**COVID 19 Readers’ Theatre, Fall ‘21**

Today, mommy brought home some masks

They’re pink, I love pink

She says they’ll protect me from the virus

I don’t like how the mask feels

It’s hard to breathe and my face gets hot

She says now we can go outside

But mommy says we can’t go to the playground

The virus is all over it

Now when I get home I wash my hands twice They still feel dirty .

I miss Abby and Neil  
We used to play at daycare  
Before the virus  
But I get to see them on the iPad  
When mommy turns it on for French school “Bonjour Abby, bonjour Neil! Comment ca va?” Mommy says I’m on mute  
To press the microphone when I want to talk The screens are small  
Class is so boring  
I get up to play with my toys instead.  
I hope Abby and Neil don’t get the virus

Or mommy  
Or my baby sister  
I’ll keep washing my hands  
I don’t want the virus to get me sick.

Seraiah

I feel like a bank robber

trying to coach and talk to the players with my neck gaiter pulled up so high covering my face

The players don’t wear masks

only in the dugouts or during team meetings during practice.

My neck tan line is getting out of hand,

spending my days locked in my house in class or on the baseball field

but I’ll take it! Anything to get back on the field

even if that field was the one we built in our parking lot

Anything is better than losing another season with the player, better than hiding in our facility

Getting shutdown time and time again by nosy neighbors

We are back on the field almost back to normal

Chris

When the virus reached Washington I got scared

For my family

For my mom, who has a weak immune system,

For my brother, who was only one year old.

Later,

When any of us got sick, we got scared for our lives that it was COVID.

Especially when my baby brother got feverish

and was vomiting

and we didn’t know what for.

I got scared

when my baby brother had his first seizure and only my mom could take him inside the ER because

COVID only allowed for one.

When that happened my dad had to wait inside the car at Kaiser until early in the morning.

I stayed up late worrying

and calling my friend on the phone

and crying.

But my dad is incredibly positive

He sent pictures on our family group chat of how he couldn’t find a bathroom in the middle of the

night and we had a good laugh over that on the phone.

Later we found out-

Baby didn’t have COVID

it was Roseola

But man that scared us

We are all on edge

All the time Rose

Nearly two years later.

They said it would be two weeks.

Public opinion-the killing force.

How many people demanded

Their right to die? How many demanded

Their right to harm all those

That needed protection the most?

Nearly two years later.

“But the economy”

They said.

The economy-that incorporeal thing,

Is it worth the lives? Over 700 thousand

Lives lost.

Is the economy worth 700 thousand lives?

Nearly two years later.

And what has changed?

People still demand

Their right to die.

The economy still crashes.

But now 700 thousand

Lie in graves. Chloe

Wake.

Work.

School.

Sleep.

Repeat.

Every day the same.

First two weeks.

Then two months.

Now two years.

How much longer?

Stuffed into too small classrooms, reminding students to keep their mask on.

Every day the same.

Eating outside, even when it rains.

Every day the same.

How much longer?

I fear a student will come in sick.

Every day the same.

The fan running constantly,

Every day the same.

How much longer?

Wake.

Work.

School.

Sleep.

Repeat. Chloe

Mom paces around the kitchen,

opens the bottle lid of the clorox cleaning wipes,

aggressively pulls out a dozen,

shoves the lid down shut

Wipes the gleaming kitchen counters,

Wipes the loose door knob of every room,

Wipes the clear reflection of the television screen,

Wipes the worn history textbooks,

Wipes the clean fingers of her teenaged daughter,

throws away the wipes

sits down on the couch

for a brief second

Stands back up

Begins pacing around the house again,

Situates herself at the back door entrance of our house

Scratches the open wounds on her dry palms,

And doesn’t let anyone out. Trinity

I had my bags set

Ready for the airport

An 8-hour plane ride to RDU

Christmas in the countryside

T-minus 7 days

My dad came in,

Set his suitcase down,

As he held up a paper

I tested positive for COVID

You guys are going to have to fly without me to NC

Oh no, we all said out loud,

The next day,

We all got tested

Our results came back in

POSTIVE

The days went by slow

My mother passed out on the living room couch,

I haven’t gotten out of bed for 2 days

My sister passed out from the Tylenol

My dad begging us in the group chat to shower

Don’t worry, my mom told us

We’ll get through this Stephanie

On an ordinary day, I’d be at school,

walking to Subway between classes and complaining about the cold.

But today is not an ordinary day.

Nor was yesterday, nor will tomorrow be.

There is no school, but it is cold outside.

I’m looking out the window, shielded from the rain,

but wondering what I am going to do next.

The only things to look forward to are Zoom, a pile of classwork,

a loss of motivation, and a bag of jalapeno lime chips.

Julie

Animal crossing,

Tiger King

Chloe Ting

There was not much to do for me during quarantine

Except for these things.

Started at 167

Now at 139

Did everything I could to improve my health

I didn’t want to risk my life.

My grandmother going to chemo

I did everything to not risk her life

We wiped down the groceries

We stopped getting packages

We stopped ordering out

We did not want to risk our lives.

The Hudson family were extremely anxious

My dad had to go back to work, we stayed away from him

I was threatened to be let go, I had to go back to work but I was not allowed to swim

My dad and I were told to stay back!

My sister had to go to my mom’s.

She was told not to come back!

Aunt had to go to work but my grandmother was more relaxed.

We couldn't take it anymore.

We don't care anymore. Sarah Lynn

My wedding

Planned on December 10, 2020

Since July 6, 2018

2018, when there was

No covid

No masks

No sanitizers

No distance

Keeping us six feet apart

My wedding

Long due

Now about to be postponed

Because of the life-threatening virus

It was like the virus said

“do it my way or the high way”

Just 50 people and no friend around

With thousands of precautions

And mask covering my face round

I tried to smile and laugh

For photos with masks

Concerned about my parents and future

Ones to be

For their and our

Safety

I took seven vows

As and when planned

With a pain buried deep in my heart

I wish was not due to covid Shivani

Trying to get home was crazy

Fifteen-hundred, two-thousand dollars

To fly home through SFO

I’m glad we got that insurance

You buy insurance in case something bad happens, but it usually doesn’t, right?

But I came home on my “free” flight

And the April air was yellow and smoky

And who knew what would happen next, with school and work and

What’s the big deal about the flu anyway?

That was almost two years ago. And how much has changed?

But people say things are getting back to normal,

So maybe they’re right.

I hope there is some silver-lining to all the terrible death and sadness.

Laura S

When it all started… March 9, 2020, I

moved in a blur

Strange things like getting up at 5:30 to

stand in line with other “elderly” at Safeway

-- the parking lot dark, everyone masked

hoping to get the rationed rolls of TP

or the Clorox wipes

Months later – February 2, 2021, I got my first

dose of the Moderna vaccine

I felt so relieved

Numbers of deaths started to drop

I was able to fly to MN and be with family

in summer 2021

But not everyone sees the wisdom of the vaccine

Not everyone understands that masks, vaccines

are concrete ways to help others stay alive

to end COVID’s death grip

Some – Gary and Linda – unvaccinated

die leaving children and grandchildren, friends like my brother and sister-in-law

Die for no reason

Die because they simply didn’t get vaccinated

I “understand” deaths from cancer…

the unvaccinated leave me angry Dr. Warner

Covid-19 was a transition that I, like the rest of us, never expected the need to be made.

At first it felt like a break, a reset, a pause from reality, until it wasn’t.

Until two weeks, turned into two months, and six months into an entire year.

A year of ungodly consistency.

I woke up,

Drank coffee,

Brushed teeth, hair,

Sat at my desk,

Hopped on zoom,

Dreaded class,

Went to work,

Came home,

Slept, and repeat.

Overall, this year felt as though it went by pretty quickly doing the exact same thing every day

and I’m still not sure as to what tomorrow will hold.

Kendall

I don’t get it

This virus it keeps changing

Mutating into something more

When will it end?

The hell do I know

I am trying to study it, understand it

I have named more variants than children

Maybe someday it will all just go away

Let it be known I am contributing

towards the knowledge of this virus

Even if I am just as confused as the rest of you

Kevin

i’m stuck within these four walls

and i wonder

if my life is slowly slipping away

if life will ever go back to how it was before.

i get scared for my friends

i get scared for my family

i escape with books and movies

there is nothing but silence outside

and i feel disbelief when i watch the news

i think back on the things i didn’t appreciate

and i wish i could have them again. (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse) Laura V

I thought there would be more time.

I waited for the world to return to normal.

I thought we could celebrate some other time.

But your time was running out like an hourglass with only a few grains of sand left.

I wish I knew that while I could sit still during all of this mess your time kept ticking forward.

I wish I could have lost you during any other time so I could have been by your bedside and not

on a computer screen.

I wish everyone just stayed inside in the first place.

Kai

my brother is home now.

six hour flight from new york,

experts say it should be six weeks before he can go back.

my cousin’s second great aunt’s husband is a general,

i heard the world is ending.

civil war is declared every 8am at Costco.

i’ve never counted the squares of toilet paper before.

(used the lower case style of Karen Hesse) Justin