Chapter for the public idea:

For each heading, start with a song lyric that I can elaborate the time within the research

* Main times to hit:
  + Prelim
    - Covid?
  + The struggles
    - Nothing working times
  + Good data moment
  + The end?

If possible, would be cool to attach the song for each section, so each song can be listened to while reading the section and then tell a small story about how it relates to my PhD. At the very least, attach a spotify playlist that can be listened to for a description of my PhD experience.

Intro:

Hello! Whoever you are (friend, family, stranger) thank you for taking the time to read the journey of my thesis. To personify this journey and truly share the experience in a form that I feel embodies the experiences I had throughout the past 6 years, I had to ask myself what is the best way to speak about this. It was listening to x song that I experienced a phenomena known as frisson, where my body begins to truly lose itself, as if I can feel my pores and a tingling sensation go up my spine and everything begins to feel okay. Music, my main coping mechanism throughout this time, is the way I have decided to share my life with you now.

Feel free to read this chapter however you like, and I hope you enjoy the songs that I’ve placed here. Thanks again for reading, and best of luck on whatever journey you are currently facing :D.

Flipside-Postlude

The intro. About how you can love someone so much that people don’t really understand

* Likely a tribute to my friends and family that stuck with me. I have put away so much meaningful connection with others just to get this finished. I’ve gone weeks talking to only 1 or 2 people and rejecting any advances for increased connection because the stress was unbearable. This one’s for all those people who’ve stuck by me rather than rejected me

Limbo

* Design sequences
  + Sort-Seq
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  + Sort-Seq
* A process that takes months to complete and feels like no progress is being made…
  + Talk about how I’ve reached a point of low progress. Although I learned how to code, the journey and the path to becoming proficient enough to do my work was fun and came quick, but then I hit a wall where progress on my journey began to plateau (metaphor here)

Something about the above following repetition: I can talk about the process of learning protein design in the first place, having to scrutinize the way I did it, and continue to think critically about how to do it again in a more elegant way

Feels like limbo because I’m doing the same thing, but maybe at a slightly lower limbo level. Can probably equate it something to trying to limbo and the difficulty of things just getting slightly higher. You can feel yourself improving, but at the same time it feels like there’s no end. The stick just keeps getting closer to the ground, and you somehow keep finding a way to do what feels impossible, squish yourself under, and keep going.

BEEF reminded me of some of my traumatic experiences as a child. The things that happened rarely or even more often. The thoughts I never think about: my parents fighting all the time my Sophomore year of high school. Throughout it all I’ve just been able to be focused…And I just want to stop. It feels like it never ends and that I can ignore everything for this work. And I have. For people who haven’t been able to…I hope they’re doing well. Completing a PhD is a lot about luck. For the most part, my family has been healthy, and I’ve been able to maintain my own health through their support. I’m fortunate to have them by my side this whole way, and this PhD wouldn’t be complete without them. I have sacrificed so much life for this PhD, and I’m excited to be able to feel alive again afterwards.

Ideas to emphasize:

* The fact that I can’t talk to any of my family about my research, or what it’s like to do research/phd

“” – Nothing Revealed / Everything Denied

* Visualizer focuses on a variety of aspects of life

I need a song to describe how badly failing my prelim wrecked me and completely changed the way I live. I don’t go out, I lost friendships, I can’t be spontaneous, I always feel behind, I forever feel inadequate, I always feel judged and critiqued, constantly feeling betrayed or berated for thinking. Finding ease in my own thoughts but fearing sharing them with others.

Write about the time in my life where I felt unheard: like people would listen to what I said but rather than try to understand, silently judge me and share the conversation that we had in private with other people. I’ve felt taken advantage of for my kindness, then it doesn’t get returned, and then they also talk behind my back. That’s not what life should feel like.

* Write about my journey into science:
  + In second grade, my class was brought on a field trip to a botanical garden. Each of us received tiny magnifying glasses. This was the beginning of my discovery of science: being able to look at the world through a lens that I’ve never seen. It began to give me a respect for the things that I can’t see with the naked eye.

In college in my sophomore year, I had the opportunity to do some really interesting research with a team of students for (probably don’t name drop, but something like it) IGEM. However, when the time came, the lead of the team who initially brought me on ghosted me and never explained why I was no longer being recruited, instead picking up other students despite bringing the opportunity to me first. I was floored, and confused. What made it so that I was no longer allowed this opportunity? Being one of the few people of color majoring in biology, I had questions: Why was I being rejected despite being considered and essentially being promised a spot? Is this how people of color are treated in science? How was I initially considered and then not given any sort of explanation for my rejection? I began to question my own abilities and my interest: maybe science wasn’t for me. If it wasn’t for a very supportive professor who invited me into his lab to learn and do research during the summer, I would never be on this journey and my journey in science would have likely ended that summer. TY Professor Heideman!

2023-10-24

Off day by Lyn Lapid

After a month or so of being unable to sleep well, on this particular day I gave up. Instead of sitting in bed and doing nothing, I succumbed to my inability to sleep and decided: welp, if I can’t do anything else right now, might as well get some work done in lab.

As I sit here finishing up western blots, preparing for some of what could potentially be my final experiments, I realize what keeps me up at night. The fact that I’m so close, and putting the finishing touches on my project is mesmerizing, trance like, leaving me unable to focus on even the void/empty mindedness/dark relax that is sleep. When you’re so close to something that you’ve been working towards for your whole life, everyday starts to feel a bit off. Food has less flavor, games are less enjoyable, data looks less exciting. Add a little insomnia to that and you’ve got the makings of ending PhD depression. But as my mom likes to call me, the philosopher that I am, I think it’s important to ask the following questions: Am I depressed because this journey has been so difficult? Or is it because I know that it’s ending and it’s time to move on? I have a feeling I know my answer for the current moment, but I tend to look fondly back at the nights like this when I go to lab because I can’t shake some nagging thought or experiment or something else to try. The freedom/privilege to be able to work my own hours, to literally just think and test different ideas, to decide when I get to do an experiment. This environment that I’ve been in pushes me to discovery on the outskirts of our knowledge, and I’m fortunate to have been apart of it. Even on the bad days, my appreciation for this moment doesn’t seem to wane, and I’m so fortunate to be able to do this.

This song to me expresses the current bout of feelings that I’m going through during grad school: the hook is particularly connecting with me, “you don’t cross my mind, you live in it”