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| |  | | --- | |  |   **Something Else by Jonathan Ukah.**  I miss our cigarette-filled afternoon gist, When we ripped off our blood-laden apron, Casting it aside like a piece of nuisance rag; We would discard the heavy stethoscope, That carved deep, red marks around our neck; Our desires mixed with our painful memories, And there is no shadow of a doubt, That we were dead to this cruel season. There is no need to fear a handful of dusts, Whirling against our thick, cigarette smoke.  Let us talk about something else, Not the last breath of that dying man Whose cold was enough to chill our room; And his death wish was too strong for us, Due to the dark clouds of microscopic droplets, Strings of mucus arcing with grace Through the plastic tubes hanging on his nose. Let us not talk about the festoon of saliva, Rushing mercifully down his shrunken cheeks; As though they were his beloved ones.  We did our best in these chilly circumstances, Pinning ourselves to the resolute mast of duty, Our nights are speckled with suicide thoughts, And our days swoon with bizarre sights Of men that hid behind obtuse masks; And women ballooning into orbits of angst;  Their palms encased in gloves and sanitizers; Their faces masked in threadbare cloths. Let us not whisper about the festival of fear, As it would soon be another great day.  Instead let us talk about something else, Like that perfect picture of Joy on your wall, Which you bought last year at an auction, But till now had little smile for its presence; Let us admire the flock of little pigeons That pecked some dry crumbs from your palms; Let us talk about our nightly dip of prayer, Which makes us drunk with salient hope, As we switch off just another life-support And look away to hide our flooding tears. |

Written at the Peak of a Pandemic, 2020.

Bio

Jonathan Ukah was born in Nigeria but nationalised in Germany. A graduate of English at the University of Nigeria, he studied German Law, but lives and works in London, UK.