**COVID 19 Readers’ Theatre, ENGL 112B: Fall 2020**

From The perspective of someone ill

Day six and i feel better

I miss my mom

I wonder what she’s doing

Is she thinking of me the way i do her

Doctor say that i gotta stay indoors

I don’t wanna be indoors

I wanna be free like the birds outside

The birds don’t feel like me

The birds with their mama

I wish i was a bird **Jazmin** **Chilin** (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse)

As of yesterday, I was preoccupied with the mask hot against my skin.

Beads of perspiration welled up and slid down my face.

I wanted to wipe them away, but I was overly aware of my hands.

Risk of contamination or condemnation kept my hands down.

Distantly someone sneezed and anxious eyes turned in their direction.

I’m exhausted,

When will quarantine end… **Alexa Aguilar**

COVID is like the unwelcomed visitor at a Thanksgiving party. No one sees it coming, but

everyone is talking about it. It’s an inconvenience for kids, and a deadly problem for adults.

COVID should be an acronym that stands for “Can’t Overcome Virus Indefinitely Disease”. The

reality is this is our world. This is not a hoax or a phase, but a transition to another lifetime that

many want to reject. The same “old Karens” continuing with “COVID is a hoax” are the same

people that can’t find love. True and brutal. Maybe it’s time to change. To see that some will

survive this horrible time and become more compassionate and loving to a stranger and others

will perish without catching the disease. So maybe COVID is the unwelcomed visitor bringing

strangers together at the Thanksgiving party. Thank God for that. Thank God for compassion.

**Kalena Zamora**

My day starts at 10 AM, scrolling through Facebook and Instagram constantly with no rhyme or reason. I refresh and refresh, expecting something new to be happening. I occasionally throw some TikTok viewing into the mix, just to stay up to date on current trends. I get stuck in this social media rut-- I have nowhere else to go, nothing to really do. I have homework, but I have all the time in the world to do that, right? Stuck here. On my bed. Zooming with friends, playing Jackbox and among us for hours on end. The highlight of our week was that Jackbox 7 came out and we could finally have some new prompts. I’ve been lucky. No one I know has gotten sick. No one has died. I’ve just been here. In my house. Taking some chances here and there- risking getting a drink with my boyfriend. The fear when I get home, though, lasts for about a week. But I turn out fine. Again. I always end up fine. Starts to drive you crazy a little bit. Knowing that it’s out there but can’t really see it. You see it in the masks everywhere you go, terrified of this invisible thing. **Shaelan Barber**

“Watch the eyes” is what I’ve learned so far from this pandemic. People can hide a lot about themselves, especially with a mask on at all times, but there is one thing that remains constant. Their eyes. I work as a customer service and office supplies associate at the only Staples store in my town. We never closed because of the pandemic, so I have been working for months through each new restriction that is added. When we step through those doors together, I become a worker and you become a customer, and our relationship is boiled down to those two things only. It is up to you or me to break those boundaries, and a lot of the time people are not interested in doing that. However, there are some people who want nothing more than to break that barrier, to be more than just a customer, especially in a pandemic. They are cooped up at home from either working from there or simply quarantining for the health of their family. But I can instantly tell their intentions from behind that mask, even if I can’t see their hopeful smile. To some people, little meaningful conversations while shopping can make their entire day, and I can definitely see that in their eyes. This pandemic has opened my eyes to the invisible hardships people face on a day to day basis, and I think my job has also played an important part in that.

**Andrew Williams**

All this time alone has left me with nothing to distract me from my thoughts. They begin

consuming me until they completely take over. I have to keep pretending that everything is okay

though, there is a virus that’s killing people so how does the fact that I feel sad all the time

compare to it? It doesn’t. I sit all alone at home, every day, with nothing to do but think. I think

about how lonely and how sad I feel. These thoughts continue to take over until there’s nothing

left of me. The loneliness I feel has its roots planted in my heart, but its branches spread through

every fiber of my being. We grow together, intertwined, eventually, I stop being able to tell

where it ends and I begin. It’s been six months and I’m still trying to untangle us.

**Angeles Rojas**

This semester has been amazing. My classes are going great. I am doing great-- nothing could go wrong or so I think. They tell us after spring break we won’t be coming back. Well, this sucks. A few weeks go by, and I am still thriving in my classes until I get some bad news, my brother and younger sister have caught COVID. I am worried sick, and I can’t go see them. They’re across the country. They both have really bad asthma. I want to see them, but I can’t. I hope everything is all right. I call them every day just to check up on them. As each day passes, I pray and hope that they get better. **Michael Ortiz**

it’s strange how “pandemic”

and “the virus”

have become easy things to say. i was in

Venice last summer, my mom and i

each bought masks to bring home.

i think i miss most the

intimacy of sharing drinks with friends,

each of us passing our cocktail around

the table, seven different mouths each taking

a sip and giving their opinion before

trying the new next drink someone had ordered.

missing something so easy is like having a cold

and not realizing how good it is to normally have

both nostrils not leaking and breathing freely.

i can’t wait to take simple intimacies for granted, again. (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse)

**Mycah Miller**

Every day is

The same. I do not have anything

To look forward to.

I do not know if I should leave the house to support people like hairdressers

who rely on customers to make ends meet.

How can we be socially responsible during COVID-19?

**Julia Skapik**

the masks ran out

so did the sanitizer

and the gloves

and the shields

there’s not time

not anymore

not to be close or build report

not to give the comfort

the patients deserve

and the sting of alcohol is in our noses.

loneliness and despair

cling

like the hopelessness

that everyone is facing

--

the doctors say

we need to pick who

gets the ventilator

why should we

have to pick

why are we

faced with this decision

why can’t we

get the resources

we need **Clara Albright**

i wasn’t so sure about how i felt about getting money

for being unemployed due to the lockdown.

where did our state even have all this money?

i do not feel

worthy of getting this amount,

but what am i going to do when my mom needs rent

or when my dog needs vet care?

i don’t think i could take advantage of it.

the rise of homelessness continues and i’m here

sheltered, getting COVID money from the government

my work told me and my coworkers to sign up for it.

maybe it’s because a big corporate retail company can’t support their employees themselves.

to be honest, i sound like a middle-class citizen who complains about everything.

so i should stop complaining.

and i am not going to complain about wearing a mask. (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse) **Shannen De Ocampo**

I’m here.

Not everyone believes a word I say.

I’m still a “child.”

Too old to know what’s right, too old not to have a life.

They say I’m lying about being sick.

I used that trick not long ago, to avoid going to class.

Not my fault I have bad lungs. It’s no one’s fault.

Ok, it was my dad’s fault.

He didn’t mean to. He was at work and caught it.

That’s all.

Dad’s here.

Mom’s here too.

They’re all in bed coughing and wheezing.

Weak in their rooms.

Me? I’m lying on the couch, coughing and drowsy.

People say it’s not real.

But I’m real, aren’t I? Aren’t I here?

Don’t forget about me. I’m here too.

**Paulina Gonzalez**

we’re all locked up in our own homes

for days to months, we only have those close and those in our screens to talk to

we became strangers for a good while and more

without much talking to other good neighbors

i think we near forgot other people have troubles and problems as we do

i think we near forgot other people have interests and likes as we do

and

i think we forgot that they’re human

and

i think they forgot we are too

i hope all of us are out soon (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse) **Kevin Nguyen**

Haven’t opened my front door in some time now; nothing is too tempting about the world out there as of late. I can’t tell if this sudden explosion of chaos and hurt was catalyzed by this pandemic, or if the world had already been going down this path and COVID merely gave us all the spare time to notice. **Jacob Stewart**

Medical personnel: I feel so overwhelmed due to COVID. I’ve been constantly working doubles and overtime for the last month because of the number of people coming in due to the pandemic.

When will it end?

When will I be able to rest? When will we be able to go back to normal?

**Adrian Arroyo**

Person infected with COVID: I’m having a lot of trouble breathing. There aren’t enough rooms to house us so we’re either stuck in the waiting room or outside. I feel as though my lungs have collapsed, and I’m not getting any air. It’s as if I am drowning. I was sent somewhere else because there isn’t any room at the hospital. I was also considered a hazard and dangerous to be around. My insurance won’t be able to cover the cost. Even if I were able to afford the bill, that stills means I have to be seen or admitted.

I don’t think I’m going to make it. **Adrian Arroyo**

At first, I didn't think much of the virus. We've dealt with things like this before, such as the Ebola and Swine flu epidemic. I personally had the Swine flu and was bed ridden because of my immune system. I always got sick easily, but it was never too severe until I had the swine flu. It wasn't until we were quarantined that I took it more seriously. This had never happened before. Isolation was terrible. I was very cautious with this pandemic and never left my home unless absolutely necessary and took every precaution. I did not want to risk getting my parents sick. I felt like I was gonna’ go crazy being stuck inside and unable to see anyone I knew. This slowly faded as my Virtual Reality headset finally came in. I was able to escape through games and shows, using VR to imitate the experience of hanging out with friends using social games that let the two of you physically hang out anywhere you wanted. I used this to trick my brain into thinking I was actually hanging out with my friends, who also had Virtual Reality headsets, at a bar. I tried streaming since I was playing more games. I made a small following and met many great people because of it.

Today my mother came into my room in tears. Someone older she knew for most of her life that she was close to had just passed. I tried to comfort her. I did not know the women well or really even at all, so I wasn't really affected but it hurt seeing my mother in tears.

This pandemic has shown people's true colors, as if the metaphorical mask had been pulled from their face, revealing them for what they really are.

Selfish people who don't care about endangering others **Adrian Arroyo**

suddenly there was no structure and no job,

and soon, no money

friend got sick and passed away.

and then it was living day by day but

then the days became weeks

and then the weeks, and months.

easy to dig yourself a hole,

climb into

and to try to forget about everything. **Sam Hoffman**

Many people are taking this pandemic hard. They suffer from isolation, not seeing their families, not seeing their friends. I’ve lost many of my family members closest to me. I need not

worry for them. My immediate family is high risk and so we are paranoid and safe. I need to worry about them but not as much as others. As for me, I worry about myself none at all. I am taking a break from work. Operate in my means and pay my bills just fine. I play video games every day, watch anime and listen to music all day, enjoying this era the best I can. I am still a student and try my best, but I do so enjoy the time I have to myself. My horizons are bright with the PS5 coming soon.

I do miss my girlfriend though. This pandemic keeps me from travelling to see her. We talk and spend time together like we used to. I worry for her and her family, but we keep this connection to one another, and it is how we can get through. I will see her some day when this is all over. For now, I do with what I have and will tell her I love her and miss her every day, so we don’t lose touch. Because behind my enjoyment of the things that keep me entertained, she is more important to my happiness. I want her more than anything, but I cannot have her here with me.

Till the day I can. **Cisco Garcia**

Isolation with its ominous silence. Too quiet.

I feel like I've been living under a rock, sheltered away from the world as it burns.

It burns here in California, brightly.

Do I feel safe? I don’t know. Even if I’m safe from fire because I’m in the rock, there is still quicksand. The sinking feeling of quicksand that chokes me, making me feel like I'm drowning. I need to rise; I need to climb…. But the sand’s strength proves too much, and I sink once more. Perhaps one day, the embers of the world will flicker and cease, when I feel safe enough to emerge from my sanctuary. When I can climb once again and rise above the sand… but not today... **Aaron Cao**

The day was hot

And excitement still bubbled in my blood

I could still see the neon lights

My eyes absorbing everything it saw

The feeling of my throat dry up from chanting

The singer’s name.

It was splendid to forget my fears

And responsibilities

Only to be forcefully imprisoned in my own home.

Great.

The fears that I wanted to face

Slowly crept out of their shadows

Though this time was depressive

It was quite opportune

For me and my fears

Because now

I had no excuse

Now,

I can draw my sword

And slash through

The pains that consumed me.

It would have been great

To go out with friends

And buy boba

Without the stench of disease

Pervading the air.

But, I worry for my relatives living on the Philippine islands.

There are many of them

And little food to go around

And yet, when I see my cousins on the little screen

I see the smiles that continue to warm my heart

The smiles that motivate me to work hard

So that, one day, I can visit them again

That one day I would be able to send money home.

Just one day. **Mary Rosary Flauta**

Everyone told me this virus was nothing to worry about.

Mom and Dad always tell me that I worry too much and that everything will be okay.

Usually I believe them, but as I got older, I started to question the certainty Mom and Dad had.

How do they know? Why are they always so sure?

I guess that’s just what happens when you’re a parent.

Or so I thought.

It was May 22nd when I was taken to the hospital by ambulance.

I was confused, scared, and lonely because Mom and Dad couldn’t come with me to the hospital.

The doctors were nice, but they seemed to be scared too which didn’t help my conscience.

After hours of waiting and testing, my results came back positive.

This was the first time Mom and Dad had been wrong. And that’s something I couldn’t fathom.

The doctors kept me in the hospital for a few days. giving me fluids, gross hospital jello, you know, the usual.

I had never felt so sick in my life. I truly felt like I was going to have a fever forever.

After two long weeks of recovering, I got the OK to go home and Mom and Dad still seemed terrified for my health.

I feel better now but I was told my breathing and lungs will never be the same.

I guess it’s a good thing I’m not a smoker. **Brittany Barry**

I don’t like canceling plans to see my friends. I don’t like sending the “can we reschedule for next week?” text message. But now, I wish I could send those messages more than anything. Those messages mean possibility. I miss planning for the future.

Before, I always tried to rearrange my schedule so that I can share a meal, a drink, a game, or a laugh with those I hold dear. I miss those moments.

This year has stolen those joys from me. Or rather, those who believe in personal choice are removing mine. I haven’t seen my little siblings in ten months. I miss them.

**Yvette Ackerman**

So many “twilight zone” moments

like standing in line at Safeway at 5:30 a.m.

in the not-even dawn on

a Spring Break day when I might have slept in

Hardest of all – the loneliness and

emptiness of only being at Mass

virtually

And Paul with his advanced lung cancer

in a “bubble” with others

who are terminally ill – surrounded

by circles of those dying from COVID

and loss upon loss upon loss

Compassion – that word so central to my life—

Compassion is the only way to live… **Dr. Warner**

I saw this video where two boys are handing out free masks to people in Huntington

Beach. Believing that everyone wants to go back to the days before COVID-19, I thought that

everyone would accept and wear the masks these two boys were giving out. Instead, a majority of the people in the video refused to reinforce the safety measures created by the government to

reduce the spread of COVID-19. Some of the people in the video said that the government is

manipulating everyone. Another went as far as to say that we live in America and that he is free

to do whatever he wishes such as: not wearing a mask. To think that wearing a mask has become

a political statement. I’m very much disappointed. **Archie Malapit**

Pregnancy is a beautiful thing.

I never planned on it being this way

I always wished for it to be shared with my loved ones

My gender reveal was on a long facetime call,

but in a way I was lucky,

My partner and I were able to share special moments together

Unlike others--

Such as her first heartbeat and ultrasound

but then I had to go all alone,

Delivery day was hard and scary

All I wanted was my mom,

as extra reinforcement for such a scary new beginning.

Even so, many of my loved ones have not met my new little being

And it’s unfortunate that it has to be that way

In moments like these I’m thankful for technology to keep in touch with others

As a way of them being a part of my new journey

and my little one’s life **Julissa Mendoza-Delgado**

COVID rudely interrupted life as

I know it and refuses to leave.

I wonder if life will ever go back to a sense

Of normalcy.

I know my grandma is lonely, after losing Papa,

And I miss our Sunday dinners.

I can’t wait till COVID disappears and I can hug

All my friends and family.

They say us humans need 12-15 hugs a day

In order to live a healthy life,

But yet they want us to stay 6 feet apart? **Kaylin Gamch**

Time.

So much time lost outside my home.

Yet, during this time,

So much was gained within my home.

Family time was well needed,

But too much of it, I found, was an overwhelming

challenge that I cannot explain.

School.

So much time to read,

Yet, the procrastination game has been winning.

So much time lost to do the simple things, but

I. Will. Get. Them. Done.

Relationships.

My true friends,

Where are they?

Lost connection. Error. Ding! (never mind, Jeff is here)

Myself.

How are you?

I want to be better,

I want others to be better also.

Lord, heal us. **Marianne Buena**

They say wear a mask, the people don’t listen,

They say stay six-feet apart, the people don’t listen,

They say avoid big crowds or gatherings, the people don’t listen,

Try as you might, speak as loud as you want to tell the people the dangers we face

But if the world is centered around the self and not of others this thing will surely go on

People live on as if this disease is normal

Like all the deaths didn’t matter

All the lives lost, the opportunities gone, just like that

And we still stand only 2 feet apart. **Brendan Whistler**

COVID 19 story, Characters: Business Owners (of a restaurant)

Summary:

The business owners speak about how COVID 19 has impacted their personal lives financially and emotionally. For example, they talk about how “lockdown” affected them as people were not allowed to freely roam around. Even if people were allowed to freely roam around the last place, they would go to is a restaurant because everyone was concerned with buying essential supplies such as food and toilet paper. However, this led to a great depletion of income for the family as their restaurant was “closed” for the time being. They still had to pay for the business expenses, and on top of that they had to pay for the essential supplies in their home. They were able to make some money through “take out only” sales, but it was not as much as they were used to. Then they were able to open for “outdoor dining” and had to spend thousands of dollars in order to build a patio on the street in front of their restaurant. They were able to get more customers and more income, but there were still other businesses that were closed that could potentially bring more customers into their restaurant. Their sales have since increased due to the new mandate that allowed them to have twenty five percent indoor seating and full outdoor seating. The owners of the restaurant are happy because they can supply the demand for their food, but they are nervous about the proximity in which they could catch coronavirus. They are nervous because many people come into their restaurant and there is no way for them to know where their customers have been, and if they have recently been in contact with someone who has coronavirus.

A small dialogue idea:

Shelly: “I don’t feel so good. I have been working seven days a week. Maybe it’s the hard work that is getting to me… or maybe it’s coronavirus… no never mind, it couldn’t be!”

Juan: “Shelly, I also don’t feel good. We have been working so hard to keep our restaurant up and running. I’m also really tired. Maybe we should just have a nap before we open up again tomorrow.”

Shelly: “JUAN! The health department is calling. Oh no. HELLO!”

Health Department: “Hi is this Shelly, owner of Ocean Front Restaurant?”

Shelly: “Yes, that’s me!”

Health Department: “Hi Shelly, I am sorry to inform you that a customer from your restaurant has tested positive for coronavirus. You must close for seven days and all of your employees must be quarantined and tested for coronavirus. No one can return to work until after the quarantine period, and until they have tested negative for coronavirus.”

Shelly: “Thank you.” \*looks at Juan\* “Juan what will we do? We just opened up for outdoor dining and we have barely been making ends meet. And now we have to lose seven full days of the restaurant being open? And more importantly, I think all of us have been exposed to coronavirus. I’m thankful that I don’t feel so sick like other people, but now I don’t know how to feel. I am thankful that our restaurant is open, but I am afraid that we will continue to get customers who do not care about the health of us and of our works. What if another customer brings coronavirus into our restaurant again, what will be do? I am afraid that sick people will continue to go out to restaurants without having respect for the health of others.”

**Lupita Castañeda**

i stand in the lobby finishing up a latte. i see people walking in a fast pace, rushing to the safeway next door coming out with loads of toilet paper and groceries. not knowing what is happening until i ask, a shelter in place will be happening soon. i wonder if i will get a chance too. i rush to safeway only to find out it is closed. I head to whole foods after I am off, empty shelves all around me. It’s too late. (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse)

**Cris Cortez**

i hear about how the governor is shutting down gatherings

over 500

then 200

and i am indignant that the schools remain open

that we are all still working, even though our school has well over 500 kids

i say as much to my coworkers, to the teacher i work with

and they are all older than me and they say they think we’ll be ok

that we are good about washing our hands because of the population we work with

and i go to the party

but first i text my science teacher friend to ask if he thinks i’ll be ok

and he says yeah, probably safer in el dorado than in santa clara county

it’s the perfect saint patrick’s day experience

then i drive the long way home the next day

and the world changes

we will not be ok and now we know it. (used the lowercase style of Karen Hesse) **Saraah Dickens**

Standstill. The world kind of just stopped for a second. Commuting to work, hanging out with friends on Friday nights, or something as simple as picking up Starbucks faded away overnight. Home became all we knew, the new adventure was cleaning out your closet, rearranging your pantry, or doing that one thing you would just never get to. Was it boring at times yes, but I never questioned why we did it and why we continue to social distance.

**Danny Ramirez**

China Mac

How can they just openly do this?

How can they be okay with this?

Why in the hell is this ok?

She is 89!

She did nothing wrong, and you think setting fire to her is okay?

This is not going to turn out the way you want it to.

She is 89!

Setting our grandmas on fire?

This is no longer fun and games. We’re angry. You aren’t getting away with this.

We’re coming after you.

She is 89!

You too De Blasio.

You will not ignore our cries anymore

We took it upon our community to help the homeless, something that you should be working on.

De Blasio eat a d\*\*k **Kenny Fung**

In the third week of March, India contracted COVID. She received many get-well cards from family and friends. The cards were vibrant and big. She loved the support that she received. Knowing that everyone she cared about was there for her made her feel good. It inspired her to not let the fear of COVID take over the body but to fight to get better. Isolation did not make her go crazy, but her mom asking every day if “she was okay?” did. She started to hate the smell of hand sanitizer and Lysol spray. She hated walking around her house with a mask, where she is supposed to feel comfortable, as well as not hanging out with her friends. She hated the fact she couldn’t go on the school trip to Atlanta. Day by day she began to get stronger, and more vibrant just like the cards that gave her hope. **Ivy Moore**