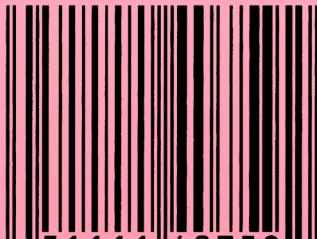


ME, MYSELF, AND ZOOM*

THE LIVES OF 8 VANCOUVER YOUTH
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

[INSERT TITLE PAGE
IMAGE THAT SOMEHOW
COMMUNICATES INTENT]

\$0.00 CAD



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SUBJECT 01: PANDEMIC TIME

In the very beginning, in some ways, COVID-19 felt like a sigh of relief where everyone is paused. I think before the pandemic, I was stuck with a sense of anxiety about the future, feeling like I was stuck - not knowing where to go, unhappy with things, feeling like I was behind, running myself in circles, insecure. When the pandemic hit, I had this moment where I realized everyone was now stuck. We are all the same. For a moment, I did not need to know what the future was like, it was just the pandemic, it was just stillness.

0:00 RELIEF



Sleeping is how I cope with everything. When the pandemic hit, living in a dark depressing basement suite meant lots of sleeping, a lot of ignoring school.

Neighbourhood walks staring at ugly suburban houses, sitting on the bench in the yard, nightly Zoom calls talking about nothing with friends, and grocery store runs - all these things kept us sane, and they continue to keep us sane. Days blend into each other - it is all one continuous day. Pandemic time did not feel real.

3:00 DUNBAR - STILLNESS

Suddenly, there was sun. A beautiful three bedroom house with two lovely roommates. Suddenly I lived a five minute walk of multiple affordable grocery stores, public transit stops, takeout restaurants, and parks. The ugly suburban houses turned into quirky Mount Pleasant houses, Vancouver Specials & Parasite homes. So many new things to obsess over, all at home... furniture, plants, DIY projects.

12:00 LITTLE MOUNTAIN - HOME

Biking changed the way I experience the city completely. Thanks to a \$500 wellbeing grant extended by my summer job, I was suddenly open to a whole world of mobility in an extremely immobile time. I could speed down Ontario St to Chinatown, or go for bike adventures to Burnaby or do errands.

13:00 BIKE

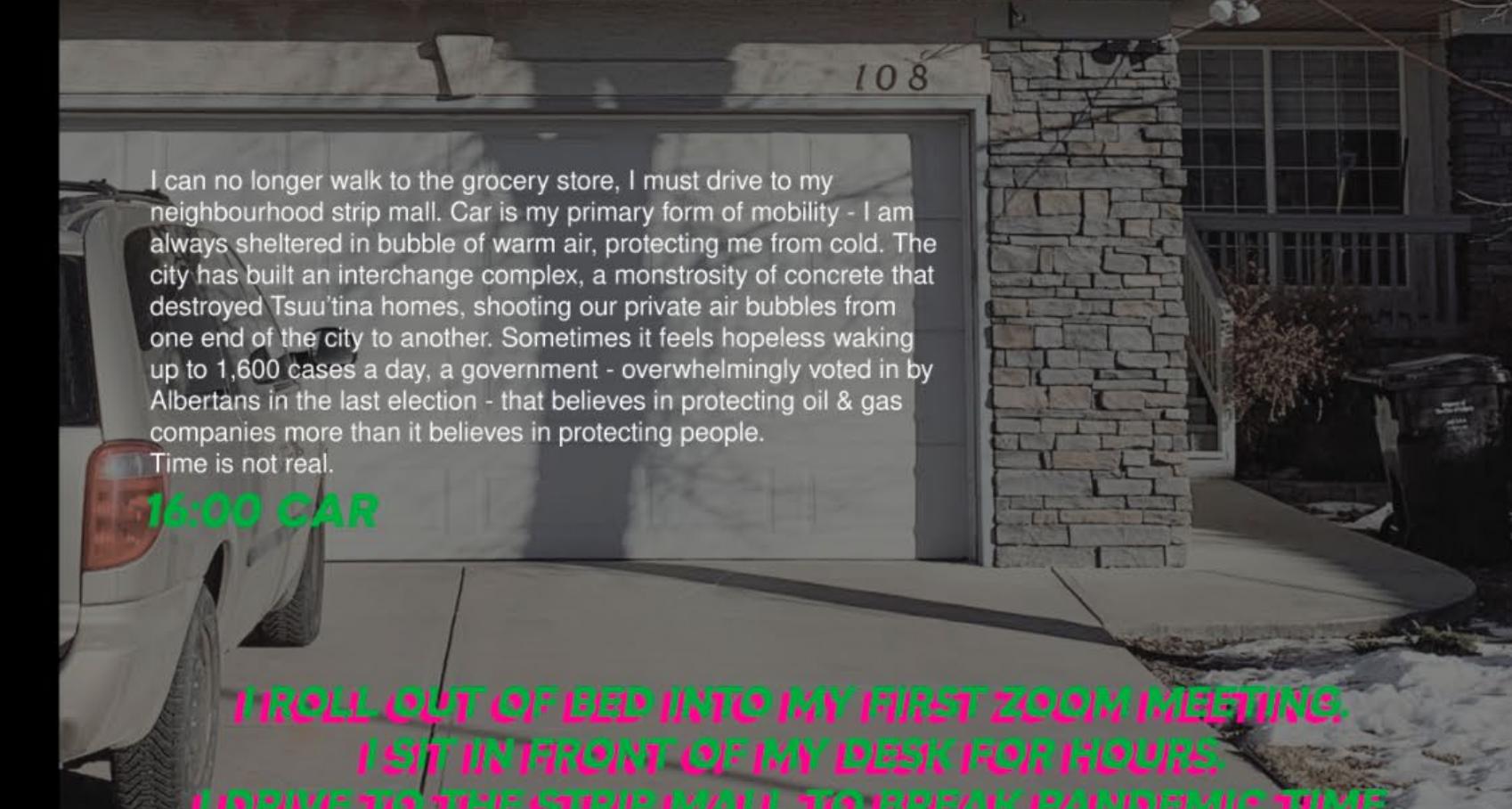


The little obsessions kept me excited, but pandemic time always returns. The cycle of rolling out of bed into my first Zoom meeting, hours spent sitting in front of a desk next to my bed, forgetting when the last time I left the house was. At least I felt at home here in this house, in this neighbourhood.

3:00? 17:00? 9:00?

Ah yes good old basement suite, we meet again. Ugly suburban houses, we meet again. Pandemic time is multiplied by the soullessness of suburbia, cold weather and the feel of being transported back to adolescence. I am sixteen again, The defining feature of suburbia is homogeneity and an excess of space - every house is too big for its people. Every street is too empty of people.

3:00 CALGARY - SUBURBIA



I can no longer walk to the grocery store, I must drive to my neighbourhood strip mall. Car is my primary form of mobility - I am always sheltered in bubble of warm air, protecting me from cold. The city has built an interchange complex, a monstrosity of concrete that destroyed Tsuu'tina homes, shooting our private air bubbles from one end of the city to another. Sometimes it feels hopeless waking up to 1,600 cases a day, a government - overwhelmingly voted in by Albertans in the last election - that believes in protecting oil & gas companies more than it believes in protecting people.

Time is not real.

16:00 CAR

I ROLL OUT OF BED INTO MY FIRST ZOOM MEETING.
I SIT IN FRONT OF MY DESK FOR HOURS.
I DRIVE TO THE STRIP MALL TO BREAK PANDEMIC TIME.
I CANNOT BREAK SUBURBIA TIME.

PANDEMIC TIME

SUBJECT 02: NOT WITH A BANG, BUT WITH A WHIMPER



I graduated high school in June. It feels simultaneously as if it hasn't yet happened, and as if it happened infinitely long ago...



There has been no real closure to the end of my high school career. One day, we were going to class, and then the next, we were not.

My last day of classes was utterly insignificant and unremarkable. I cannot tell you what I did, I do not remember. Grade 12 slowly petered out, like the dripping of a faucet, with no real acknowledgement that we had just

completed a life milestone. No party, no ceremony, no senior ditch day, no exams. What I did get was a fake diploma given to me in our English room, standing on a stage consisting of a haphazard collection of wooden blocks. Some of us met up for a picnic in the park.

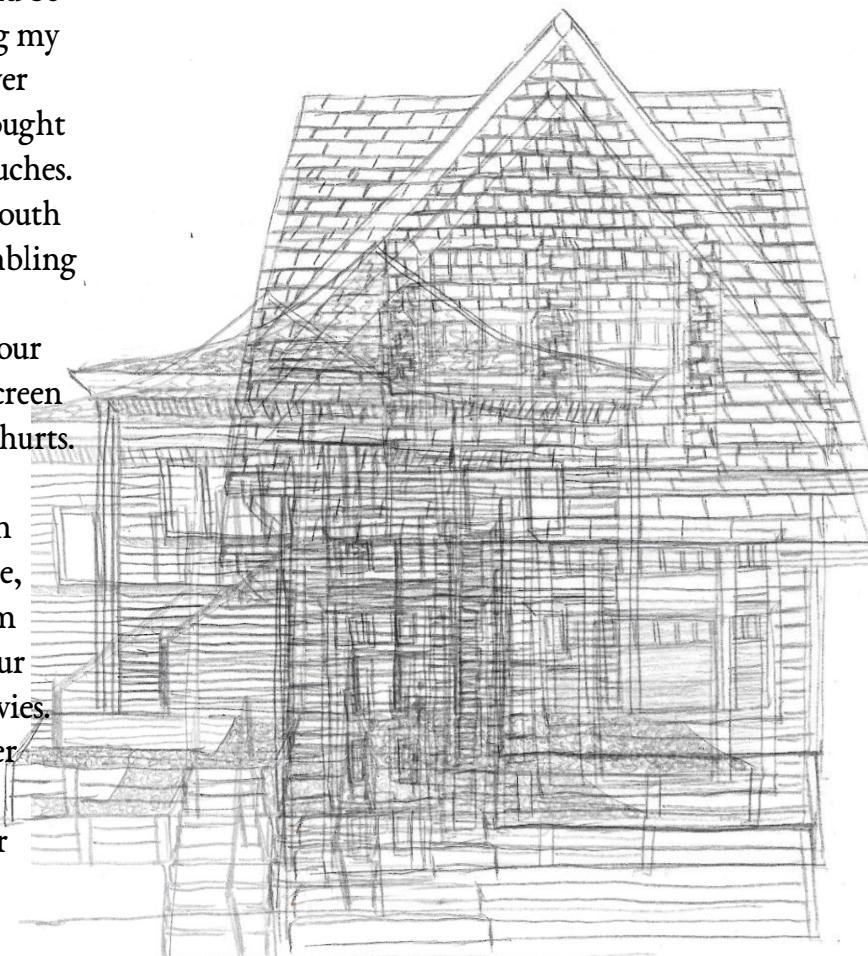
A graduation is just one of many "coming of age" experiences I feel like I have lost, and will never get back. Currently, I find myself living with 3 other gap year activists. It has been a great experience thus far, but I can't help but think of how different it would be without COVID. I always fantasized about getting my first place and filling it with parties and friends over for dinner. I thought about my gap year and I thought about travelling, camping, sleeping on friends couches. I feel like I am watching my own youth and the youth of my peers slip past me unannounced. I am scrambling at the remnants of parties, college dorm life, graduation ceremonies, and coming up with 30 hour zoom weeks and a headache from staring at my screen for too long. My back hurts. I am 18 and my back hurts.

The line between work and leisure is blurred when working at an office becomes working from home, and then working from bed. When I look up from my computer and find that it is entirely dark in our living room, I feel betrayed by coming of age movies. A promise for how much more exciting life is after high school, a glorification of dorm rooms and independence and working a service job with your friends.

"Am I wasting my time? What else am I supposed to be doing right now? What else can I be doing?"

Am I wasting my time? What else am I supposed to be doing right now? What else can I be doing? Now is the time I am supposed to be planning for the future. I need to apply to university, figure out how long I want to live in this apartment. It feels impossible to do so. How am I supposed to plan for the next month, let alone the next four years? I am stuck, rooted into the ground, watching a movie of my life play on, without me in it.

Everything is exhausting.



SUBJECT 03: INITIATE LOCKDOWN?

A. LIVING ROOM

This is where you will spend the next six months unemployed. This is where you will eat, read, watch television, and melt your braincells playing video games while you wait to hear back from companies who have been overwhelmed with too many applications to ever respond to you.

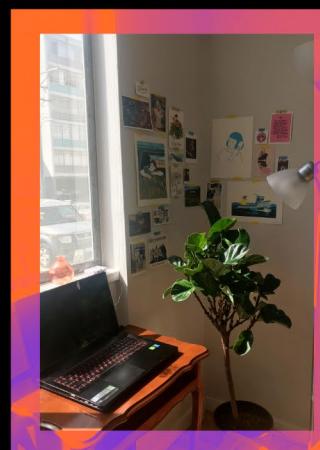
- EXPAND



B. BEDROOM OFFICE

This is your bedroom, storage room, and home office, where you will have to learn to hide all the piles of junk you haven't yet cleaned up (despite all your unemployed free time) so that any potential employers who interview you virtually cannot see how messy your apartment is.

- EXPAND



WOULD YOU
LIKE TO GET
OUTSIDE?

- YES! GOING FOR
BIKE RIDES IS
THE ONLY THING
KEEPING ME SANE
RIGHT NOW.

- OH, LOOKS LIKE
MY BIKE HAS BEEN
STOLEN FROM OUR
BUILDING'S BIKE
ROOM BY A
NEIGHBOUR. STAY
INSIDE.

"OH, YOU'LL FIND A JOB SOON."

Alert
All positions have been filled.

[Try again.](#)

Alert
New jobs have been posted with over 400 applicants in 24 hours.

[Apply](#)

[Cry](#)

My partner and I moved to Vancouver on March 1st, 2020, just two weeks before the pandemic hit BC and the city plunged into lockdown. Going into isolation in a new and unfamiliar city (and in a closet-sized one bedroom apartment) was depressing, disorienting, and scary. We had saved carefully for our move to the "big" city, knowing we would likely have a short period of time unemployed before we got on our feet, but had not prepared for seven months of joblessness during a pandemic, where we were forced to decimate our short and long-term savings in order to stay housed.

SUBJECT 003

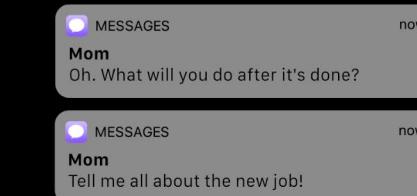


FIND EMPLOYMENT

OCTOBER

Congratulations! After you and your partner applied for nearly 1,300 positions collectively in seven months, you have found an eight-week, part time contract position. Don't relax too much! You'll be unemployed again in two months and will need to rejoin the abyss of job hunting agony.

- TEXT MOM TO LET
HER KNOW THE GOOD
NEWS?



STUDENT LOANS?

NOVEMBER

Alright, you've had your fun. Now it's time to continue repaying your student loans! Don't worry, your new job makes it possible for you to make these payments, but part time hours mean you'll also have to cut back on grocery costs and watch how often you use the heat in your apartment (best to just keep it off)!



LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE
LOW ON MENTAL
HEALTH. WOULD YOU
LIKE TO HEAL WITH
SOMETHING YOU
ENJOY?



REINITIATE LOCKDOWN SEQUENCE?

LOADING...



UH OH! HEALTH CARE!

OCTOBER

Oh no! While you, a Canadian citizen, have access to many health care services you need, your partner is a U.S. immigrant on a post-graduation work permit. This means that in addition to being ineligible for any government financial support during the pandemic from both the U.S. and Canada, they are also subject to dubious health care. When they finally manage to find a clinic accepting walk-in appointments, they will be turned away at the door when their valid BC Care Card doesn't come up in the system! Please spend two weeks on hold with the Ministry of Health to fix the situation, and then rebook the appointment.

- ARE THERE ANY FAMILY
DOCTORS ACCEPTING NEW
PATIENTS?

JOB HUNTING BEGINS

DECEMBER

Ah. Here we are again. You might not be excited, but this is your life! Hunker down with some tea and get ready for full-time hours spent prowling the job listing boards, refining your resume, and rewriting your cover letter hundreds of times. You can always take a minimum wage retail job, and risk your health and the health of your immunocompromised family members. Make sure to spell check, and follow up after interviews!



SUBJECT 003

SUBJECT 04: BASEMENT DWELLER



Here is the house where you felt most at home in your adult life. You lived here with two of your best friends for two years, but you don't live here anymore. It was a good home, but hydro cost an arm and a leg and it had mould in the closets. Cost of living and the instability faced by renters are constant thorns in your side in this city. In the home you live in now, the rent is reasonable for Vancouver, with utilities included. Your landlords are kind, but since your suite is technically illegal, you have no tenancy agreement. You understand this means you have no rights, no protection from eviction or an exorbitant rent increase, should that tickle your landlords' fancy. You doubt they would do something like that, but it is nonetheless a precarious position to occupy. Your rent takes up nearly half your income—you can make ends meet, but you can't save anything. You don't plan on staying here forever, so you put up with this uncertainty, but the feeling of impermanence in your home is unsettling. Still, you recognize the privilege of having family you could stay with in a worst-case-scenario, even if they live outside of the city.

Your city has shrunk in the pandemic; public indoor spaces contract and feel smaller than they ever have before. There is claustrophobia in the constant awareness of where people around you are standing, who is obeying the mask order, and who is not. You fantasize about sitting in a café with a friend and an overpriced coffee and (not) doing homework for a few hours. You miss crowded breweries and sweaty dance parties. Indoor spaces that once felt comfortable and safe are now fraught with anxiety. One evening, you stop by your neighbourhood branch of the public library and feel a sense of calm as you step inside, but are disrupted when you remember you can't linger here for long as you once did. Indoor spaces such as these now have a sense of "go in and get out as fast as possible", leading to a sense of hurry and unease where there used to be safety.

Ode to the Public Library

O, the comfort of
the VPL in the rain
don't forget your mask

For you, the antidote to this claustrophobia is parks, quiet neighbourhood sidewalks, and bike lanes. Your bike is one of the few places you feel an expansive sense of freedom that combats the isolation you feel while alone staring at a screen all day. The pandemic has drawn you to cycle more than you ever did before.

Public transit is sometimes a necessity, but it feels good to travel freely throughout the city without the virus anxiety that can come with taking the bus.

Ode to my bicycle

I'm not a poet
But I love to ride my bike
Pedal out the sads
I can go so fast
Pandemic woes behind me
My sweet chariot

You see this increased use of public green space and active transportation as a silver lining to the pandemic, but it's still not enough to counter the things you feel you are missing. It's okay to mourn things like job security, seeing your friends, and hugging your grandparents.

For now, you'll have to just keep pedaling.



SUBJECT 05: AT FIRST, I WASN'T AFRAID...



"I did a push-up yesterday!"

A karaoke track of I Will Survive, by Gloria Gaynor plays in the background.

At first, I wasn't afraid, I wasn't petrified
Kept thinking, "I kind of like how I don't have to go outside."

Spent my days with my guitar, cooing love songs to Lance,
And to my TV, oh this is who I was meant to be.

And so step back, and watch my pace
I move as slowly as a slug and I lounge with so much grace
I did a pushup yesterday
I take a dance class on zoom
Oh my god, my schedule has all this room

Go on now, go, walk out the door, just look around now
Like, "Have you ever noticed the birds before?"
I wear my pj's all day long
No need for laundry
Won't shower for 40 days because no one will ever see

Oh, no, not I, I will thrive
Oh, as long as I make sourdough, I'll stay satisfied
I've got all my day to nap, I've got all this sourdough
I'll thrive, oh yes I'll thrive, hey, hey

I think I feel afraid, a smidge petrified
Keep thinking, "I'll never see my friends again" and then I cried
Oh I spend so many nights thinking, how can I be strong?
When all I've got is me and we don't get along?

Sad thoughts are back from that sad place
All those years of processing struck me in my face
I thought I'd changed that stupid lock
I thought I'd thrown away the key
Now I've got some heavy baggage to unpack in therapy

Go on now, go, go with the flow, live in the right now, even if that's sobbing on the floor
Day by day, I'll do the work, to learn good coping strategies,
But for right now, I'll watch Schitt's Creek on repeat

Oh no, not I, I won't nose dive
Oh, as long as I've got Moira Rose, I know I'll feel alive
I've got all my life to nap, I've got all this bread to eat
I will thrive, oh yes I'll thrive, oh
Go on now, go, walk out the door, go get some people in your life before it rains forevermore
Social distance in a park, a public restroom is key
Because if you squat in the city, everyone will see you pee
Oh, no, not I, won't be peeing in the public eye
"I think I'm getting away from the point. Pause. Pause.

The music is paused.

I think right now is a time of mourning. Lots of people have lost their jobs, their income, lots of people are losing loved ones, lots of people are sick and scared. Essential workers are risking their health every day for our benefit. People are dealing with conflict in a way that they're not used to dealing with, whether that be culturally or familiarly, in their own homes. So, I think one thing we more or less all have in common is that our inner demons, these days, have more time and space to sit with us. And I don't know about you but for me that's been really hard. So when I'm asked the question, how do I think Canadians, and especially young Canadians, can thrive post and during the pandemic, I say... HIT IT!"

The music plays again in the background.

Seriously, health care should cover therapyyyyyyyyyy!

...
It should.



SUBJECT 06: I'M ESSENTIAL. I SWEAR.



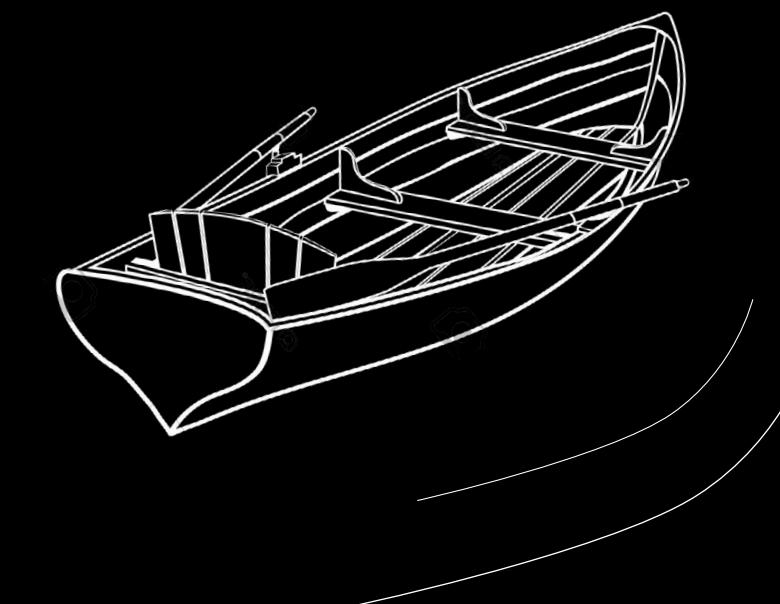
"I'm told my job is essential but I feel as a person I'm expendable."

My job was considered essential, when the pandemic sent Vancouver into lockdown.. The reality of retail during COVID-19 continues to be that customers don't follow the arrows on the floor, and don't care for physical distancing, which is the most concerning. They act selfishly to get what they want when they want it without considering the space between others or communicating that they want to get a product, putting me and other retail workers in danger. Customers treat staff as invisible until they need something. They don't read signs or listen to announcements. As someone working on the sales floor I am passed or shoved the most. This lived reality has heavily impacted my mental health. I feel overwhelmed with anxiety at times. I don't want to work in aisles where people are gathering around places where I need to merchandise products. When an aisle becomes too crowded I'm encouraged to leave for my safety but that is a solution to a symptom not prevention of the cause. Customers entering the store when clearly sick, touch everything and pull off their masks to cough in a store with centralized air conditioning. The management team and I are following and enforcing safety measures as much as we can such as wiping down baskets and buggies, having a limit of 35 customers in the store, sanitizing till countertops, having staff work solo in aisles, reminding customers to abide by the physical distance markers when lining up to cash out, etc. Despite all of that and more, the disregard of my safety by customers has forced me to come to terms with the possibility that I could get COVID-19 and die.

The government's lack of support and aid for homeless folks, people with mental health issues and individuals dealing with drug addictions during the pandemic, has accumulated in an exponential increase of threats, violence and theft in my store, to which I have become numb. It is too much to deal with for \$1 over minimum wage after the pandemic premium was taken away. I'm tired of the clearly failed systems. When we call the police due to an individual having a mental health episode, and if they show up, we as employees become a part of a repetitive cycle of "triggered, terrorize, escalation, arrest, drop off, repeat".

These individuals need help and resources, not to be held in a cell over night then let go so they can repeat the process. My staff and I are dealt this hand over and over again even more so now with COVID19. I'm told my job is essential but I feel as a person I'm expendable.

The way I navigate through the city has also changed. The difficulties I experienced were often as a result of protocols set in place to keep everyone safe and affected my dependable way to get to work. I now only choose one bus route. The other options that are available are not safe in my opinion as they involve taking the Skytrain at Main Street - Science World or Commercial- Broadway. Those transit hubs at night are where individuals dealing with drug addictions and some of the homeless folks gather, and unintentionally harass essential workers trying to get home. I feel for their desperation but I don't carry cash on hand nor do I have the funds to buy meals for everyone. Being forced to be in opposition to their needs leads to escalation and violence and I deal with enough of that at the store. When I take transit my only goal is to get to my destination, not fear for my safety. I've had multiple instances where police involvement would have remedied the situation through de-escalation or attracting the individual having an episode's attention. I avoid going downtown via bus because my heart sinks when all the housing built are not for those who truly need it, like the people on the streets. In the COVID-19 pandemic, I'm told my job is essential but I'm not the only one that is expendable.



SUBJECT 07: FREE TIME COSTS



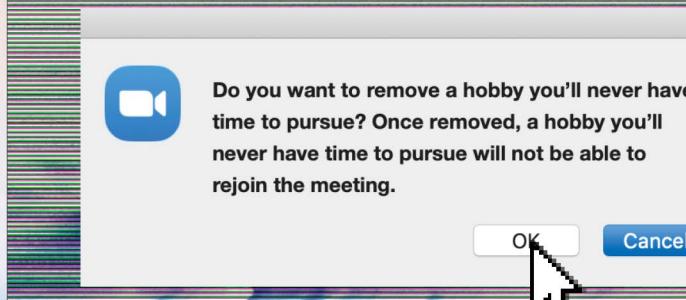
Back in April, during the height of the “quarantine fads”, I tried making Dalgona Coffee. If you don’t know, Dalgona Coffee is made by whipping equal parts instant coffee powder, sugar, and hot water until it becomes a creamy, delicious blob. If you’re like me and don’t have an electric hand mixer, you have to whip it about 300 times until you feel like your wrist might fall off. Then serve with milk and enjoy. I wasn’t much of a coffee drinker at the time, and I definitely made too large of a batch. In my over-caffeinated fugue-like state, I crawled into bed (the only real place to sit in my tiny apartment), and somehow became hyper-fixated on learning how to make resin jewelry. I stayed in bed on my laptop for over 10 hours that day, watching countless tutorials by suburban moms on YouTube. By evening I was ready to commit. Jewelry-making was going to be my new quarantine hobby.

I splurged on over \$60 worth of supplies on Amazon, a major purchase for me at the time. I was still finishing up my degree at UBC, working in student housing as a Residence Advisor so I could live on campus. My monthly income as an RA was \$1,010, making me a heaping \$10 too wealthy to be eligible CERB. Meanwhile, I had to pay \$980.72 in rent to live there in order to keep my job. The contracts of my other 2 jobs had ended pre-COVID, leaving me with only \$29.28 of monthly disposable income. But I was coming to terms with the fact that quarantine was going to last a lot longer than we’d expected, so I told myself that a creative hobby would be a worthwhile investment.

What I didn’t realize at the time was that graduating in the middle of a global pandemic is more complicated than I’d imagined. I had just begun what would turn out to be a 5 month long job hunt, and my contract as an RA was ending in less than a month. Between May and August, the days flew by. I was lucky (but not particularly excited) to move back in with my parents. I spent most of my days applying for job after job, receiving little to no interview offers. My jewelry supplies collected dust. I felt guilty even thinking about taking a break from my job applications to work on something creative, and told myself I could start as soon as I signed a job contract.

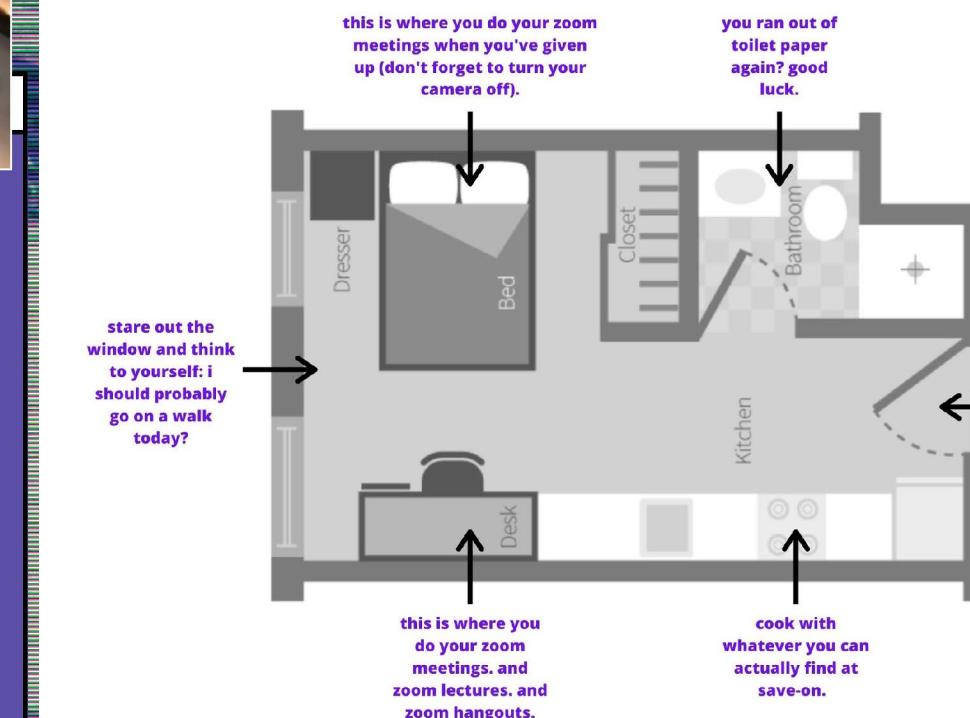
I eventually secured this 4 month contract, but the truth is I never did start making jewelry. Maybe I’ve been procrastinating, but I think there is something to be said about the amount of energy it takes to be constantly connected on Zoom, especially when you work remotely. It starts to feel like a lifestyle. I make Zoom catch-up plans with friends after work. I attend Zoom trivia nights. I have Zoom meetings for volunteer commitments during my lunch breaks. I forget to leave the house, I forget to eat lunch, I forget to move from my chair entirely.

I could tell myself that I’ll start my little jewelry hobby as soon as my current contract ends, but I know that’s probably not true. I still need to find another job, a reality I’m reminded of as I check the date and realize that it’s rent day. I know now that my expectations of downtime during quarantine were the naive, wishful imaginings of an underpaid student on the verge of burnout. As I sit here isolated in my bedroom that doubles as a home office, work stress and looming job precarity permeate every aspect of my life. The space between my bed and my desk is minimal, and the balance between work and life is non-existent. |

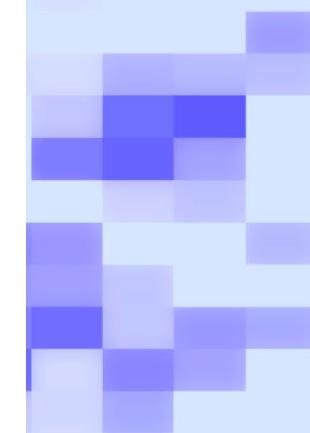


Dalgona Coffee Recipe

daily quarantine routine: march-april in my dorm

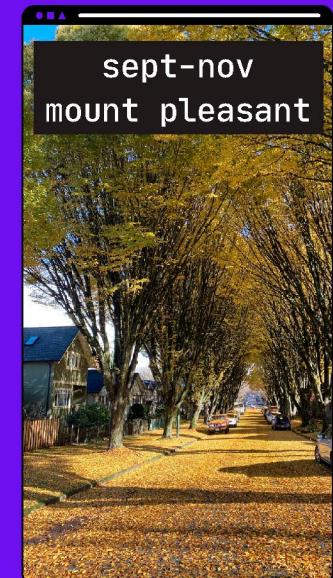
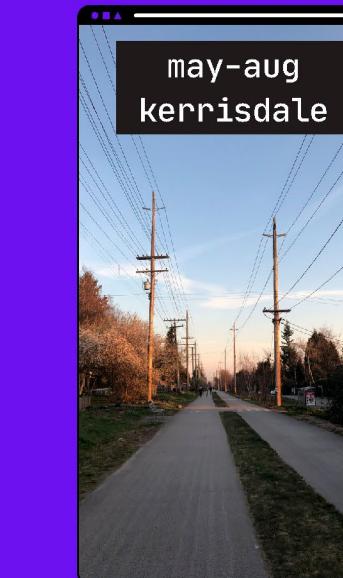
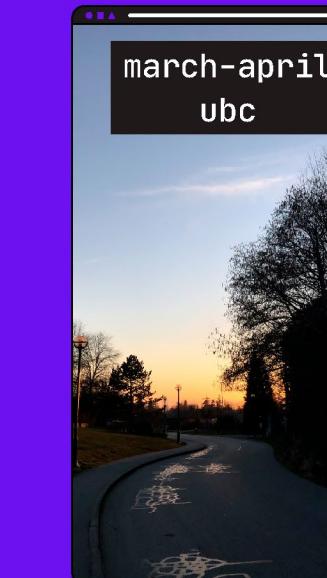


I've moved 3 times since the onset of COVID-19.



job hunting anxiety has entered the Waiting Room for this meeting

[See Waiting Room](#) [Admit](#)

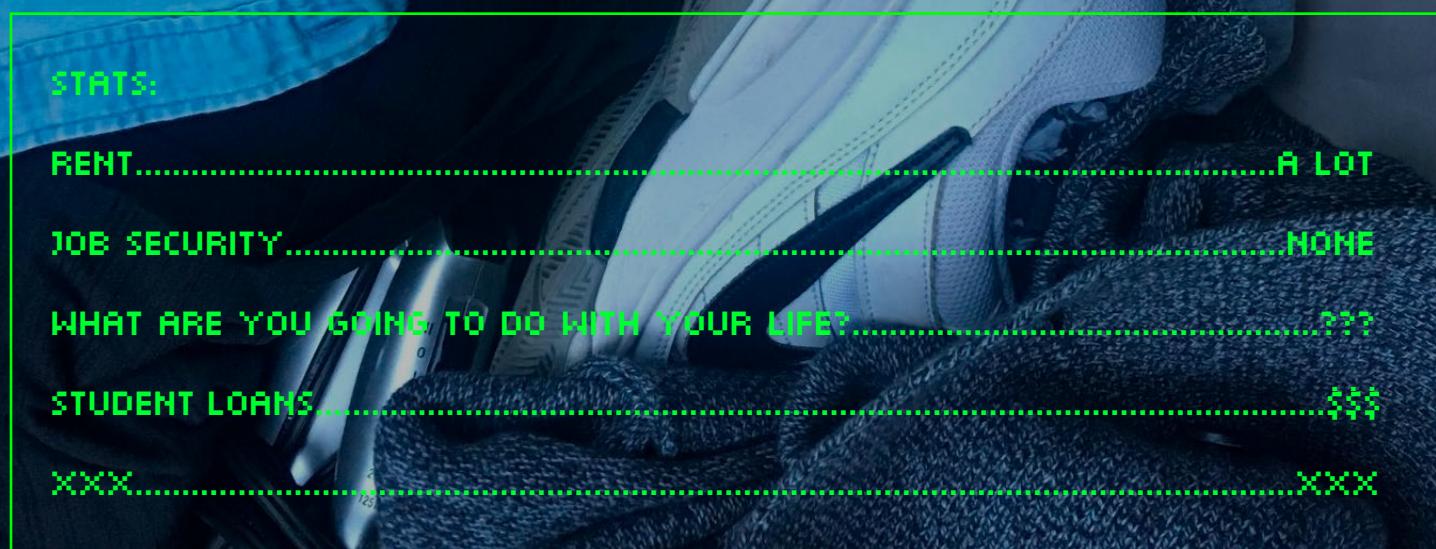


I live and work in student housing at UBC: a scary place to be in March. Public health information about the virus is still so uncertain, so I avoid my residents at all costs, quickly sneaking into the elevator before I run into anyone in the hallway. I try to hype myself up for my weekly walks to the nearby Save-On, where Lysol, toilet paper, and non-perishable food items are nowhere to be found. On my way back, I snap sunset photos of the beautiful campus I'll soon be leaving, and wonder what my last month of university would've been like in more “precedented” times.

My RA contract ends so I move back into my parents’ rental in Kerrisdale, where I grew up. The home cooked food is amazing and I know I’m lucky to have somewhere to stay rent-free, but it still feels claustrophobic and lacks privacy. Between my frantic job applications and Zoom interviews, I go on long walks and bike rides with my mom along the Arbutus Greenway.

With a short-term job contract signed, I’m excited to move into my own space. I find an amazing and reasonably-priced room in a Mount Pleasant home with a flexible month-to-month lease situation. Between remote work, job hunting, volunteer commitments, and grad school applications, I don’t often get to leave my room. When I do, I go for long walks, admiring the neighbourhood’s colourful fall leaves, local businesses, and character homes. I love it here, but as my current work contract comes to an end, I wonder how long I can afford to stay.

SUBJECT 08: NO PLACE LIKE HOME



"And I'm not talking about the fake kind of inspired that wellness-washing culture encourages you to partake in."

The Covid pandemic (a phrase I'm just so sick of at this point) cut short my Masters at Cambridge, stranded me from my fiancé in New York, and landed me back in the basement of my parents house where I grew up at 26 years old. This vision of my current situation is a near replica of my 13-year-old self's darkest nightmares. Picture a (clearly gay) teenager clutching his breast in horror. That's what I see each night when I close my eyes.

I currently stay between my brother and sister's apartment in Mount Pleasant, Vancouver, and the suburban basement previously mentioned. At the apartment I have a drawer and sleep on a 176 dollar Ikea fold out couch that feels very much like cardboard. When I'm at the apartment I feel restless and crowded due to a lack of privacy and space. At my parent's I feel like a child again and too far removed from urban life. The closest store or coffee shop is over an hour walk past endless winding roads of McMansion-esque houses.

All of my belongings fit into a suitcase. All of my plans are designed to be temporary. My job contract ends in two weeks at which point I'll once again be over educated, under qualified, and unemployed, yet still needing to pay student loans, etc. Zoom fatigue sets in like clockwork each day. Showering becomes optional, as do pants, and sitting upright. I could work, sleep, and relax without leaving bed (not recommended). There's a perpetual sense of time running out yet also standing completely still. Security is an illusion, days blur together, coffee cups and dishes accumulate next to my laptop that seems to be forever stacked on top of books (finally, they're good for something).

At this point you'd think I'd be applying like mad to any kind of job, anything remotely related to my field of study—someone, anyone, please hire me! But no. Despite all this, I hold out. I remain optimistic and quietly hopeful. Quite frankly, I don't want most of the jobs I see advertised. What this pandemic has done, in addition to foiling everyone's plans, is cause us to reflect on the routines behind our days, the amount of time we spend working to live, and the corporate structures we can choose to lend our skills and resources to. I'm trying to stay firm in my decision to avoid any job that will leave the world in a worse off state than I found it.

Perhaps naively, I'm still looking for "meaningful work". This means work I feel good about, work that allows me to think critically and use more than a small part of my brain or skill set, work that doesn't force me to falsely smile into the plastic personal branding abyss of LinkedIn and network my soul away, and work that doesn't make me sigh with deep existential boredom while I partake in systems I fundamentally disagree with. Like any young person who was told to dream big and that if they only tried hard enough, anything is possible, I want to do work that leaves me feeling inspired. And I'm not talking about the fake kind of inspired that spiritual bypassing and wellness washing culture encourages you to partake in. To me, this just becomes a band-aid used to ease the cognitive dissonance you feel and help you sleep at night. We all know that feeling; as if something's missing and you just can't put your finger on it? It never seems to go away. If I sound disenchanted or entitled try not to blame me... All I did, as far as I'm concerned, is embody the cultural ethos impressed upon my millennial self by a generation of baby boomers spouting neoliberal philosophies about work and life. The only mistake I've made is believing them.

Covid or no Covid, it is a precarious time to be young. I don't know what city I'll be living in a few months from now or what I'll be doing. I don't know if I'll ever really feel at home again or if I'll manage to get a job I don't mind. I don't know if the constant feeling of contradictions will ever go away. What I do know is that I'll keep on trying because my increasingly nervous parents taught me to always keep working hard towards what I'm passionate about! So despite myself, that's just what I'll do.

I think there is an automatic urge to seek out a solution to a problem, not because we have the right answer but because the problem is unpleasant to sit with. What if instead of explaining it away and trying to fix it as soon as possible, we make our lives into a practice of asking difficult questions? What if "exploring" and "questioning" become verbs that are enough all on their own, and we understood that the continually evolving process of asking these hard questions over and over again is the answer?

