

un/phased, un/phasing

a poem by danilo machado in couplets for two voices

part of *Phases and the In-Between* by Brothers Sick, Yo-Yo Lin, and danilo machado, presented by The Shed: *Up Close*
2020 – 2021

and the moon spins, of course
glitched patches of light and cratered shadows

x-rays illuminate
the bones of two hands

signs read: save lives #FlattenTheCurve
outside with no mask? fuhgeddaboutit

quarantine for fourteen days
words burning orange

two hands, knobs and joints
make an OK OK

lehman college drive-through testing site
a black bird swoops down

camera pans slowly left
passing white pointed tents

we enter, plastic windows let light in
two white fans spin inaudibly

a desk and sanitizer pumps
two teal-gowned nurses

one gets up, leaves the frame
one puts on black gloves

squirm fingers
nitrile disposable sanitary

a map of new york city has joined
the right side of frame

colors change from shades of green to blue
metrics and mappings

testing and cases
patches of pink and purple and orange

we move faster to the left passing more fans,
a worker and a uniformed soldier, who waves

sterling silver ringed finger
scroll touch screen questionnaire

how much pain
how severe

split screen tubes red pull for help
speaker holes dotted like fireworks, green glow drips

unringed finger scrolls down
symptom questionnaire no yes

green drips
green fireworks

former poor house, asylum
kings county hospital, lenape land

two smoke stacks like swabs
leaving ambulance, overlay fade

signs work zone ahead
share the road

approaching yellow school bus, blue open tent
strings of yellow caution tape

fade into orange cones neon vests hard hats
overlaid construction zone around our corner

essential work stopping traffic, breaking ground
tubes over shoulders carry heat and oil

black diamond chain link fence
in front of sibling smoke stacks

double

double

bags drip transparent, curled hoses
uncurled metal cold reflective blue wall

fade and zoom
lit candle flicker wick yellow flame and ash

jewish soul candle, *yahrzeit*
in memory of the dead

quarter million dead from the virus in the US
—and counting

black white static side view inside view MRI
ear nose skull eye sockets bones and folds

static
static

overlaid face fade
recovery index new york city scroll down

march school closures
first city deaths, cares act

april subway closures
state of emergency extended in may

governor cuomo announces governor cuomo extends governor
cuomo allows

phase one reopening june eighth begins phase two june
twenty-fourth

phase three begins july sixth phase four begins july nineteenth

mayor de Blasio furloughs himself september sixteenth
in person learning begins with unanimous no confidence

black white static top view
inside view MRI bones and folds

colored dials imposed on glitched spinning moon
measure pressure time temperature

engulfed in green blue pink neon glitch,
the cratered moon turns turns turns

fade into blue syringe, red glitch
tubes phase one two three