unfairness of this world  
it will soon pass.

As long as this hope doesn't wane,  
this truth will settle in her bones.  
And as the old her drowns beneath a sea of the past,  
her, newly created, like a monarch,  
moving, mournfully with newfound curiosity,  
slinking out of a cocoon, she'll crawl out,  
eyes laced with sleep, bones rusty from lethargy, hurt but ready, to start anew.

## **Generous Earth (Change one thing about the world)**

If I could change one thing

The earth would be dewey and green

The children would run freely

Consuming fresh air

It would always smell like flourishing roses

The ground a deep mahogany brown

Our lakes would overflow,

Drowning in hues and powerful tides

Strong, monstrous trees would embrace the wind

Creating sounds of rustling leaves

The human race would be snug and safe

If I could change one thing about the world

Everyone would live happily

No doubt, no worries present on their face

If I could change one thing about the world

It would be my ability to rest in your warmth

Enjoy your everlasting generosity of gifts

Basking in the fruits of your labour

Your glowing rays would continue to overpower

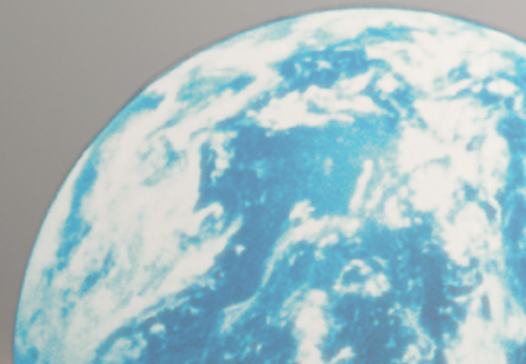
Always bringing unto us life and gratitude

Awaiting the day for us to give you the same

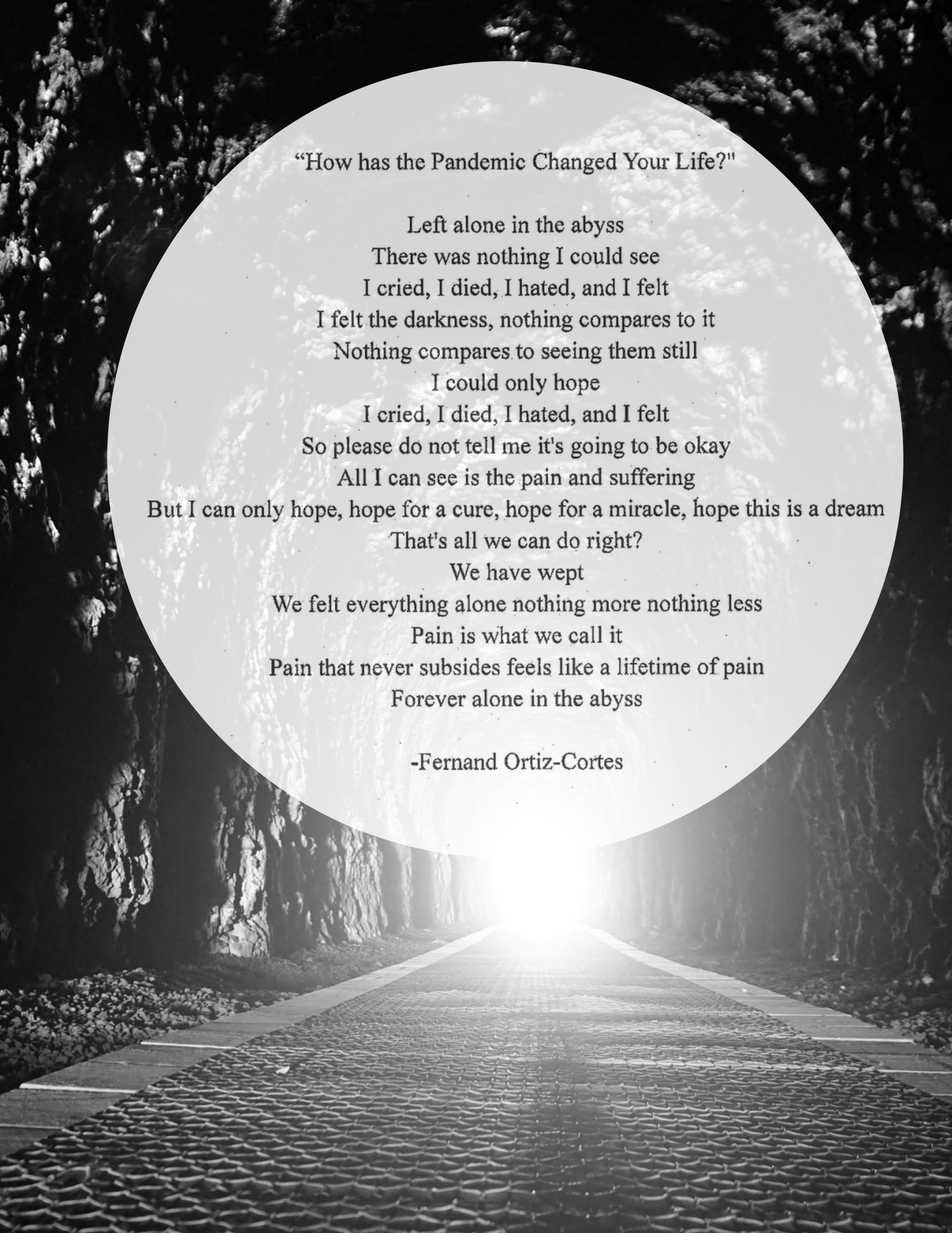
Generous Earth, If I could change one thing

It would be your eternal nurturing spirit,

Your hands that always give and never receive







"How has the Pandemic Changed Your Life?"

Left alone in the abyss  
There was nothing I could see  
I cried, I died, I hated, and I felt  
I felt the darkness, nothing compares to it  
Nothing compares to seeing them still  
I could only hope  
I cried, I died, I hated, and I felt  
So please do not tell me it's going to be okay  
All I can see is the pain and suffering  
But I can only hope, hope for a cure, hope for a miracle, hope this is a dream  
That's all we can do right?  
We have wept  
We felt everything alone nothing more nothing less  
Pain is what we call it  
Pain that never subsides feels like a lifetime of pain  
Forever alone in the abyss

-Fernand Ortiz-Cortes



## How the Pandemic Changed My Life by Blessing Owusu

My favorite color was yellow

Before

I grinned at the image of the brightness

Of the sun

Of happiness

And I willed myself to like it

I willed myself to grin at the sunlight lap up the breeze

I stared into it

And even though it brought tears to my eyes

I kept grinning

And hoped that the yellow around me was bright enough to fog the running faucet in my mind

I loved yellow until I hated it

Until yellow got obscured by darkness

I lapped up the breeze and found myself choking

I clawed for the clouds and found myself broken

I closed my eyes and found solace in the darkness

And I willed myself to harden

Until my soul started reaching for something more

It started twitching for more than the imagery in the brightness of the sun

The sun gave way and shone brightly against my fluttering eyelids

And I was content

My favorite color is brown now

I'm settling into my skin

I'm at peace with the darkness in my eyes because I know there's something beyond the sun

And if the tears come I'll keep grinning

And I'll like it

My favorite color was yellow

Before

## It's Over

Through efforts unbeknownst to even myself  
I have seen the great beyond, it's just over the hill  
I'm pulled down taken away by their soul

They don't allow me to move on and I fall,  
Losing the view, if I could just pass over my hilltop,  
Maybe ill find some clarification, yet I'm dragged down

I've apologized, wasted my time and theirs  
Their soul seems to be justified  
If I could've tried to pull myself up, I still shouldn't

The soul understands when its over, they know where I've wronged  
Through trials, the soul deems me guilty  
Tribulations among regrets

The horizon is gone now, I longed for that view  
The light only shimmers to see what could have been  
The soul has taught me about the moment, the one I can't lose

Its over, truth sets in the most terrible illness  
Black envelops, it's only fair  
How I've moved on unwillingly, unbeknownst to me.

