

Living  
in  
the  
unseen

mar.

(foreword)

# THIS IS NOT A DIARY

and if it was,  
i wouldn't know what to say

2020.

a year, that, I'm not sure any of us could have expected.

march 9, 2020.

my birthday, and, the last normal day as we know it.

it's the day we got the email school would have an extended spring break.

the day that washington square park erupted in a collective joy of college students - celebrating another week off - as they crowded in unexpected 70 degree weather.

a week later, then gym closed.

we weren't going back to school.

i wasn't going home for easter.

i didn't know when i would be going home next.

and since then, there's still a lot of things i don't know.

i don't know when life goes back to normal.

i don't know what normal means anymore.

i don't know when it will be safe to hug my grandpa. or when i'll be in the same room with my 34 first cousins.

i don't know when i'll go back to school. or if i'll ever go back.

the one thing i do know is, though, the last seven-ish months have been nothing short of -

unexpected.





july 7, 2020.

the day i left new york.

i don't know how to exist at home

split between two roofs with no walls

living out of a suitcase

where i spent the first 18 years of my life.

i hate running

but i find myself rushing the same paths i used to walk

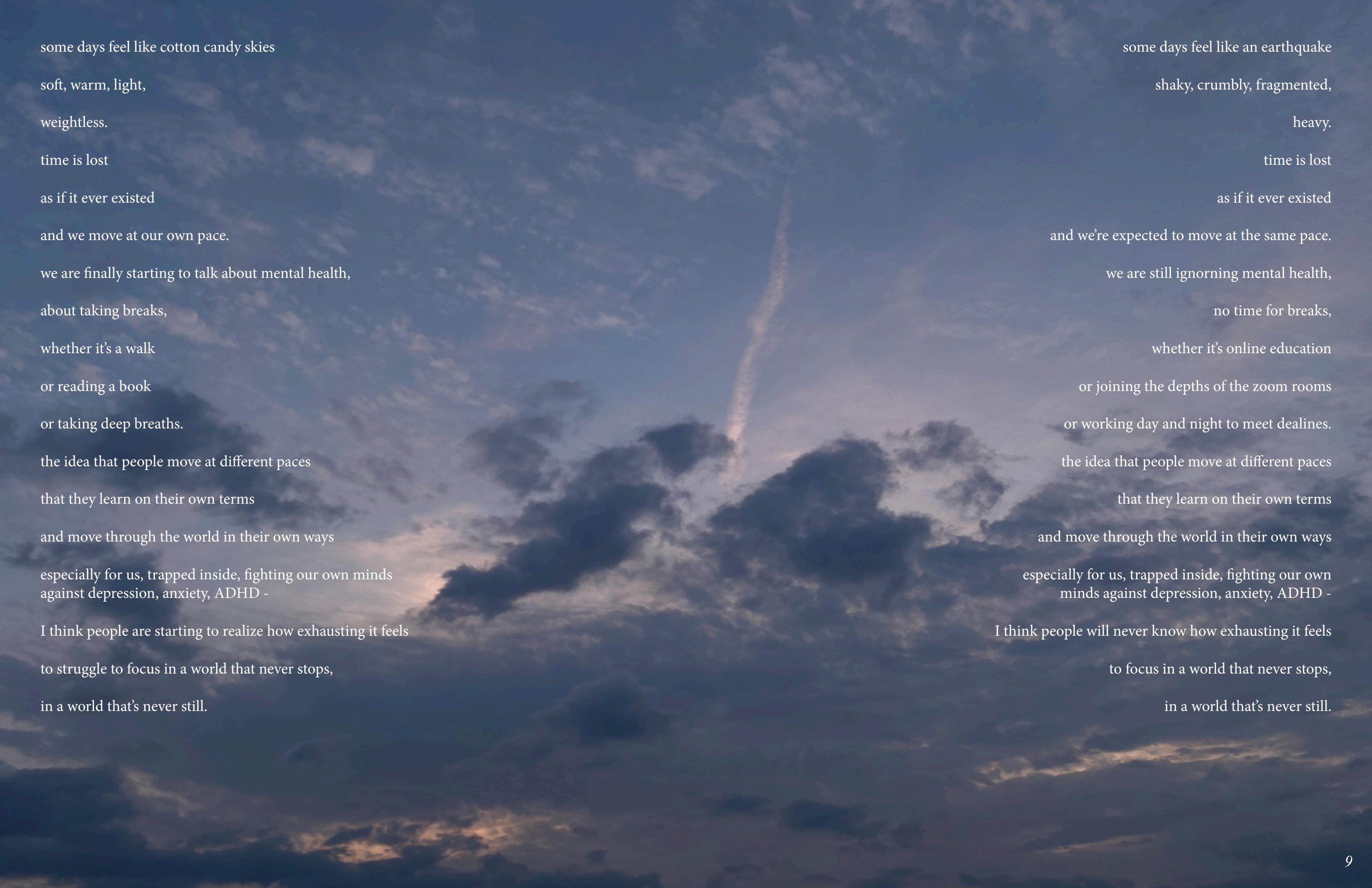
as if i'll get to leave faster

as if my feet can outpace trauma

i am slowly learning what it means to be soft,

how to recognize there are still beautiful things

in the places and the people i've left behind.



some days feel like cotton candy skies

soft, warm, light,

weightless.

time is lost

as if it ever existed

and we move at our own pace.

we are finally starting to talk about mental health,

about taking breaks,

whether it's a walk

or reading a book

or taking deep breaths.

the idea that people move at different paces

that they learn on their own terms

and move through the world in their own ways

especially for us, trapped inside, fighting our own minds  
against depression, anxiety, ADHD -

I think people are starting to realize how exhausting it feels

to struggle to focus in a world that never stops,

in a world that's never still.

some days feel like an earthquake

shaky, crumbly, fragmented,

heavy.

time is lost

as if it ever existed

and we're expected to move at the same pace.

we are still ignoring mental health,

no time for breaks,

whether it's online education

or joining the depths of the zoom rooms

or working day and night to meet deadlines.

the idea that people move at different paces

that they learn on their own terms

and move through the world in their own ways

especially for us, trapped inside, fighting our own  
minds against depression, anxiety, ADHD -

I think people will never know how exhausting it feels

to focus in a world that never stops,

in a world that's never still.

i miss talking to strangers

brushing up against shoulders on a crowded train

shaking hands,

bumping elbows,

seeing smiles,

or scowls,

or even just lips,

noses,

teeth,

chins,

cheeks.

i even miss the smell

the sweat of a summer train car,

sand sticking to the floor,

heading north after a day at the beach.



i wish i had all the answers.

i wish all that it would take to kill a virus is a vaccine.

i wish i could ask

"when will this be over?"

and google would answer.

i wish breathing was as mindless as matter

and that my glasses didn't fog over a mask.

i wish i hadn't started ginding my teeth,

and that stress wouldn't physically manifest.

i wish my mind was as sharp

as the pencils i used to snap

and that my focus could be even sharper.

and in reality,

sometimes i just look out the door,

not the slightest fucking clue

of what the next day brings.



how do we balance mental health and productivity  
how do we rationalize capitalism and unachievable wealth  
how do we turn a blind eye  
how do we not see what's right in front of us  
how do we function under constant pressure  
how do we sleep 8 hours  
how do we pay bills  
how do we do school in the midst of a pandemic  
how do we thrive inside  
how do we find peace  
how do we go without hugging the people we love  
how do we let systems fail us again and again  
how do we miss someone we hardly remember



# I WANT TO KNOW



# HOW

we barely do  
we have never known anything else  
we are selfish  
we choose not to  
we perpetuate it  
we can't  
we hand our lives to pieces of paper  
we have never been taught to take breaks  
we need the stillness more than we realized  
we are choosing to survive  
we are not the first to go without  
we will not be the last  
we are creatures of habit

**where**

**do**

**we**

**go**

**from**

**here?**