Lessons and Experiences from a Pandemic

The first wave hit like a breeze.

Light jokes filled the air as

small talk was exchanged.

“The virus will pass soon!”

Then the first body dropped.

Virtual learning was an emotional roller coaster.

Friends agreed in unison that we deserved a break.

From the exhausting early in person classes.

From the social gatherings and endless club meetings.

The psychics among us predicted the heavier online load.

Some of us grabbed the heavenly opportunity for sleep.

One day became a week.

One week became a month.

One month became the end of the school year.

The end I have been desperately waiting for!

The end of my last, senior year!!

No prom.

No last violin solo.

No celebration.

No real graduation.

No good-byes.

Reality hit like a truck.

At least I was committed to someone!

Someone who gave me butterflies!

Someone who I could hit up anytime!

I have never dropped someone

so fast in my eighteen years of life.

My only celebration in 2020. No regrets.

School brainwashed my innocent mind.

To believe school peers will keep in contact.

To believe they were more an instagram follower.

I was dead wrong.

Some people are like clouds!

It is a brighter day without them!

The numbness is not fading away. The fact that I cannot end a chapter of my life makes

me frozen in the past. As my mentality is stuck, moving on seems difficult and the feeling of

going crazy slowly consumes me. I am on the edge of the cliff, dangling on hope for a better

college life. High school ended on a bittersweet note, and I will not be able to get back the

last few months. However, none of the tiny details will matter a couple of years from now.

The same people I have attended school with for the past twelve years suddenly

vanished. Looking back now, the thought of never seeing them again does not faze me

anymore. Those who truly value my friendship will stay in my life till the end, while those I

passed by in life will have become a good experience. The quarantine did a phenomenal job

of filtering true relationships from the toxic ones. I am beyond grateful for my few friends

that I could call family, for the end of a relationship that was clearly not meant for me, and for

opening up my eyes to the truth.

The beauty of waking up to face a

waterfall of sunlight is immeasurable.

Being able to go for walks and

hear birds chirping calms my heart.

No more waking up to the darkness.

Having time to make a meal instead

of cafeteria food is a blessing in itself.

No more hair in pizzas or subs.

Being able to watch Netflix while eating.

Not hearing three hundred other people chewing.

No stressful background noise.

Perfectly splendid.

The first few days felt like a holiday.

After a while, my mind wanders

in complete isolation at home.

Deep breath in. Deep breath out.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. TICK. TOCK.

Like my childhood, I was alone again.

Texting and TikTok could not feed

my socially deprived soul.

Getting up in the morning became a struggle.

An atrocious bomb goes off almost

giving me a slight heart attack.

Suddenly, I found a new best friend.

The snooze button and I are best pals now!

Certainly better than the fake friends.

One foot in front of the other gradually

gets heavier as if sandbags are attached.

Schoolwork starts off like a snowball.

The ball rolls and rolls until an avalanche is born.

Stress and anxiety accumulates until

the clouds get too heavy to hold it in.

I can finally check off mental break down

from my quarantine to-do list!

In complete honesty, I do not remember

the last time I learned in school for fun.

Virtual learning took it up a notch.

The current goal is purely finishing

assignments before the deadline.

The summer after senior year arrives.

The one we have all been waiting for!

The heavenly fast foods,

the stupendous road trips, and

the memories that could have been

quickly disappear into my thoughts.

My thoughts creep louder in the growing silence.

Goosebumps infest my arms but come and go.

My thoughts send a shiver down my spine as if a

ghost is ready to thrive off my vulnerable state.

I turn on a smooth melody for a peaceful day.

Blackbear songs became my national anthem.

I am teleported to a whole new world.

Free of worries and stress.

Music was one major escape route.

Social media was definitely not.

One day became like the next,

and the next,

and THE NEXT,

and the overwhelming next.

At one point,

we are not living,

we are surviving.

The moment I step outside my house, life feels normal. As I walk my dog, there

is only the sound of nature and miniature paw taps of my dog walking and relieving himself.

The peace is quickly overturned by spiteful emotions. With a bitter emotional state, I could

not comprehend why the pandemic hit during this specific year of my life. While the previous

pandemic occurred around a hundred and two years ago, I try to find reasons for my horrible

luck or karma. I convince myself these are useless thoughts, but realize they give me slight

comfort and less suffocation in quarantine. On the other hand, the isolation and quiet became

a golden opportunity. Deeper intrusive thoughts began to overflow but allowed for selfreflection.

For my entire life, I was busy focusing on being someone else. Because I was

afraid of becoming an outcast, I would shape my personality and actions for an ideal image.

I found myself mimicking normal behavior and let others overshadow me. Eventually, I

engraved the toxic mindset of putting other people’s thoughts over my own and focused too

much on what other people thought of me. I forgot who I was for a while, but complete

silence brought me to realize my internal conflict. The realization took ten years and a deadly

pandemic.

School comes around with no hesitation

to laugh off the pandemic.

Hundreds of students gather avoid missing out

on new adventures while worried for their lives.

Political fires are fueled, and shots are fired.

Professional and doctoral advice is belittled

as the mask civil war begins.

Lives are lost.

Life flourishes until it can grow no more.

Life decomposes in the ground.

Life replaces life.

Out of the blue, I feel sad for those

who were not able to escape from

the virus itself.

The year 2020 has been filled with inevitable surprises that will be remembered forever.

As I start my new journey into college, the pandemic is far from over. The continuous

increase in patient and death count around the world drastically darkens my mood while

political issues lights me on fire. I worry for the heroes battling in the front lines and those

fighting the virus. I am extremely fortunate that my family and friends have not caught the

virus and there is still a source of income with food over the table. I pray that I have

not spoken too soon because the end is unpredictable.

By the true end, we are all survivors

of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both mentally and physically.