I almost died alone
We were in the midst of a pandemic
So died should scare me the most
But it was alone
It is alone
Alone is supposed to keep you safe
But alone is what almost killed me
They say to choose between
6 ft apart or 6 ft under
But what if one just leads to the other

Reaching out to people
Who’ve been told to keep a distance?
It sounds like a set up to me
So while everyone is watching the virus
Society tries to pick off those of us
Unfit for isolation
Those deemed unworthy of love
“Unessential” is what I hear
they’re calling us these days

So when I needed a hug
and could find none
I considered a kiss
One from death
For when they do not love you the way that you want them to...
Love them anyway
Not the way you love yourself
That is too sacred

Love them like a sunset
You know they will leave
But they are still beautiful while it lasts

Most people will not know how to love you the way you want them to.
They will love you too soft.
Or too inconsistent.
Or too fragrant.
Or too typical

They may send you flowers
but they won’t be rainbow daisies.
And they may tell you they love you
but it will be amidst a disagreement.
They may remember your favorite song
but you’ll only remember how they sang it out of key.

And when they kiss your tears away as you sleep your fitful sleep.
You will wake up only recalling a drought in your dreams.
Because they can only love you the way that they can.
And it is okay if that is not the right way.
For you.
We should probably prepare for the things we pray for/
Today I got good news and I cried

I wish that I could say that they were happy tears
I wish I could tell you that I sobbed because I was grateful
But I found myself weeping because joy had shown up and I had no space left for it
I had filled every single crevice of me with grief
I had only today made space for new pain
For even when I finally developed a wary type of acceptance for depression and anxiety
I discovered withdrawal
Frantically feeding my brain like a feral beast
Causing me pain when it needs something
But unable to communicate what that something might be
I was so consumed
That a piece of the joy I had been praying for
Finally arrived but
It found me unprepared
I had nowhere to put it
I had no idea how to let it in
So I cried
I hope there is soon space for that joy where those tears occupied
#BlackLivesMatter*

When I scream Black Lives Matter
There is an asterisk in the back of my throat that whispers
*this does not apply to me
My life does not matter
People would barely miss me if I was gone
Sometimes I wish that I could take their places
Bring back Breonna Taylor or little Aiyana Stanley-Jones
Take me instead
Maybe I could be more useful as hashtag
I’m sure feeling like a lump hits different from inside a body bag
At least I won’t feel like a waste of a toe tag

It's no wonder that I can’t breathe
when I constantly feel like a waste of oxygen
Why couldn’t they take me
And leave someone here, more deserving
It’s unnerving,
The way that I lay in my bed and pray for death
Yet, cops have murdered better people in their homes without an invitation
What I gotta do around here to get some damn service?
They out here protecting and serving my people to death
And yet, they screen my calls
Home

Every day when my dog, Huey and I return to my apartment
I point to the door and say “Home”
I am beginning to suspect that I am trying to teach myself this lesson as well.