

~~different~~ something

The Quarantine Diaries

A PUBLICATION VOICING THE INNER
MONOLOGUES QUIETED BY QUARANTINE.

I want to say I've been spending my time responsibly. That I haven't let the weight of a crumbling world hinder my perception of the future but if I'm being completely honest, it has. Most of my time has been spent numbing the anxiety of potentially losing my loved ones, potentially killing a stranger, being evicted from my home, being let down by my government. Monitoring the waves of emotion as they come has become a full time occupation.

As someone who suffered from clinical depression and anxiety even before all of this happened- it feels strange knowing that the fault in our societal structures, the ones i thought about everyday, are so tangible now. Somewhere in my heart I feel satisfaction knowing the whole world is seeing it too.

I'm having a hard time doing the things I once loved doing or even finding a place for those things in my life. I'm not sure how long that will last, hopefully one of these days I'll wake up with a longing to sing again but as of now I'm letting myself feel impossible; only because everything seems to be right now.

I'm finding sanctuary in my partner, one I'm lucky enough to be spending this time with and taking it one day at a time. I'm finding peace while cooking a meal, even a simple one and finding gratitude in it because it meant risking lives just to make a pot of spaghetti... Which still feels so weird to think about.

I'm talking to my family a lot, recognizing how little effort i put into saying hello and how important that feels right now. Same thing goes with friends I've neglected after years of self isolating. Who knew it'd take a pandemic to realize you're kind of an asshole.

I can't help but do some self reflection. To look at myself and understand why I may have been so unhappy before I had a viral disease to credit. If anything, this has taught me that I do need people. That living my life with a chip on my shoulder negates the fact that I have a life to begin with. Every moment we're here with each other is a reason to feel gratitude. Gratitude for a fight with a friend, gratitude for coming home from the grocery store with moldy mushrooms, gratitude for traffic, gratitude for a movie night you chose not to attend.

I hope that once this is all over, I can be a better version of myself than when it began. Maybe this is what we all needed in the end. A massive, world ending, societal crumbling, comfort destroying reality check to bring us right back down to earth.

Stay safe, Stay healthy and most importantly, stay sane kids.



Coming to you from Barcelona, Spain on day 19 of my quarantine. Spending the majority of the time in my room, occasionally hanging with the roomies but mainly wanting to be with my own thoughts. My anxiety was through the roof at the start of lock-down so I was smoking weed every day to cope. Luckily from this, some creativity managed to sneak past the anxious thoughts and I've been dabbling with some creative shit here and there, but honestly not a ton. Nowadays it seems like mostly everyone creates with the intention to post, but when I do feel so motivated then I have just been indulging in the act itself as a form of therapy... and if I feel lead to share the outcome then I do, but it's not necessary. Just trying to get through the days one at a time and some days it's harder than others. These are the days I now reserve smoking for. But today is a good day, and so was yesterday so I'm grateful for that.



I've been able to take this time to focus on my future projects and my goals. I've learned that I can still get social interaction simply by calling friends and family, and that it helps fuel me. They give me energy/hope.



I don't know what to think. We are all so vulnerable to this unseen enemy. I'm afraid for my family, my dad can't quit smoking and has very poor lung health. My mom has an autoimmune disorder. My aunt has cancer. I think this disease killed my uncle and my grandfather in the same week, just before they started testing for cases in Michigan. I hope that the disease has taken enough from my family.

Every hour it changes. I go from being hopeful, calm, and optimistic, to drenched in anxiety, with no light to see and no science to rely on.

I am SO PROUD of my friends in healthcare.

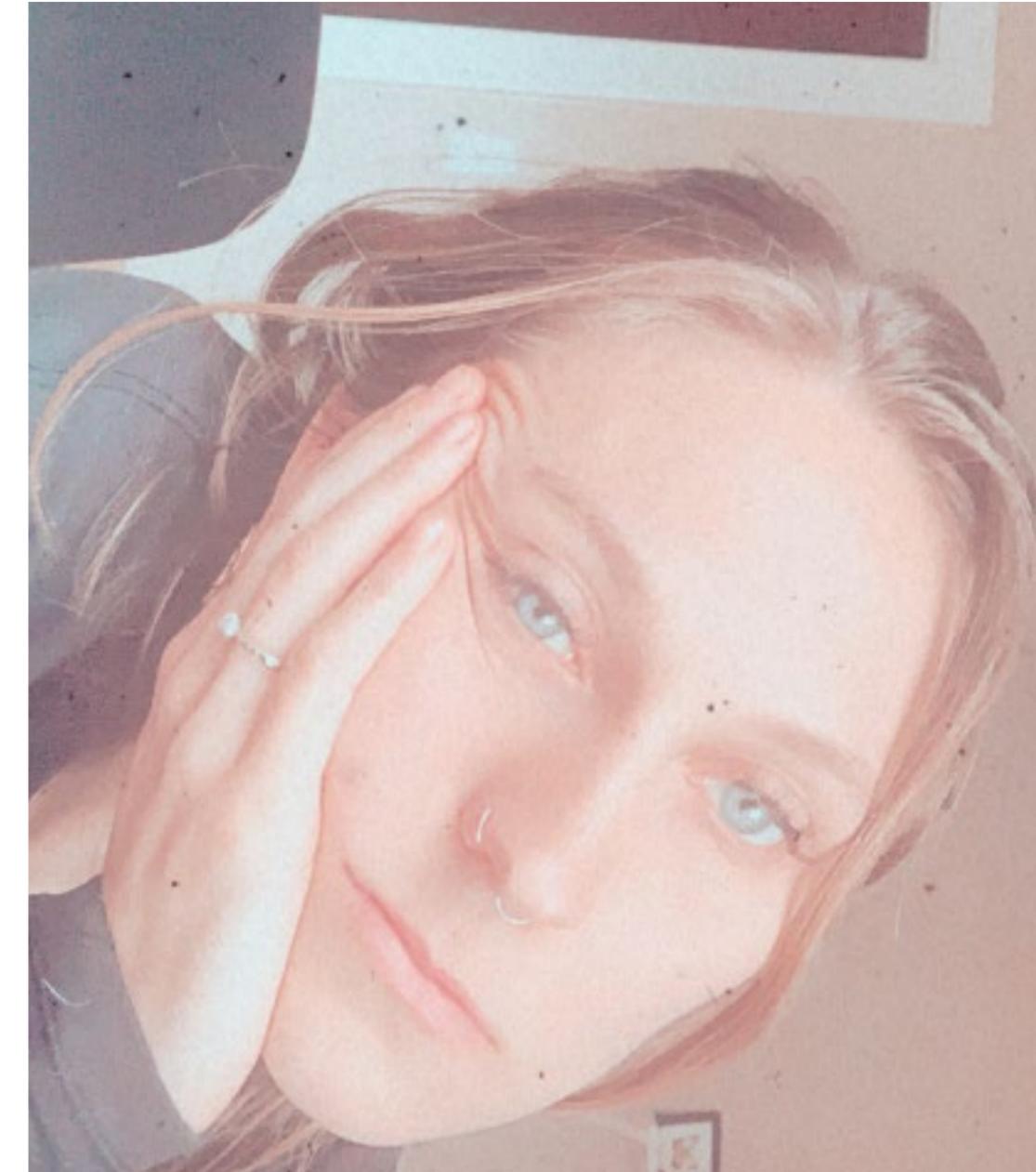
I'm proud of the doctors and scientists doing work I'll never understand.

I'm hurting for people I'll never meet.

I'm praying no one will have to hurt for us.

But I still see humanity in all of this. I still see love, joy, productivity, art, growth, strength, spirit. I see a world that will be ready to rebuild and reconnect one day.

In the meantime I'm going to be kind to myself, and stay home.



I have been working for the past few months preparing for New York Fashion Week in September. There is lots to do to prepare since I am an independent designer. I do my marketing and design. I usually work at a studio and sew but because I kept hearing about this virus slowly I have had to stay in and work from home... it was fun at first but then I had to overcome the many obstacles that I have been faced with. I have no access to sewing equipment so I remembered what the wise Tim Gunn said "MAKE IT WORK " I have been working from bed and eating a lot and posting to get sponsors for my presentation in September. Part of what I am doing is working with a group of students that I am teaching about the Fashion Industry and we have had to communicate by phone and of course young people like texting which is the worst.

I have decided to take this time to make changes , texting being one of them. I realized that I do not eat properly when life is normal however since the virus hit I am eating a lot and often. I make culinary masterpieces that even blow my mind. I am kinda grateful for the downtime but it has been difficult to watch some of the human greed ,ignorance and fear that I have seen. Its sad to watch people all of a sudden do things like bring in race or selfishly hoarding food and even licking grocery items for a minute of internet fame. I hope that this situation teaches us how to be better people and respect our environment more...I also hope that things get better and I hope that I am able to show at NYFW in order to show my students how to face life with faith and determination without fear



I'm doing my best to cope with the boredom of having to live at home without any roommates, besides my two cats, while also trying to not treat the COVID-19 pandemic like a design challenge.

That being said, all of this time at home has allowed me the space to go through all my 35mm film prints that I never ended up scanning and I am finding beauty in photos that I had once forgotten. This has been really exciting and rewarding.

Every day I drink my coffee and smoke a little pot and will start sorting through my old photos, arranging them according to different rule sets each day. I do this until the music I'm listening to, or the arrangement of photos on the table give me an idea for a collage. Every day I wonder what/if I'll end up creating that day and that process has helped me move the time along with a positive spirit.

Going through a break-up and having my final year of grad school going online has had a significant toll on what was a perfect past couple of months in my life, where everything was coming together and things which I had never dreamed of happening were happening left and right. I felt like I was living in a different world. Life has its lows to compliment its highs. Now, many of those circumstances are different but I try to keep my chin up. I am dealing with this by trying to keep a sense of humor about life's circumstances and recognizing that all that I have control over is how I respond to life's situations. Sometimes I wonder if I had just done *this* or *that* differently that the outcome would be different but thinking like this won't change the past and would diminish the future. I try to find humor in my thoughts, or bring a smile to my face by dancing to the latest recommendations from Spotify. With this sort of attitude my creative output has been good and has lifted my spirits.

The COVID-19 pandemic is scary. I have concerns for the older people in my life and, while it seems removed from me since I am not an essential worker or in a hospital, I treat the situations seriously and am playing my part in social distancing. Magazine's like Something Different definitely help in times like this: being able to read other people's stories and feelings about the pandemic, and seeing the strength of the people who work to help save lives.

If you are reading this I hope that the burdens in your life are lifted swiftly, and I wish good tidings upon your day and weeks to come.



Me gustaría nadar desnuda
bailar entre una multitud hasta desfallecer
cumplir promesas de amor
destruir algo que cueste mucha plata
vender enciclopedias, comprar paco
pero está diluviando
en todos los rincones del mundo
y me resulta imposible continuar.

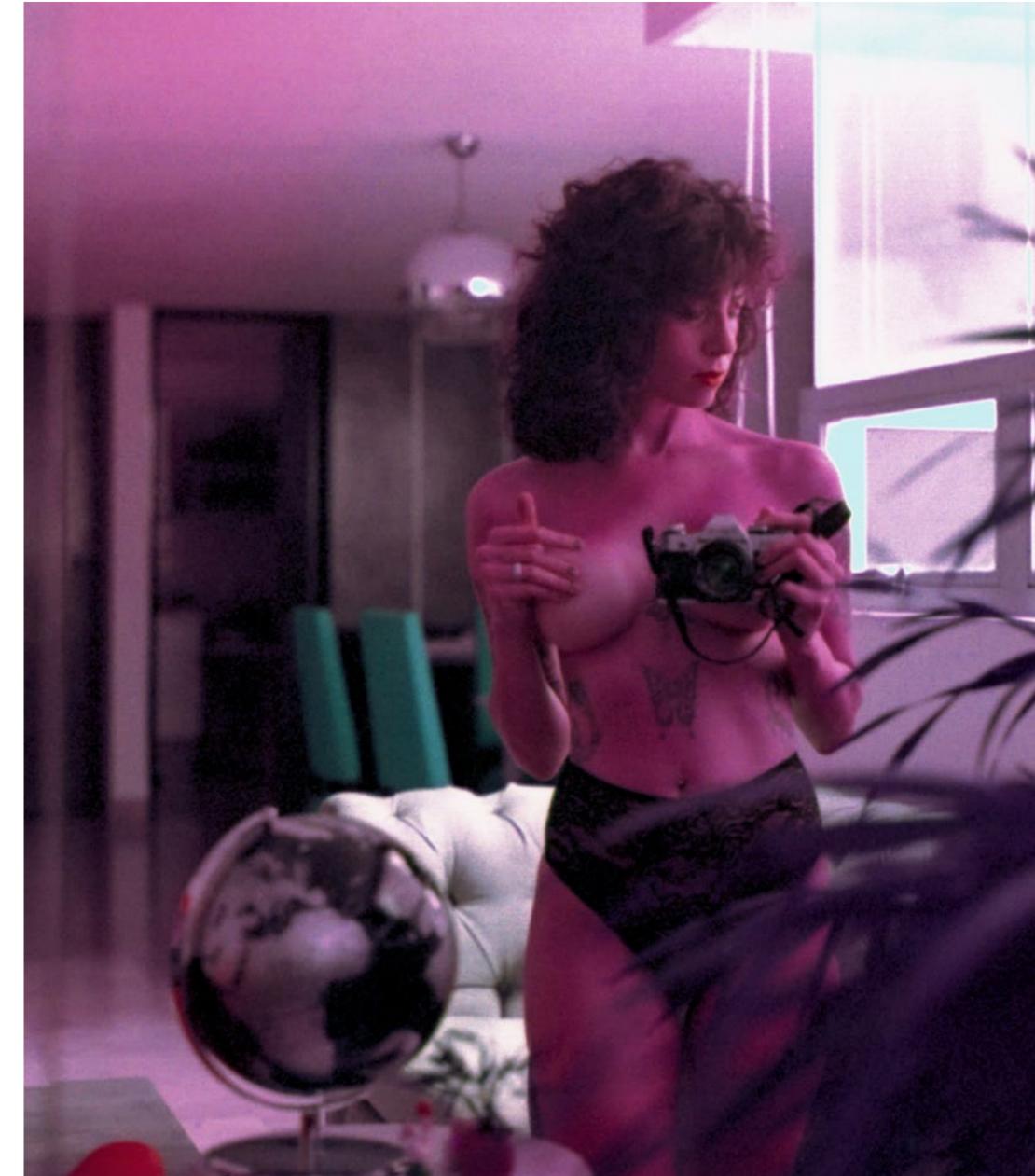
Llegan alertas de todo tipo.
Tengo una sensación negativa
difícil de explicar,
de esas que dan ganas de volver a hablar con alguien
a quien le perdiste el rastro mil años atrás.

El tiempo no está de mi lado.
Ojalá en vez de envejecer pudiera mutar.
Asumo que todos moriremos,
de cualquier cosa o de un virus universal.
Me hubiera gustado descubrir un continente,
detonar un edificio, incendiar una catedral.
Me hubiera gustado que nos conociéramos más.

I would like to swim naked
dance through a crowd until you faint
Keep promises of love
Destroy something that costs a lot of money
Sell encyclopedias, buy paco
but it's pouring
In all corners of the world
And it is impossible for me to continue.

Alerts of all kinds arrive.
I have a negative feeling
Difficult to explain,
Of those that makes you want to talk to someone again
To whom you lost track a thousand years ago.

Time is not on my side.
I wish instead of aging I could mutate.
I assume we will all die,
Of anything or a universal virus.
I would have liked to discover a continent,
Detonate a building, set fire to a cathedral.
I wish we had known more.



How you are spending your time?

I've started a minute melody piano diary of writing a new piece of music for each day that we've been in lockdown here in Michigan.

What have you learned?

That I've always been capable of creating, it just reignited what was already there.

What are your thoughts on the crisis?

It's a sad time to hear how many are affected by this virus because so many have an immunodeficiency. It made me really thankful to know that I've been focused on my health and my awareness towards what I have.

How have you been dealing with this?

Continuing my projects and setting new goals and intentions to finish.

How have your thoughts changed from 2 weeks ago?

The social distancing thing feels surreal. Seeing friends and being hesitant on hugging them is something I never imagined I'd be thinking in my lifetime.

Are you frustrated by the way the world is acting?

Yes and No. it's a two jagged sword. In many ways, this pandemic is worse in the us because of the instilled fear from the media and it wasn't enforced quickly enough. In other ways, there are a lot of u.s. citizens that have immunodeficiencies that are in danger. I find it best to practice patience whenever I go get groceries.

Do you need anything?

A physical hug and face to face interaction.

What are you dealing with?

I was set to release a crowdfunding campaign for the greater impact house here in Detroit and was going to have n art exhibition inside the house as well as some live performance house shows and I'm just patiently waiting for the lift of social distancing to occur. Here's to releasing the campaign during the summer.



What are you afraid of?

Not being able to go to my local restaurants and coffee shops because they might close.

How have you grown closer to yourself or others?

I've been communicating with more people via FaceTime/zoom than ever before.

How are you using humor to cope?

Finding Online Comedy is really easy and I'm thankful for Conan and Trevor Noah keeping the news light.

How are you feeling?

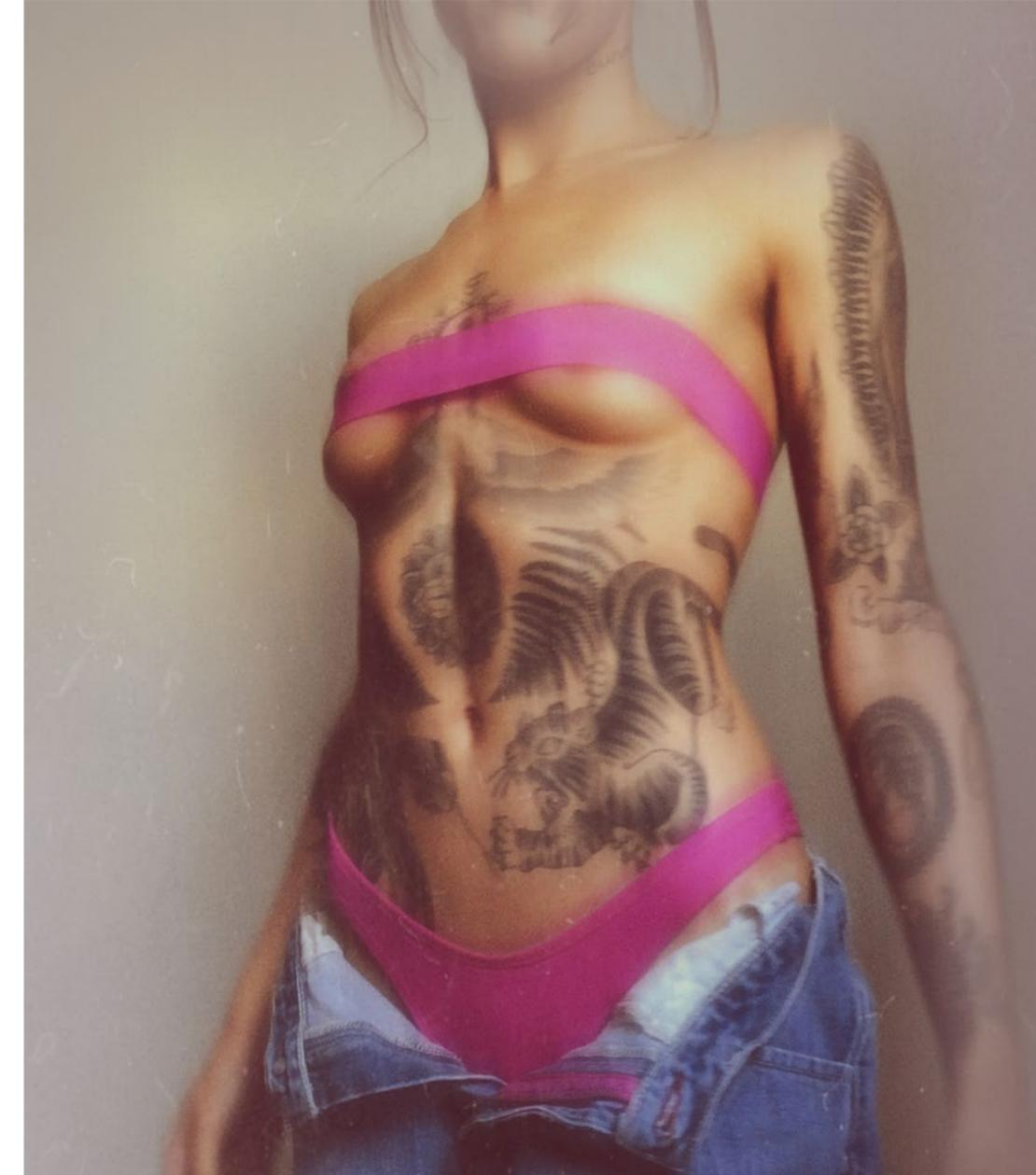
Pretty healthy and thankful.

How do you mitigate fear? risk? sadness?

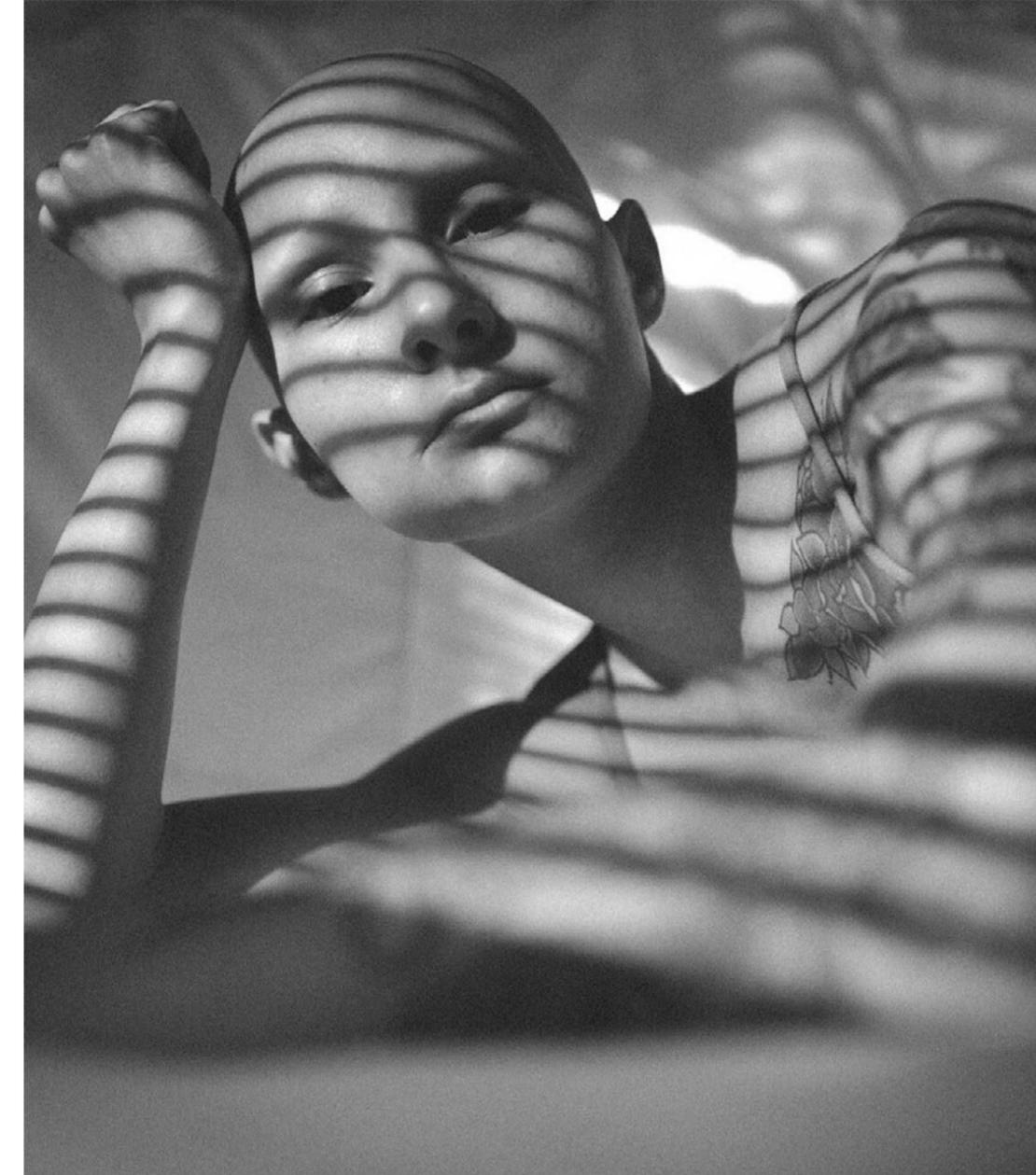
By focusing on creating a new musical piece.



“When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back. A week is more than enough time for us to decide whether or not to accept our destiny.” -Paulo Coelho



The past few weeks I have felt a mix of openness like the light and cloudiness like the shadows. I'm reminding myself every day that all my feelings are there to be felt and it's okay.



March 4th i had my first emergency surgery of my life. it was to place a stent in my ureter to hold a weapon caliber sized kidney stone impacted while my body healed from the initial damage attempting to pass it. i spent 4 nights in the hospital recovering. i cried a lot, took every test, and lost track of time on a morphine drip in a basement corner room with no windows. i just had to wait.

There was an energy in the hospital, like standing in field when a storm is rolling in, but the wind stops curiously, and you just feel the storm's electricity. i woke up to a woman seated outside my room talking very loudly on the phone about the virus and i asked her to shut my door. i googled about the virus on my phone in between dreamless sleeps. no one had masks on at the hospital, should i really be worried? i was discharged, stent and stone included, with a fist full of prescriptions to wait, uncomfortably, and heal in preparation for my scheduled surgery in 10 days. i just had to wait.

A lot happened in the world those 10 days. i live alone, no partner, and with injury, singular life is difficult and depression truly bites at your ankles. i would have felt hopeless without my dog, Mookie, and my cat, Merlin, warm bodies to sleep next to. we just had to wait. we three cuddled, in and out of reality, i was high off prescriptions in my bed, i felt trapped and scared. the virus had jumped from off of the news and into my community. shit. my hospital was on the news, flooded with humans, just like all of the hospitals. all of them. no one has ever seen anything like this, lack of supplies? how is this possible? the word pandemic was being used and soon i got the call-

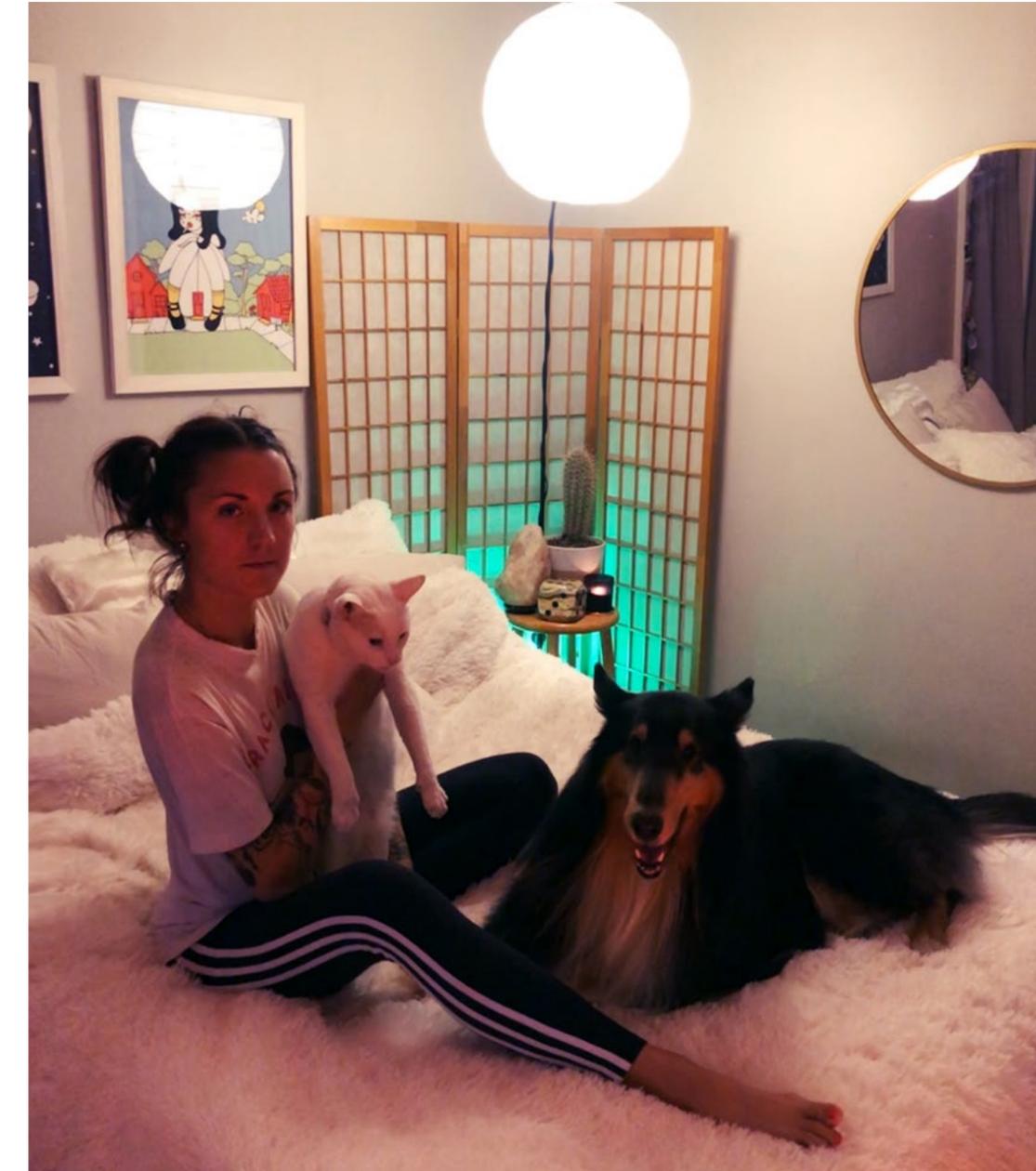
"I can't tell you when we will be able to proceed with your surgery at this point, no elective surgeries are able to be performed, we are so overwhelmed, we don't know anything more."

I just had to wait.

At first i was angry for me, my mental, for my body, for the personal frustration of constant pain management, angry that i can't truly relax, ride my bike, or even take a bath during this incredibly stressful time. the days crawl, still feeling sorry for myself, each day feeling like a whole week in itself. the rest of the world was ordered to join the quarantining I'd already been practicing and this is when my experience changed.

Seeing every peer i have ever had dealing with the same problems put a perspective on the world I've never been able to have before. unfortunately that also leads to mass misinformation, fake news, & seeing everyone post the same fucking memes but it wasn't a joke. millions of people are in unsafe situations and not sure where the next paycheck is coming from. i have friends truly leaning on me for mental stability, for love. i can wait. i am so grateful for my body, my health, no matter how injured it temporarily is. i am thankful for my ability to quarantine, & my means to have supplies. i am grateful to have continued work in the marijuana industry and measuring time with plant growth has become therapeutic for me, as well as measuring time spent outside of my bed where i feel strong and patient while i wait, with purpose. the time I've spent this month in my bed with my animals could never be duplicated. i took this photo with a timer and its the last of 4 shots and the only one Merlin appears willing to pose. when i look at this photo i see the feelings I've worked out within me this month in this bed and i don't feel sorry for myself anymore. i feel like i am deep in a challenge of perseverance that i will win. i feel safe in this place.

I am thankful to feel safe while we wait.



Q: How are you spending your time?

A: Making sure I am staying up to date with my work and emails, working out, spending more time playing and mixing music, catching up on new TV series I have yet to see. Been giving myself a lot of time to think, reflect, and creating ways on how I can continue to make myself better; not just now but for when the world becomes normal again.

Already knew this, but more and more I understand how well I can hold up in my own personal isolation. Yes, I love being around humans; but in my seclusion from the world I am happy, strong, and stable. No one can disappoint me. I've learned as well that many people love and care for me. People reach out to see how I am doing, and nothing makes me happier than replying to that person to ask them "how are you?". I'm scared of human connection but I understand its essential to my mental health.

What is happening is unfortunate. Of course we would rather have our normal lives back, but this is a time all humans must come together to battle this and to protect each other. There is beauty in that.

Q: Are you frustrated by the way the world has been acting?

A: Yeah. I wish our president was supportive of my state and the Florida spring breakers are selfish individuals. All people must understand the severity of this situation and the role they play is very important; important enough where it is between life and death.

Covid-19 or not, I always need love. It's why I breathe.

Dealing with my mom who suffers from alcoholism. She doesn't want to stay indoors and likes to go driving which is very scary. I tell her everyday she is loved and her health and safety mean the world to not just me, but so many other people. There are good days and bad days.

Q: What are you afraid of?

A: Having this last longer than June. I think if this lasts into July we could be in serious economic and human mental health trouble.

I am a person who is very hard on myself, so to have everything in life slow down it certainly does give me time to think and be easier on myself. My coworkers and I love to do Zoom meetings; we definitely have a sense of bond. I'm having longer conversations on the phone with my close friends. I love my friends so much.

I love using humor to cope! Just continuing to have a sense of light on everything happening, got to be goofy when you can be. Tiger King is life; Tiger King is love.

I'm feeling good. I'm not focusing any of my energy on things I can't control. Human nature will do its thing and I have total faith in what the universe will offer me. If you're not feeling good just shoot me a call/message lets connect and laugh! I am here for you.



Today is day who-knows-what, and we just finished all of the sour gummy worms. Alex and I have spent a majority of our isolation clearing our sweet stash(es), playing video games, and making music together. Before quarantine, I was working in elementary schools and Alex was employed at the local grocer. My father - that we live with - has lung issues, so we both quit our jobs before quarantine was announced. As the weeks have progressed, we have been dealing with the fear that everyone has. How will I pay rent? Is my family safe? What will the end of this look like? Admittedly, I have felt insecure during this time of high-stress, and lack of control, and it has forced me and Alex to communicate and confront on deeper levels. He has been much more patient than me, but we find strength together. Whether we are giggling in bed at night, crying, or praying we grow more in love. We have found enjoyment in cooking, taking walks, and reading. Our new bedtime is 4am to 1pm. We feel deeply for all of those affected by the pandemic, and we will continue doing our part by staying home. Thank you nurses!

Best,

Abigail + Alexander



I am currently in massage school, and I am an aspiring Reiki healer. I went on a journey to Guatemala for a woman's Yoga retreat in holy Mayan lands, and when I came back is when everything went on lock-down. I went from living in a tree-house, being touched by Mother Nature every single day, singing, moving my body in the ways it begs to, embracing my Throat Chakra with song, whilst studying and learning- to this new reality of not being able to be with one another in the ways we are used to. Yet, there are endless ways we can touch one another without physically touching. I had already decided to bring those practices home with me, and now facing our inner and outer selves is something we don't have a choice in. I believe that Mother Earth is hurting, Spirit is angry, and that we are being given a chance to upgrade into new ways of living. Who am I truly? Who are we without our regular schedules? What are we learning from this? How can we implement change? What are my priorities compared to what my soul feels called to experience? These are all questions that are being circulated by more than just the spiritual community and those on their path of enlightenment. We are all meditating, opening our minds to new ideas and methods, learning more about ourselves and having a new appreciation for life itself. Life is fragile but human beings are strong. I don't know if this much change would have occurred without drastic tragedy. It is heartbreaking, but we must appreciate all of the positive outcomes this is creating. I am thankful to be alive and to be a source of that positivity for those who are going through this in a complete different way. Everyone is experiencing these strange and ever-changing times differently; but we must hold onto Hope. I am currently in a toxic living situation and being forced to stay there can be excruciating; and yet it is a blessing. I am being forced to transform from it and I accept this as an opportunity. And what am I doing with it? Learning to play ukulele, doing exotic dances, yoga, meditation, and putting my feet in the Earth and thanking Her. The 5 senses are powerful; tune in. We have been practicing emotionally touching each other for a long time; smiling to that crying stranger on a train, sending your love to a deceased grandparent, writing in our journals to ourselves... it is my prayer that we each return to ourselves and therefore return to Nature, so that when we return to each other, it will be through different eyes, mind, and heart.



As a cancer survivor, some of these feelings of isolation, uncertainty, frustration, and confusion are very familiar. I've learned that resilience isn't something you have or don't have, or something you can use like a tool. It's a quality that grows. Resilience is only evident after the crisis. It comes one day at a time by just making it through. And then suddenly, you are resilient.

Together.



I am currently spending a lot of time looking back on my work and trying to find new inspiration in different places. Also, I have been catching up on scanning film and figuring out projects I have either started or are currently looking on.

During this period, I have learned that even the small things that people might take for granted have become some to look forward to. A good example is leaving my apartment to drive to class, just being outside for those quick minutes I have begun to cherish.

During this crisis, I have been trying to keep positive thoughts while also trying to stay cautious about the things going on around me.

I have been trying to focus on things on a day by day basis, however, I am still trying to stay cautious with everything going on.

My frustration comes from people who are not heeding the warning of other countries who have been hit the hardest by this pandemic so far. Having family who live in Italy, they have been warning my family who is living in the states to take the warnings and the quarantine seriously so that we do not face the same issues that they are currently dealing with.

Currently no, I stocked up on the essentials before being put on locked down.

The most I am dealing with is the concern for the health of my older relatives and those who are around them.

I am afraid that the virus evolves before a cure can be developed and it becomes more dangerous to a wider range of ages.

I was already close to others; however, this period has allowed me to grow closer to myself.

I am trying to use humor in a way to try and shift my focus from fear to more of a light-hearted situation while still trying to stay cautious.

Currently, I am feeling bored with my daily routine which consists of waking up, going to class online, doing homework, relaxing and going to bed. I miss being able to go outside, going to the gym, and hanging out with friends.

I have been trying to mitigate sadness and risk by forcing myself to stay busy which has been keeping my mind off these thoughts. However, when I do start to feel these types of ways, I allow it but I try not to focus too long on these thoughts.



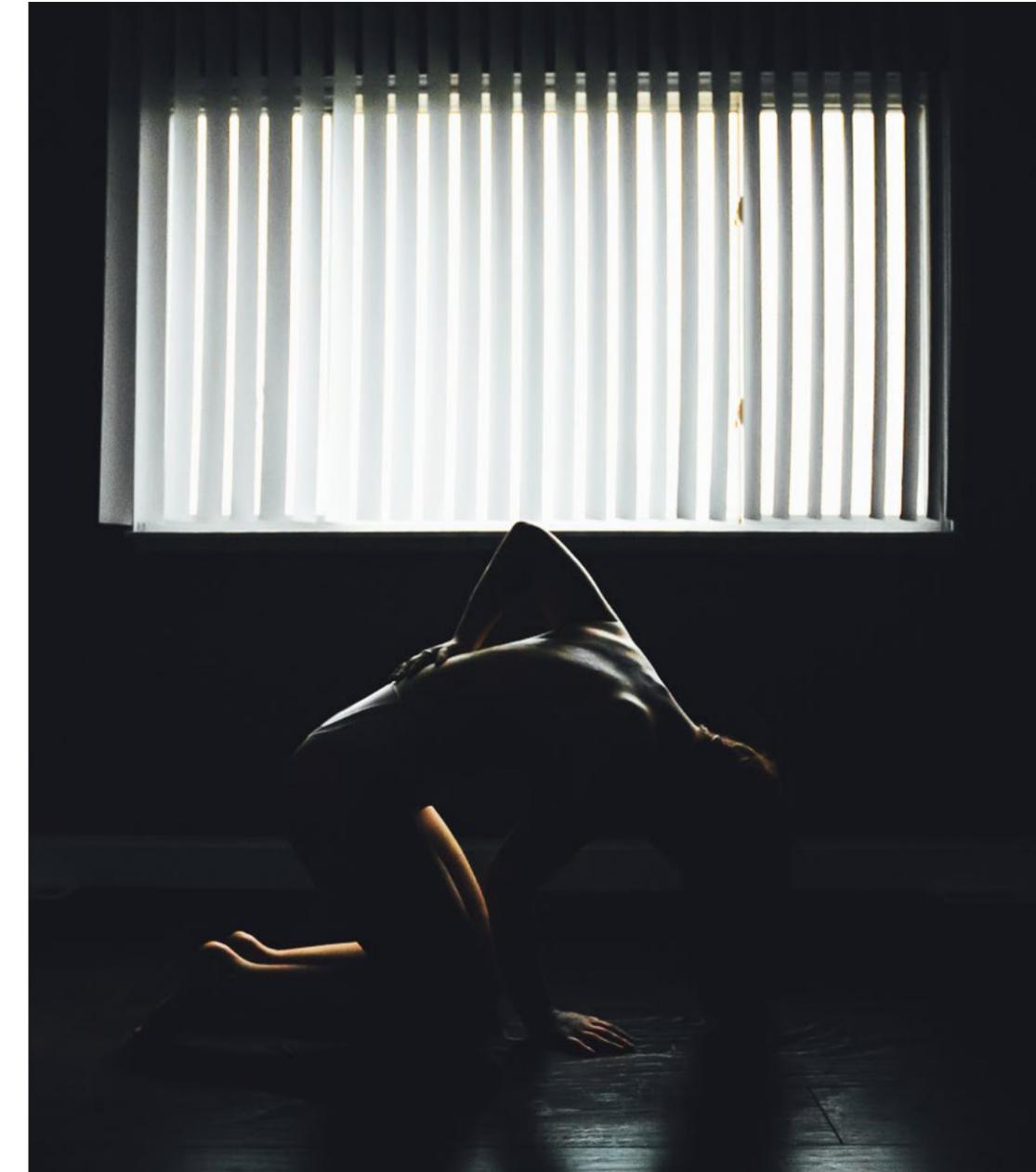
Day 14:

I've come to terms with being stuck inside, I'd even say I'm grateful for it. Having nothing to do but sit within your own thoughts, all day long, has made me realize that working 40+ hours a week between two jobs has left the creative and expressive side of me untapped for months. I have a deep desire to create things. These long days of nothing have left me no choice but to dive in head first to expressing myself creatively. I've spent countless hours in front of the mirror contorting myself to practice showing emotion through body composition. Hours, even days maybe, have been dedicated to drawing whatever my hand feels necessary. Finally, every chance I get, I try out a new joke on my fellow in-home quarantine buddies (my boyfriend and his brother) that I've been spinning up in my head. I think I'm quite hysterical.

In dark times like these, I try to find light in all unfortunate circumstances. My ability to practice expression through art and photography has given me peace during such a chaotic time of life. I urge anyone stuck in a funk to try putting there hand to paper, or singing the song your head plays on repeat, you'll thank me later.

Xoxo,

Slaya



I was 13 the first time I was whisked away by ambulance, feeling as though I was drowning, but my feet were firm on land. I don't remember much from that day, but you know how, in the movies, when someone regains consciousness, they see bright lights and people hovering over them?

You can probably imagine that when THAT person struggling to regain consciousness is you, the memory can feel dream-like; as if you are recalling a scene from a film you once saw, not a scenario you actually lived through.

There were three more ambulance rides that saved my life after that. Turns out, asthma and anxiety are a pretty uncomfortable combination- especially as a child who's parents have no real medical history of either. You see, when asthmatic symptoms begin, anxiety never fails to remind you of how scary the last asthma attack was.

Just like at 13, it's still a pretty uncomfortable combination. Throw in a few environmental allergies during flu season and a chronic autoimmune disorder, and you've got a pretty interesting concoction to deal with during a global pandemic.

I was 21 when I was diagnosed with my autoimmune condition, although I had been living with the same misdiagnosed symptoms my entire life. I was basically told autoimmune diseases don't typically occur on their own; I would most likely be uncovering new issues for the rest of my life as I get older, but with the right knowledge base, I could manage my flares, lethargy, chronic pain, joint issues and depression caused by the loss of self-esteem many autoimmune diagnosis cause.

At first, I wasn't afraid. When news broke that the coronavirus was in the US, I knew it was only a matter of time before it was from sea to shining sea. Truthfully, due to my "unstable" immune system, oddly enough, I sort of felt prepared. In theory, there wouldn't be much that would change about my day to day life. But then you tie into the equation the other 7.8 billion people alive on this planet and each of their emotional responses to this chaotic news and you begin to throw yourself down a black hole of terrifying "what if's".

By now, though, the fear has mostly surpassed. I have always been more afraid of a loved one contracting the virus and me not being able to spend time with them helping, than contracting it myself, and I don't know if that will go away. I have learned I cannot focus on that day to day.

The introvert in me is flourishing. I am enjoying my time in solitude- exploring all my favorite mediums to create in. I am spending really positive, goofy time with my partner. I am communicating with distant loved ones on a regular, weekly basis. I am spending many days overflowing with ideas, living in a make-believe world I thought didn't exist, with far less pressure to perform and impress people, and more self-expression.



I have learned so many things in the last three weeks.

I work best on a set schedule. Early morning is my favorite time of the day. Stretching each day really makes a difference. A clean, tidy, organized home helps me accomplish more. I typically let laundry pile up too long, and it's much better if I take care of the dirty stuff right away. The dog sleeps better when I take her for a run during the day.

I can't ignore the deaths that have plagued our entire planet due to the coronavirus. I can't ignore the healthcare professionals, grocery store workers, restaurant workers and other people who are continuing to work overtime so that our communities don't completely collapse. I can't ignore the risk they put themselves at in order to help the greater good, or the economic impact it will have, or the families it has caused to suffer. This should be taken seriously. And the people still walking into work each day are truly heroes- that fact cannot be diminished.

But I really believe that if any positivity comes of this, it should be that we all need to slow down a little more. The skies are all bluer. The oceans are cleaner. The sidewalks are fuller. The conversations, although they may be over video chat, are more intentional. Our days consist, mostly, of things we CHOOSE to do- often because we ENJOY doing them. I hear more kids laughter and birds chirping through our open windows, now than ever.

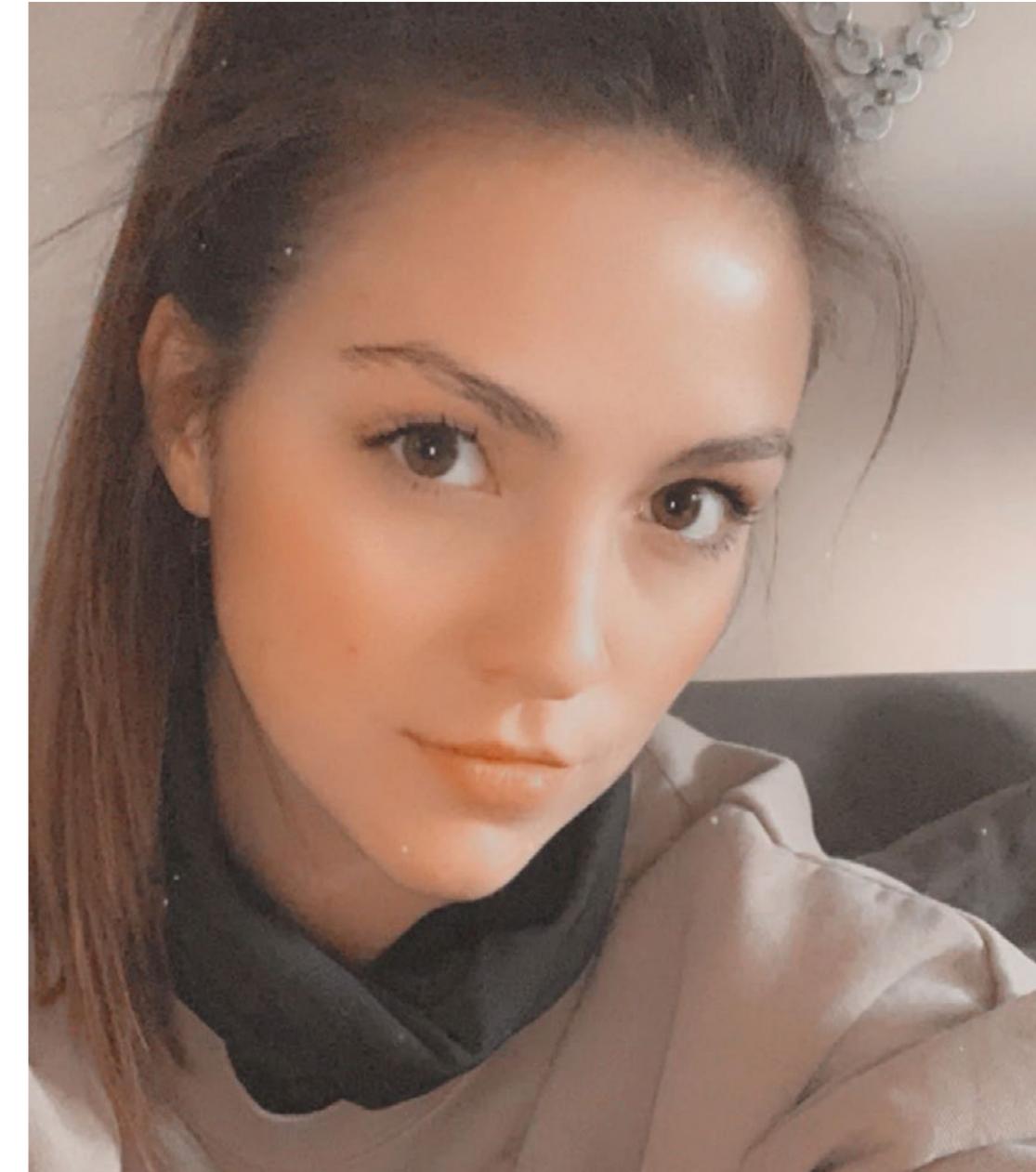
This time, for me, is time being used to reset. It was an unforeseen blessing. No- you do not need to accomplish a whole bunch during this time. It is completely alright if you want to spend this time binge watching Netflix and snacking to your hearts desire. It doesn't NEED to be a life changing time for you. The crazy part about all of this is for once in your life, you don't have many expectations. But for many, it is very difficult. And don't get me wrong, I have my breakdowns. I am very afraid. My doctors are extremely difficult to get in touch with. My income is at a complete halt. I will not be spending my birthday with my friends with year. But at the end of the day, I am grateful for my health, the people I have in my life, and I know the only way we are all going to get through this is one day at a time.



“You’re beautiful” says my angel of a man as I shamefully walk into the house after running (literally, running) myself into an asthma (which I do not have) attack.

I have never been completely comfortable in my own skin. I used makeup, tanning, over working out and clothes to cover my insecurities. But during this dystopian time those things have been neglected. I have to live with and see all of those demons every time I stare into the mirror. Except over the past few weeks, I oddly find myself loving them, piece by piece.

On one of these quarantine Friday nights, I put on a full face of makeup. Then I stared deep into the mirror... And something had changed. I didn’t feel like me anymore. That full face of makeup made me feel like a clown. I was fed up with the hiding of my true self. I am beautiful and it was about damn time I started to recognize it. I had finally broken free of the cage I had placed myself in for the last 24 years.



Quarantine Thoughts

I have noticed a greater compassion growing in me. I feel with those who experience isolation on a regular basis. It is easy as a nation to stay busy on the road or swim in the mainstream, while someone else sinks.

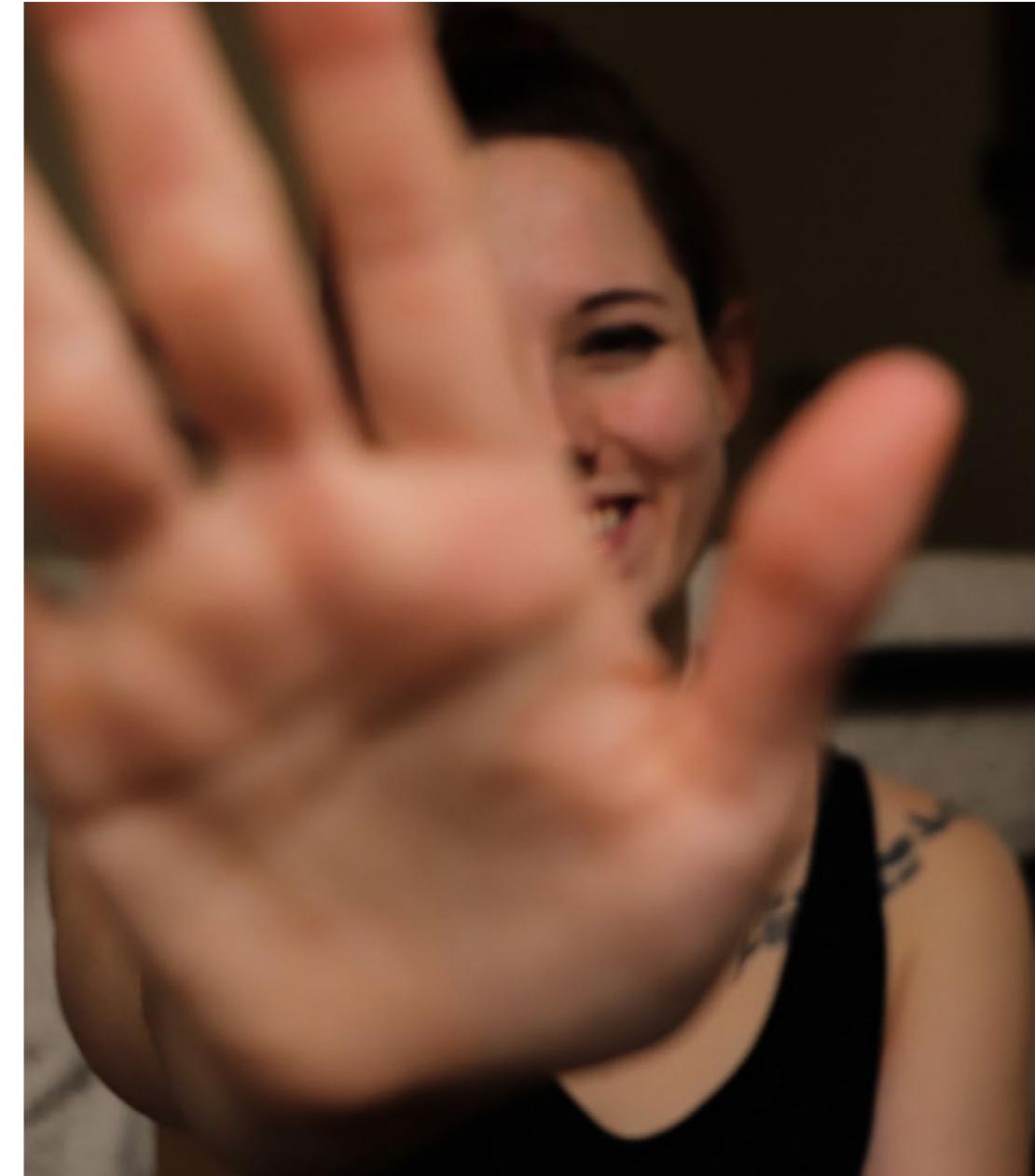
Yes, these days are physically quiet and slow. But my thoughts are busy on the days ahead when America returns to “normal,” whatever that may one day be; and there are still souls in quarantine.

The biggest lesson I’ve learned in this time is simply this: It’s not about me.



I've always loved spending time with family. Growing up family was all I had. These days are so precious and going by fast. I want to soak up every minute. I have learned how to really respond to situations. Being a young mother you need patience and I have found that. This world has been exploited by news articles we often forget how beautiful isolation can be. We as people have come together to help the people who help us most and that alone is a beautiful outcome. I will be spending more time focusing on the good and doing my part in the community. Maybe this was for our own good? A tool to help us learn more about ourselves and more about responding to one another.

Peace, love, and stay safe.



Quarantine is something I felt like I couldn't be more prepared for. From past experiences like in-patient rehabilitation and Vipassana silent mediation, I felt like having to stay in the comforts of your own home was not something I was worried about. For me and many others, coping with the uncertainty of the future has not been easy. I made sure to sit down and re-configure the next 6 months of my life to elevate some of the stress of uncertainty and change plans to better accommodate the unpredictable virus. I took quickly to the physical tool that has always helped me during dark times, the camera. I ordered materials to begin the process of learning to develop color and B&W film at home. I was shooting self portraits everyday. I am fortunate that my house borders a 50 acre reservation of woods. I made this place my playground to explore different forms of self portraiture. This has helped to feel productive and given me a sense that I am building something out of nothing. These woods also have a carved out path that I use to run. The exercise really helps me to release anxiety. Beyond that I have used this time to refocus my energy. Focus on what I can do and ignore what I can't. I was unfortunately separated from a girl I fell in love with due to this virus. She lives in South America and we talk almost everyday. We know it has helped us both. I think this is a really complicated time that has a lot of people angry at the world. This thing has the potential to be more destructive than war and we have no control over it. We can only control the actions we take and we are only as good as we are as a unit so we need to work together and unfortunately we are not doing that. Every country has there own agenda. Every state is left to govern themselves. It's frustrating and sad to watch it all unfold this way. We have not had to be this patient for a very long time and I believe we have lost control of this powerful characteristic. Still, I have hope for humanity. It is hard to see the future for a freelance photographer/videographer, but it will exist in one form or another. So I am watching the landscape to see what the next big thing is, trying to stay as current as possible. I'm worried most about when I will see my girl again. That seems to be at the front of my mind most. Hoping to have her safely travel to the USA and then both of us back to Europe in the Fall. Right now it's looking very questionable. And to help us both, we just try to hope for the best and prep for the worst cause that's all we can do.



I have hit a patch of turbulence, my days of calm isolation are over. Someone heaved a large rock into my still river and suddenly it feels like I'm standing idly and expecting some event to come and happen to me, for every day to stop being Sunday. I'm thinking about divine providence. What do I do now, while I cool my heels? Do I water the begonias, break the rules and send a message to the man I'm thinking of? Should I kiss a wall? Eat a plum? Is there any work more important?

There is so much to say to you about my terrifically bad day. First, I woke up and dazzled myself by thinking about what my last wish would be if right now I was dying and had to make a quick decision, and I guessed that I would wish to inhale the smell of sawdust and polyurethane and old barn one last time. Meanwhile, a turtle dove whose head was the color of violets and wet rocks had settled on a branch by my window. I listened to its gentle coo and recalled a friend of mine telling me how terrible and invasive they are and how another friend of mine once volunteered at a sanctuary breaking their necks to save some other precious avian species. They are secretly my favorite bird and so I roll over and I say to the dove, "How surprising it is that I should love such a bad thing!"

In the afternoon I go for a walk and the thing occurs where you and the other approaching person stare each other down to assert your dominance and ownership of the sidewalk. We both are wearing bandannas like we're bandits so I imagine a Western Standoff and I rest my hand on an imaginary holster. Ultimately I shuffle towards the street because I disapprove of confrontation and enjoy being a person who can uphold social distancing measures. I like being the easy one. Each time a person passed I waved and said, "Hello! How are you?" When I did this I was met with a courtesy smirk or worse: an inconceivable silence. I felt very small and unworthy of any human attention ever again. I deliberated about ways to determine whether I was a mortal human or just a weird gutter ghost doomed to walk Kinney Street forever. I tore a sprig of jasmine off of someone's fence to hold under my nose and decided that if the homeowner leered at me, I would squint back at them, toss the vine on the ground, and crush it under my heel without breaking eye contact. Mortal human it is. Jasmine flowers can sometimes symbolize appreciation and other times resentment.



I don't know what the point is here, which is kind of the point. I think about myself often these days and pay close attention to my thoughts and behaviors in a way that has made me feel so very slow, ruled by painstaking expressions and funny delusion. Unemployment is really a research grant that allows me to observe this animal lumber around its habitat unprovoked, eating grapefruit and falling asleep in the bathtub. I feel distant from everyone- I went somewhere they're not allowed to go. I jumped head-first into a remarkable sound where I am restoring myself to my most sinuous and graceful form. There's a place called Mariana's Trench and it is the deepest pit that we know of and I swam down there.

It's gotten lonely being this self-regarding and I miss the sensation of standing next to someone and knowing that was the thing happening to me. Sometime soon we are going to have to collectively inhale a big breath and walk outside and we'll all be broke and somehow more tired and we'll have to suffer through the election of a bad President, another winter. We'll battle each other for the job and talk to men who are not the man and avoid our exes in the park and sit in traffic and wait in insufferable lines and go back to being a question about how good we are in bed. There is a difference between Limbo and Purgatory and it has to do with purity and sins. There are binary opposites like good and bad, civilized and savage, and my favorite is lonely and annoyed. I'm inclined to pity the fool who deals in opposites but I can't wait to feel the beginnings and endings of things and feel well pleased!



This experience is such a bizarre thing to put into words. There seems to be just as much unknown 6 weeks in as there was at the beginning, albeit a different set of challenges. And though we're all "in it together," the massive range of public acknowledgment feels divided.

My initial response was to gather information and prepare to the best of my ability. Next, was feeling, accepting, and moving through emotions. Lately, it's been utilizing that emotional fuel to create via whatever medium I'm drawn to in the moment.

Overall, I've been forced further into mindfulness, one of my most cherished skills to hone.



2 months of quarantine. I mean... what the FUCK is going on??? At first I'd wake up everyday in limbo, an empty state of dread, now it's becoming weirdly normalized but I'm also becoming increasingly manic.. however!!! as restless as I may feel at times (especially as of late) I am so fucking grateful. I have it so so good. I have good health, financial stability thanks to unemployment and a balcony. I live in LA, I spend my mornings reading and writing, mint green tea in hand, staring at palm trees and the Hollywood hills, while letting the sun bake my body. I cook new things. I freaking CROCHET, it's been a spiritual and artistic journey. Finding who I am without outside noise, I have gained an inner peace that I've been searching for my whole life. Even on my bad days, even on my "what the fuck is happening w the world, is this a new apocalyptic show no one told me I'm apart of?" days, even on my "I just wanna hug someone, anyone, everyone, get me OUT OF HERE" days, I am grateful.



For the past few years, I've been dreaming of building a garden in my backyard. With the hectic, fast-paced, and somewhat unforgiving world around us, I never thought I'd have the time to actually do it. Through this quarantine time, I've realized a few things...such as the true disparities in this world are fueled further by loneliness, and love helps heal all. While surrounded by people I love, my garden has also brought so much happiness to my life in just a short time. I am hopeful that our earth will heal in this time away from human destruction, and families, couples, friends, will realize the importance of being present in the moment with one another.



Our goal for this piece is to provide a digital window into the lives of individuals across the world, as we forgo our instinct for face-to-face social interactions and settle deep into our personal spaces, families, and close friends. We want to give voice to inner monologues quieted by quarantine.

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