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## Pathogen Textures

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# Pathogen Textures

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The parasite —  
made gardens of cadavers  
built fences around the motherland  
reparations for good science.

A gangrene gardener, planting its sick  
inside the calabash, wilting walls,  
a passport's emblem.

*banned from entry*

---

She lifts the temperature gun from its holster  
raises it to my forehead — I feel warm  
a muffled voice behind the blue mask  
*you're good to go!*

I pat my fro  
the phantom bullet dissolves  
into my smallest details.

---

When the hospitals denied  
us a chance to wash the wilted cadaver  
we prayed the most merciful would accept  
her sodden soul regardless.

the West moves the bar  
clamps you in a corner  
builds a glass house,  
watches through hazmat suits  
as Johannesburg burns.

At Kotoka airport  
a British Airways flight  
full of fuming passengers  
rush past a row of commandos  
refuse to wait another hour for swab results  
more parasites arrive in the Commonwealth.

We stay inside  
alone with our thoughts;  
the veiled, bearded onyx,  
an undesirable roommate.

He pokes at your growing gut  
through intravenous screens  
feeds you footage of your genocide  
waters the plastic begonias  
obsessively scrubs your insecurities  
with Clorox.

The parasite painted  
over exposed whites  
barely visible blacks.  
Tried to erase a larger sickness  
more gangrene, way more infectious.