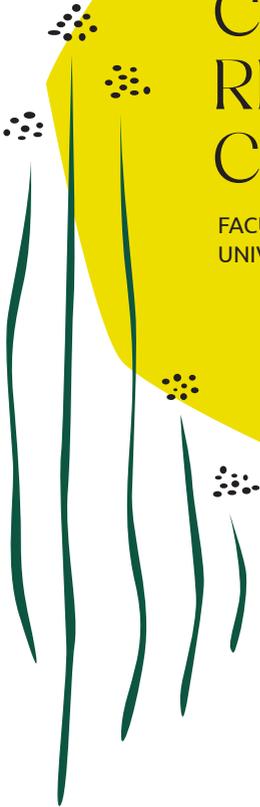




UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

CREATIVE REFLECTIONS COMPETITION

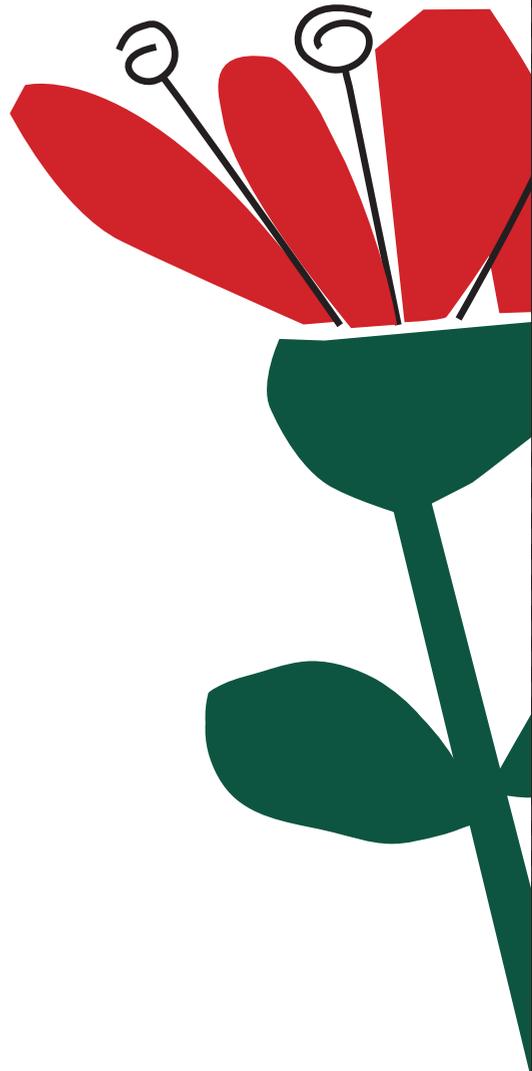
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



Since lockdown began in March 2020, student learning at UJ has gone online. The Humanities Teaching and Learning Committee decided to ask the students to reflect on their online learning experience during lockdown by drawing on their creative energies and submitting to a 'Humanities Creative Reflections Competition'. The following collection is the result of that competition. Creativity is an essential 21st century skill!

Congratulations to the students and we hope this will inspire readers to keep on being creative!

Humanities T&L Committee



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Creative Reflections Competition

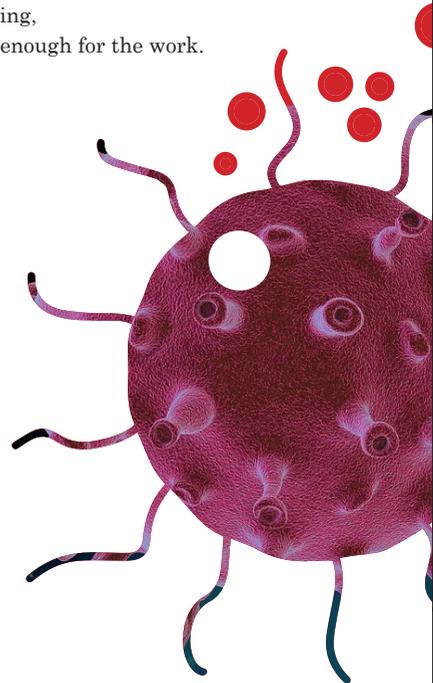
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UKHUVETHE | A.C Mbatha

Uk'hlala ekhaya kubi, kumnandi.
K'thuthumela umzimba, isikaze ukuma inhliziyiyo,
Hawu, phela bengithi aziyi ngomtsha wendoda,
Umthwalo ubethwa ubani, yimina,
Eqinisweni ak'sinisi mahleza ukuba la,
VU! Umsebenzi, uzimpethu zendlovu,
Ethala, ngisikaza ukuziphonsa izinduku,
Thethelela Nkosi, nakhu seng'khohlwa uhlelo eng'luhlelile,
Hawu, konje akukho nsimba yazuza ibuzi ngokulala,
Eseng'zokwenza uk'sebenza, ngoba amageja alingene abalimi.

COVID | A.C Mbatha

Living at home is bad, it's fun.
The body trembles, the heart threatens to stop beating,
Alas, for I thought that we still on time,
Who carries the load, is it me,
In fact, it is not an easy task to be here.
WOW! There is a lot of work, here,
On the terrace, I feint at throwing the sticks,
Forgive me Lord, I have forgotten the plan I have made,
Alas, no one has ever gained anything by sleeping,
What I would do is to work, since the tools are enough for the work.



Sinenhlanhla Jama

CORONA VIRUS

- C Certainly, I have grown as a student.
- O Overwhelmed but eager to learn.
- R Re-visiting my notes for clarity, and attending online lectures for knowledge.
- O Overcoming the odds beyond my imagination, it has been tough, but I'm tougher.
- N Needless to say, lockdown has been a nightmare, but it has taught us courage.
- A A scary rollercoaster ride it has been, after all that is what life is all about.
- V Venturing new hobbies, like writing poetry and playing instruments.
- I Igniting the endless possibilities of a beautiful future ahead.
- R Reconnecting with old friends, and making new ones.
- U Utilising my spare time to learn new things about my inner self.
- S Sanitizers and masks became my new best friends.

AND/OR

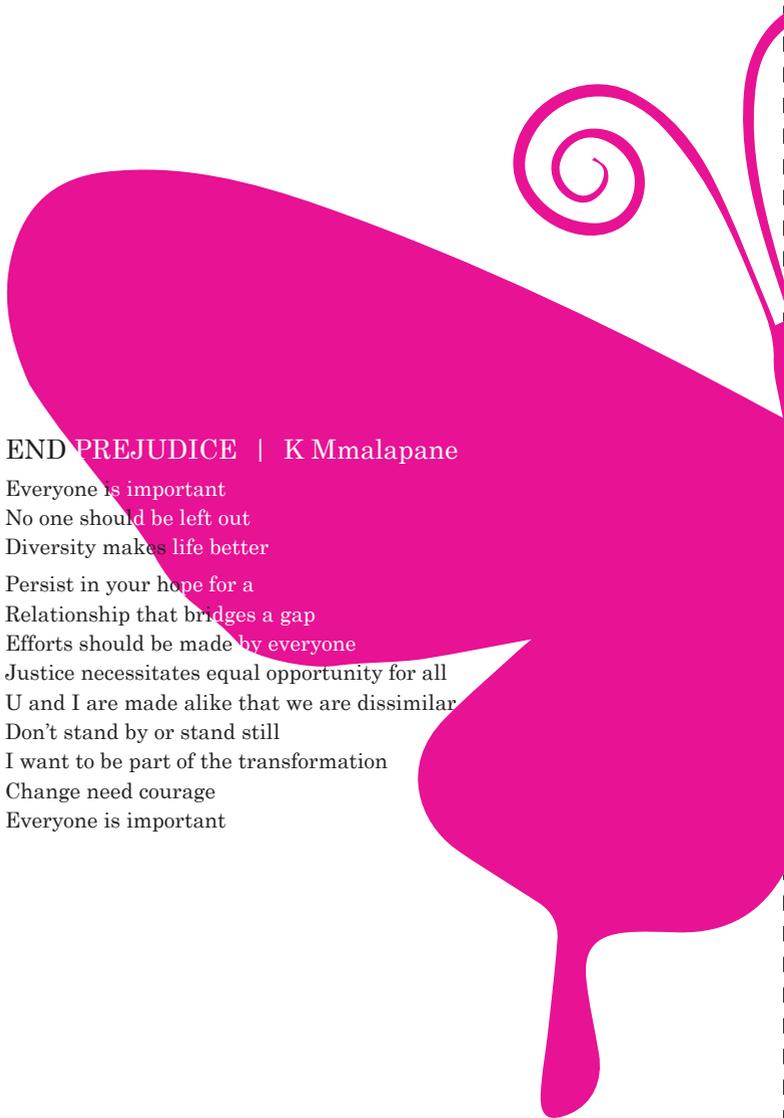
LOCKDOWN

- L Learning has been fun, insightful and challenging.
- O Overcoming obstacles, trying to stay alive.
- C Cautiously, we have been trying to stay alert.
- K Keeping busy, with assignments and quizzes, exploring new things interests.
- D Doing the most, despite the odds we face.
- O Oncoming freedom we await,
- W Wavering journey, with curves and falling rocks.
- N Nevertheless, we will conquer.





Heavens are as the Clouds



END PREJUDICE | K Mmalapane

Everyone is important

No one should be left out

Diversity makes life better

Persist in your hope for a

Relationship that bridges a gap

Efforts should be made by everyone

Justice necessitates equal opportunity for all

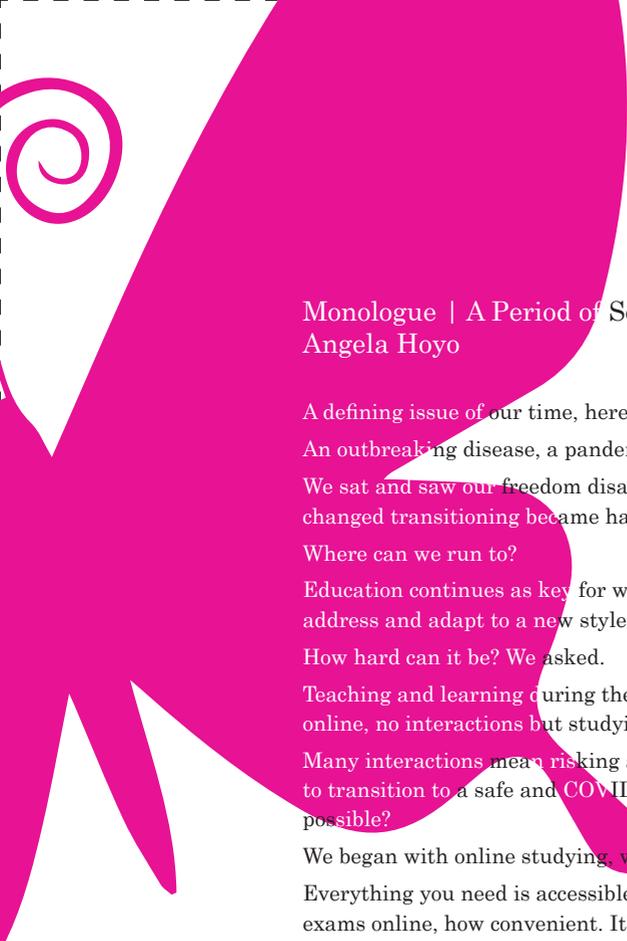
U and I are made alike that we are dissimilar

Don't stand by or stand still

I want to be part of the transformation

Change need courage

Everyone is important



Monologue | A Period of Social Change

Angela Hoyo

A defining issue of our time, here.

An outbreaking disease, a pandemic result.

We sat and saw our freedom disappear; systems changed transitioning became hard.

Where can we run to?

Education continues as key for we will know how to address and adapt to a new style of interactions.

How hard can it be? We asked.

Teaching and learning during the pandemic moved online, no interactions but studying continues, how?

Many interactions mean risking a rare opportunity to transition to a safe and COVID-19 free future, is it possible?

We began with online studying, well it's not so hard.

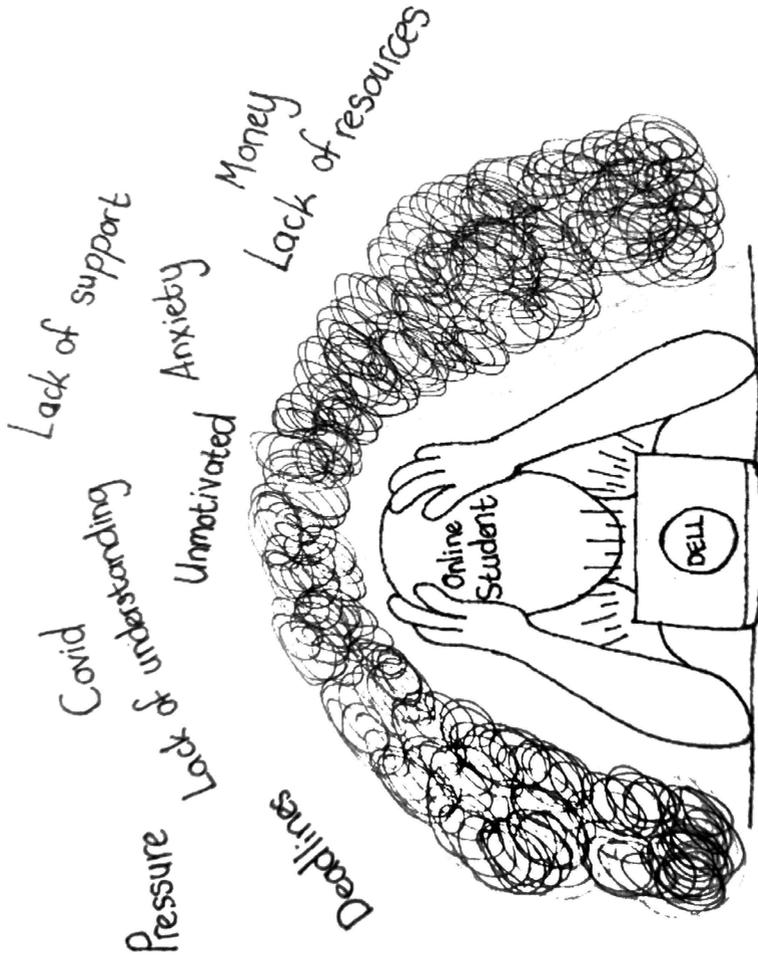
Everything you need is accessible, we write tests and exams online, how convenient. It's safe isn't it?

We learnt and developed as students, we were introduced to a new and improved way of leaning.

For most of us we acquired skills of time management, not easy but oh how I enjoy studying at my own time and space.

Although challenging to wake up early and attend a lecture online, I laugh because its not so hard.

Not easy but things will change, it does not have to be long term social change.



Online Learning
by Lizette Smith

LOCKDOWN | PM Moremogolo

Oh, you mother of great reset!

You creeped in on us when least expected

You started off as “21 days” mangithi phaa phaa! you are now our new normal

Our academic habitual maneuvers were no longer formal

I can now snuggle on my couch for a lecture, It’s informal

Blackboard collaboration the new go

All things “mute mic”, “video on/off” we can’t outgrow

Some struggle with connection, their secluded areas deem it slow

We adapt to the held zoom meetings; we want to go with the flow

The good ol’ days of bumping into my fellows at the D-Labs are hung backed

I now release my voice through the echoes of zoom mics, it’s the current style

It wasn’t easy grasping that I’ll only join a class online, it took me a while

I’ve gained patience and resilience though

Remotely, I can effectively communicate it’s an overflow

Yeah, put that on the skills’ list

Our department couldn’t allow us in studio, what a catch-22!

My ability of holding a cam-corder as a film student became skew

The digital creative side – subdued

Barrel of laughs brought by ridiculous-on-camera-presentations

Liberation’s seeked from this great perhaps

Ao! mara lockdown, siyalwa yini my love?

CODID-19 PANDEMIC | LOCKDOWN

Makananise Mutshidzi Angela

Covid-19! You introduced me to a new mode of learning

Online learning is now part of my life

Very challenging hence, I acquired advantageous skills to manoeuvre

I had to be punctual for online meetings

Developing listening skills was a necessity

Pity! How I had to adapt rapidly

After all, you introduced me to simple modes of communication

Nothing was puzzling with supportive lectures

Doing school work at home was incredible

Every task was completed at my comfort zone

My learning experience was completely modified

I am sad you took away my relatives however,

Challenges that you brought made me stronger

Learning became funny and easy

Oh! I never thought I can attend meetings with pyjamas

Covid-19 you did not only bring sadness but laughter

Knowing more about you helps us to conquer

Data is provided by the caring UJ, why should I worry?

Obviously! I refuse to be oppressed by covid-19

Well... I learned to accept what I cannot change

Now, I am utilising what I have to be the BEST



LOCKDOWN LEARNING | MT Dlamini

My feet hit the pavement in a gentle rhythm. I am not fast. But I like how stress rolls off me along with the sweat from my forehead, the way my favourite songs match the beat of my heart, and the satisfaction of discovering I'm capable of more than I first thought.

The sky spreads blue above me, and I'm content. I bask in the feeling for a short while before making my way back to my place. I arrive and realise there's load shedding. And this time, it caught me like a bolt from the blue; totally unprepared. There goes my online class. "Yoh! Ngaze ngah-lukomezeka!", I think to myself while letting out a huge sigh of frustration. This has been my issue with online learning, never mind the transition and huge workload! I stand in front of the mirror and decide to reflect on the good that still came out of this; I've acquired SEO skills. I've read books and written more. I've mastered the art of preparation and improvising. I sit back and relax. Lectures are recorded anyway, so I shall catch up later. For now, though, I choose to bask in the beauty of this day.



Mononyane Firidaus Precious

Greetings! According to my experience so far attending lecturers online is not that perfect, but I must say it is way better than waking up early in the morning and having to catch that 06:00 am bus.

I would say online learning has taught me how to trust and believe in myself with hopes of figuring out everything along the way in terms of doing my assignments, assessments, quizzes, and studying for my tests.

I have acquired a skill of talking myself out of procrastination, which has helped me so far from having a lot of workload and having to chase deadlines. I have enjoyed studying from home, because during traditional learning I used to be home sick within three days.

The most challenging thing about online learning for me would be balancing my academic work and my chores. The moment that made me laugh was when the Geography department sent out a Jerusalem dance challenge competition and guess what my friend and I won the first year category prize.

Who knows I might probably win this competition too.

THE PANDEMIC | Q Madikizela

The air has never been the same.
At times it feels insane but they say am sane,
In need of saintly solacing.
Saying this alone hurts,
We are now loners at our huts.

Education is the key to success! So they say.
How do we access it with our faces covered.
I might break the covenant I made to mama,
Please collect and connect my body to my breath of life.
The tomorrow looks gloomy.
Daunted by how I would love to glow.

Good, but start feels like a gamble.
Because now I use gadgets to study, giggle.
I am surely glued to google
Though I didn't see it coming
Yet it feels so common.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going.
But are we there yet? Getting weary.
Many of us are gazing,
Guessing every step as tomorrow is not promised.
I smile when I see the sunrise because it is the luckiest thing ever.

I FELT IT IN ME | R Phohleli

I felt the energy and enthusiasm in me
starting to fade away
While my body started shivering
fearing change
Not to question I didn't have the right tools to
even start thinking of adaptation
I wanted to be grateful for saving my mom
traveling expenses to school everyday
But I couldn't foresee beyond that

I felt it in me

Pressure I put on myself & of the society
My family and siblings who looked up to me
I could not afford to disappoint anybody
Crazy how I found myself feeling something I
couldn't pin into words

I felt it in me

I knew I was drowning
To make it worse am not a swimmer
In the water there were external forces
I had to battle
Network, data & load shedding
How do I make it to the ultimate goal
of success
I am contaminated by a virus that gave
birth to online learning

I felt it in me

I heard a little voice in my head saying
you asked for strength
Now overcome
I remembered growth has always been
in my vocabulary
So I overcame
On the bright side I gained new siblings
in the water
Today I raised up the water like
a queen I am
Two qualifications in my hand
And now I am digitized & accessorized
for the future





My Name is Sandiso Ngema a second-year student doing public relations and communication under the faculty of humanities. Since lockdown began Online learning was hard at first because I was a first-year student and have not adapted to the new environment yet use to procrastinate a lot and could not manage my time well but as time went by it became easier for me. I have always had a liking for making my own clothes, where I reside, I am not allowed to have a sewing machine because it makes noise, so I had to learn a new skill on how to crochet by watching YouTube videos tutorials now I have an online small business selling my crochet products with the extra money I earn from the business I send it back home. Crocheting motivates me not to sleep while I am attending classes, it is very therapeutic, teaches me to manage my time and money well, learned how to run a business while I am still a student and the best part about crocheting is I learn new patterns every day and most importantly I enjoy it.



SHE HOPES: SHORT STORY | Sinesiphe Feni

She went to the University of Johannesburg to study something she had no clue about, but she hoped “all will be well” like her mother used to say. She left her mother in the bachelor room and she was happy. Happy she got a room of her own, a bed of her own, space of her own to discover her artistic nature. “But due to the higher levels of Covid19” she had to go back home, of course get suffocated. As she disconnects with her God she still believes there is a higher power watching ahead. “Help me get through this online learning lord?” a little silent prayer she repeats in her head before every lecture. She has scars to hide, she has a perfect smile to fake, she has inner battles to fight, she deserves better. She is a survivor but nothing is good enough to her even with that single distinction she obtained in such a hard time. She always expects so much in herself but she’s doing fine. Life in varsity is getting harder, not that she can’t handle it. I hope her strength doesn’t scare her any more because her journey isn’t over yet.

LIMINALITY | Thulani Baloyi

Lockdown as a 'liminal stage' of precarity: situated 'in between and in betwixt' pre-COVID19 state of normalcy and interminable uncertainty.

Intermittent viral waves, emanating from the pitilessly indifferent ocean of pathology, with its concomitant potential earthquakes and subsequent shock waves of panic, tsunamis of mass contamination and, hypochondriac obsessions with rituals of purity.

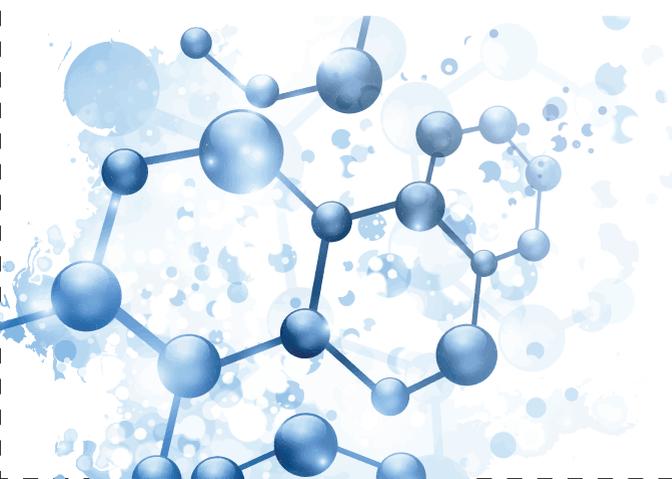
Meantime, mega death and economic plaque infests the heart of humanity with existential insecurity. Nation states' tremors with horror as they are faced with recurrent mortality and total annihilation; which shakes the very foundation of 'modern' civilization.

Although, biomedical science shed some glimpse of hope through swift development of various vaccines, some people remained convinced that the shadow will pass, while others become skeptical and cynical, whereas some believed in all sorts of absurdities surrounding inoculation.

Life, learning, teaching, and social leisure activities took novel trajectories, from corporeality and physical interactions to virtual existence and cyber community.

Individual self-exploration and reflexivity become mandatory; as induced by Lockdown's strict rules of isolation.

Transformation of societies across the globe, became inescapable inevitability. Yielding of certain civil rights and some social amenities to prevent spread of COVID19 made humanity to feel united against the common microscopic enemy.



PERSEVERANCE DESPITE ADVERSITY

Tashmika Govender

On the 23rd March 2020, the President announced a national lockdown because the COVID statistics were soaring. We were plunged into the depths of despair. This was surreal. Our lives changed irrevocably. Despite this, we persevered. I think the idiom, 'time and tide wait for no man' is appropriate.

I had commenced my first year of university, my youthful ideals stretching ahead of me. I was in awe of the lecture halls surging with students: a cacophony of voices and a kaleidoscope of colour. Now lectures were online depriving me of the opportunity to socialise with friends. Isolation overwhelmed me.

Communication was cold and clinical. There were no warm responsive faces, just the glare of my laptop. Submissions on Blackboard were initially challenging as I grappled with technology. My fear was a lack of connectivity and missing a lecture. Initially, students forgot to mute or even turn off their cameras. I got a glimpse into their lives...vicarious and fleeting. Gradually we became accustomed to this new normal and relaxed as our online skills improved.

The lecturers responded to queries, reducing my anxiety. I learned the importance of resilience and independent study. I choose to succeed despite adversity.



the New Normal | by Jenna Miles

The girl who smiled next to me
Was about to fear our air
And it was going to be destiny
That we never sat in that same chair

I found myself at home
Like a deer in skates on ice
My life felt monochrome
Because I never saw my friend's face twice

I missed sitting together at orientation
I missed the halls of people
Now I worry about my graduation
And the effects of this upheaval

But then I looked around me
And everyone seemed this lost
We began to reassure each other
While our paths all virtually crossed

We bonded over names without faces
We admired the tech savviness of our lecturers
We thrived in different virtual spaces
We conquered all and became adventurers

I know that we can all agree
That we will be wearing a mask
But I can only imagine how wide those smiles will be
On our first day back after overcoming this task

THE PANDEMIC

Thomas Abram Selomane



The day it has reached our country's surface,
Hitting our fields, hurting our families,
Eating, and erasing our relatives in the books of life – I'll never forget.
Peace it lacks like trees lack moisture in winter,
Academically it made us suffer, drowning in Artificial Intelligence.
Network is life, data is the oxygen and electronics are students' fuels,
Dear Covid-19, the mother of shutdowns and lockdowns,
Even if you intend to destroy, be aware you're building us simultaneously,
My adaptation to your offspring - lockdown, made me learn a lot,
I can still pursue my dreams despite your presence,
Cause' there's nothing better than online learning, though I won't forget
your name.

THE TE IGNECIAH POCIA



AN ACROSTIC POEM | Victor Mashishi

In a year where all students were in awe

Learning self-discipline and new ways of being

Observing and listening more deeply during online lessons became my being

Choices had to be made after all the losses of our loved ones, **C**hoices to make them proud and succeed

Kindness and sharing became techniques to be utilized if one was to succeed

Determined to know more in order to succeed, we became,

Obedient towards authorities and demands that came with using online facilities

Wondering if there is purpose to learning in all these difficulties

Natured by the **lockdown** sphere, navigated all online learning processes and finally nailed and obtained all courses.



Q Madikizela (video transcript)

Yebo sisi

Siyaphila kuhle akukho okubi, akukho okubi ngoba phela umuntu usezihlalela endlini akasaphumeli ngisho phandle.

Yebo, yebo, yebo, yebo, yebo hhayi konke kukahle, konke kukahle. Phela angithi siph' idolo ukudla kwalo, yebo yikuph' idolo ukudla kwalo.

UNkulunkulu uhlezi ezokusiza. Sijabuliswa yikhona nje lokho. Endi ke nje mina ayikho nje into engangikhiphela emnyango ngoba nje ngifundela endlini.

Sengafunda phela nokusebenzisa i-laptop. Ngiyazi awukholwa, ngiyazi awukholwa but sengiyakwazi ke.

Nami ngangingazi ukuthi ngizoshesha kanje uku-adaphtha kule simo lesi kodwa ke akukho nzima.

Alright asiyimise hhayi bo sifuna ukuya phambili nempilo thina yingakho sizimisela kanje ngokufunda

Yebo nisale

Yes sister

We are fine and all is well because one doesn't even go outside but just stays indoors.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, everything is fine, all is well. After all, we pray daily and prayer has kept us going.

God is always there to help you. We are just happy about that. And in my case, I have no reason to step outside because I study from home now.

I have also learnt to use a laptop. I know you don't believe me but I do know now.

I also did not know that I would adapt to this situation so quickly and it was not hard.

Alright then let's end here no, we want to progress in life, which is why we are so committed to learning

Yes bye.



WE LEFT

Short story by Georgia Mosamo

We packed our bags and left. Anguish flew and sat on our shoulders.

For once in a while, we never thought we'd say goodbye.

The beautiful campus with people of love and substance.

We all left, and the lecture halls were left weeping.

The trees swayed and crunched as I boarded the taxi home.

It was as though their hearts were crushed into the shards of glass for seeing us go.

Now I'm home, and every day I sit on this chair that seems ancient to the eyes.

My father gave it to me, but he's dead now. Poor soul.

Every day I sit on this chair, and voices waft from the speakers.

People I used to love; lecturers, friends, they all speak through these computer screens.

Sometimes there are no lights, but I've learnt to pray to the clouds for a stable network.

Sometimes I feel like giving up, but my mama blows in some hope.

But one day we will come back to our lovely campus, and we will hands with victory.

By washing our hands, wearing masks, we devote to keep everyone safe. Because everywhere life is full of heroes.

