



Writing | Symposium 2021

## **Pandemic Elegy**

By Angeline Truong

As he lay dying a few halls away, a young mother  
gave birth alone at the hospital, and her baby cried aloud,  
pink mouth turned to an empty window.

No-one to hear his last breath. I stay awake  
wondering what touched his skin last. I must imagine  
it was a warm bed-sheet, and not latex gloves.

Since there can be no funeral, we gather under moonlight,  
by the ocean, in our kitchens, bound only by the pixels  
on our screens, and bury our dead instead in poems.

We fit our grief neatly in 2x3 windows, like bees caught  
in honeycomb. We lay nested against each other  
in closed grief, let a static buzz fill the silence.

I send a note to the temple. Ask the old monks  
who will bury him — please wear yellow, the color  
of a daisy's belly, the color of his favorite time of sky.

The baby born alone is now old enough to wander —  
his mother turns her head from the stove, calls to him:  
*Why do you linger so? Come here, come home, come home.*

**Angeline Truong is interested in the intersections of medicine, storytelling, and social justice. She hopes to combine a career as a physician with her interests in writing to advocate for and provide care to the underserved, with a particular focus on the Vietnamese refugee community.**