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AMST 200
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This collection of journal entries was written over the course of roughly a month and a half of living with my parents at home in Windham, Connecticut during the COVID-19 pandemic. The entries are mostly stream-of-consciousness and pretty accurately capture what I was thinking and feeling during this weird, unsettling period.

March 31st, 2020

It's Tuesday, exactly seven days since I've been home. I don't think the reality of any of this has hit me. Sometimes I'll be wandering around the house doing whatever aimless task and I'll stop for a moment and think about why exactly I'm at home, in my childhood home, in the middle of the 2nd semester of my sophomore year of college, and then I remember the insanity of the whole thing.

My mom and I watched Contagion last night—patient zero is from Minneapolis! Jesus Christ.

April 1st, 2020

I got this strange feeling when I was leaving Macalester. The campus was deserted, all my friends had gone home, my room was a pile of half-packed clothes.

I think you get strange feelings when you know you're leaving a place. I guess I sort of felt like I wasn't only going to miss the people who had defined that particular semester on campus, but I was also going to miss the person that particular semester had defined *me* as. And it all felt like some sort of dystopian novel in that all of it—I, Macalester, Saint Paul, the country, the world—would never be that way ever again.

April 2nd, 2020

It's the end of my first week of quarantine at home. I have seven more days left before I am allowed to go outside. And do what? I guess buy groceries.

April 3rd, 2020

I keep seeing more and more videos of people fashioning face masks out of random items because there's a massive shortage of real masks in the US. The CDC announced today that everyone should be wearing masks in public, regardless of whether you're sick. I think it will make the closeness of the pandemic feel more real. I reach for about 10 cough drops a day...I think it's mostly about calming my anxiety, but I think I've also convinced myself I'm sick.

April 4th, 2020

Every day I feel a little more lifeless. My body is heavy and soft and weak. My stomach always hurts. I take Advil for my headaches. I resent the routine of it all. It rains often. All my music is beginning to sound the same. The news is infuriating and humbling and terrifying all at once. We shut it off at 7pm every night. "Self-care".

But every day I wake up. My eyes are open, and I am taking all of this in. I am inhaling through my nose and exhaling through my mouth thinking, this is me being alive right now and that is a lucky thing.

April 5th, 2020

I have found that every week in quarantine brings a few hours full of joy. They are few and far between, but they are the hours in which I think about hugging my friends, about sitting in a classroom, about moving into my house, about traveling, about sitting in the corner booth at the Tap. Or they are the hours in which I'm walking my dog alone in the woods, or cooking dinner, or taking a hot shower, or napping: the hours that remind me I am lucky.

When I think about these things that are full of joy, and then I think about all of the odds stacked against college students, I want so badly to not to be a cynical person when all of this is over. It seems unlikely.

April 6th, 2020

My cousin Pete is supposed to get married to his fiancé Serena over Memorial Day weekend. The asshole wedding venue wouldn't offer them a refund, but said they could get married in 2023 if that works for them? How thoughtful.

April 7th, 2020

My grandma died the fall of my freshman year at Macalester. I was supposed to read a Mary Oliver poem at her funeral but instead I cried in the bathroom of the reception venue.

I miss her often.

My mom says she wishes Grandma Nancy were alive today, although I don't understand this sentiment, all things considered. I'm grateful she isn't alive to experience this; to read the headlines, to grow anxious about the symptoms, to isolate in fear in her retirement home, to lose friends. I think everyone is doing a certain amount of yearning right now, be it for people we've

lost or places we've been or comforts we miss. I think my mom really leans into these sorts of things.

About a year after my grandma's funeral, I got a tattoo of a plant from the Mary Oliver poem I was supposed to read. My mom hates it.

April 8th, 2020

17 days ago, I went to the Walgreens on Snelling and Randolph and refilled my prescription. I get a 90-day supply when I refill. I wonder where the world will be in 73 days. The 76-day lockdown in Wuhan ended today. And then Bernie dropped out of the presidential race. Only a month ago I was standing amidst hundreds of people at his rally in Saint Paul. I feel like we failed him.

April 9th, 2020

I'm in my bedroom, doing homework for a class at the college I wrote an application for 2 years prior in the very same room.

I really like this room. I designed it and redesigned it frequently between the ages of 10 and 17, when sometimes my dream job was to be an interior designer. I was very intentional about the color scheme; The walls are white, except for the chalkboard wall which I put one half-assed coat of white paint over when I decided I had "outgrown it" and now it's a weird, muddled grey, and the accent colors are pink, orange, and red. In that order.

There's the classic wall of magazine cut-outs, which includes an Onion headline: "Teens: Are They Laughing at You?" (how meta of me), a Democratic Socialists of America business card I

found (I had no idea what they stood for, I just liked the roses), and a vintage postcard of Minnesota my aunt gave me when I got into Macalester.

All of this is to say that it's really fucking strange to be 20 years old, staring at these things and thinking about who I was when I last did homework in this room.

April 10th, 2020

I'm trying to run more now that I'm home and going outside is something that resembles exciting, etc. Everyone in my neighborhood (mostly old people, mostly cranky) is so friendly all of a sudden. It makes me think a lot about the value we place on human interaction. Why does it take a global pandemic for neighbors to say hello to each other? I think about that a lot at Macalester because it seems like my aloofness is regional. Every time I come home I'm a little more midwestern, though.

April 11th, 2020

I drove to this secret beach today because I really needed to get out of the house and because I knew no one would be there. The other day I felt nauseous and had chills and the thought of what the virus is doing to change the way I perceive my body only exacerbated the "symptoms."

The virus makes me fear my healthy body and lose trust in the systems that run every day to keep me alive. It's scary and saddening to feel this way about the home I've lived in for twenty years, but I'm not sure how to regain the trust.

It's really sunny and windy and the pages of my journal keep flipping and my sneakers are full of sand and I think maybe the trust is regained in moments like this when my existence feels less

measured by statistics and news reels and symptom lists and death tolls and horrible politicians and bodily anxieties, and everything feels just a little more normal.

April 12th, 2020

School is starting to feel like such a burden. I don't want to show up to Zoom classes or do my homework. That is all for today.

April 15th, 2020

I've been thinking a lot about all the students at Mac who see being there—on campus or in an apartment or house in Saint Paul—as a respite from their home lives. I see Mac as a respite too, but I guess I mean in the most literal way. The students for whom the pandemic means returning to impoverished homes, overcrowded homes, to dangerous or abusive homes, to broken homes, etc. I feel immense privilege and gratitude when I think of where I am able to quarantine.

I've also been thinking a lot about my parents and all the weight they must feel financially, health-wise, and as parental figures. My dad just lost his job and he spends a lot of time playing music in the garage, probably his own sort of respite. My mom's work is still considered essential—she's a landscaper—,so she's out of the house most of the day which I imagine is good for her peace of mind. That being said, it doesn't make it any less scary to think of her out in the world every day.

April 16th, 2020

I know this project isn't supposed to be theoretical but I can't help thinking about my mind and my body in quarantine in relation to Virginia Blum's "The Patient's Body."

In it, Blum talks about the exact amount of hours a person must examine themselves in the mirror/think of their body image in a distorted way in order to be deemed disordered. Macalester helped me shake a lot of my body image issues, being in my childhood bedroom does not.

April 18th, 2020

I struggle sometimes with the tone of this project. I feel extremely lucky in that I don't have to face this pandemic in any direct way; I'm not mourning a loss or working a dangerous job or suffering from the virus myself. I mean, I read the news and my family talks about the pandemic at dinner practically every night, but the experience of living here has become very insular. Just by reverting back to the all-consuming ins and outs of being a child under my parents' roof, I sometimes forget why I'm even here.

April 19th, 2020

My family "went" to a Zoom birthday party for my uncle last night. It was so chaotic and awkward. No one could figure out how to use the technology and then my mom presented my uncle with a birthday cake that he, of course, couldn't actually eat it so we just awkwardly blew out the candles for him and ate it in front of everyone. Strange times.

April 27th, 2020

Abridged daily routine:

9am: Wake up, check Twitter.

9:30am: Feel glum after looking at Twitter.

10am: Cook one over-medium egg (I'm getting good at it).

10:15am: Wash hands.

11am: Walk Chief...sometimes awkwardly back into the trees so people can get by me on the trail (6ft, of course), or sometimes walk in isolated fields where Chief and I just hang out together.

Noon: Wash hands.

1pm: Begrudgingly visit Moodle...finals are coming up (how does a teacher proctor an online exam?).

2pm: Look at the clock in horror...quarantine has completely warped space and time.

3pm: Aimlessly pick up a 5 pound weight when feeling restless from homework. Immediately put down again.

3:15pm: Wash hands.

5pm: The day is now over and I go to bed.

May 1st, 2020

I keep thinking more and more about how much smaller my Mac education is going to feel—I probably won't study abroad, I probably won't have any cool, impressive summer internships, I am *definitely* missing out on new friends and experiences that seem like such a given at a school as small as Mac.

This pandemic has taken an experience that is so definitive in many people's lives, certainly in mine, and has shrunken it into this withered version of its former self. I'm scared about what the world will be like when I graduate. Some days the fear overwhelms me at unexpected times on days when I really thought I had gotten the hang of the whole quarantine thing. Today (tonight specifically) is one of those days.