

Wednesday, April 8 2020
Quarantine Day 23

From A Market in Wuhan, China to ... well the rest of the world

Four weeks ago, was when my world was somewhat normal. Four weeks ago, the situation of Covid-19 was moderate, it seemed like a far way virus that would never appear in my town, Brentwood, California. Four weeks ago, you could still see and hear people talking and laughing in the streets, daily necessities such as toilet paper, hand sanitizer, masks, and food could still be found in the aisles of well stocked grocery stores, everyone was still living their daily routines instead of being confined at home.

My friends and I for one thought this was just a tougher version of the common cold, it couldn't do anything to us right? We have strong defenses! Who cares if we get it!?! People are taking this way too seriously, they're overreacting! Boy was I so wrong and naive to have those thoughts even cross my head. Why is it what seemed like an insignificant virus is conquering the world? Coronavirus is a disease with flu-like symptoms such as cough, fever, and even difficulty breathing. It was first known to infect a man in Wuhan, China waaaay back in December of 2019. As of today, there is still no specific medicine or cure to be found for the hazardous coronavirus, only these guidelines to prevent it:

- STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES** (stay home as much you can)
- KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE** (preferably 6 feet apart)
- WASH HANDS OFTEN** (wash hands like surgeon doctors do, as long as the second verse of happy birthday, 20 seconds)
- COVER YOUR COUGH** (use your elbow pocket!)
- SICK? CALL AHEAD** (2 week isolation helps prevent the spread of coronavirus)

This might not seem like much, but believe it or not, this has helped save countless lives. This dreadful situation makes me appreciate how fortunate I am to have a loving family, a cozy home, and an abundance of food. Just thinking about the less fortunate people out there moves me to tears. I want to do something, help in any way I can, but this world lockdown has got me feeling like a chicken cooped up in a cage. Everyday as I watch the news with my family, I can't help but think "can't I do something to help the people suffering out there?" The only positive outcome I can see right now is that the world is coming together as one to fight the same appalling opponent. To what once seemed like a faraway nightmare, is now a shocking reality.

Thursday, April 9 2020

Quarantine Day 24

The Pandemic of the Century

462; 16,957; 434,861; and 1,502,618. Those might just seem like random numbers to other people, but those numbers represent the number of confirmed cases in Contra Costa County, California, United States, and last but not least worldwide. These statistics, however, only show the people tested that unfortunately confirmed positive. The most upsetting part is that the numbers keep increasing as each second, minute, hour, and days go by.

Due to the alarming situation nowadays, all kids are having online classes instead of attending school. Every single teacher is trying their best to provide students with quality educational material in order to cope with the strange situation. One of the apps used to do this is called *Zoom*, a video conference app, to help students and try to simulate a real life class environment. It's certainly different than what most of us are used to, but it makes me appreciate school a lot more. I can now see that school, teachers, and my friends are blessing in disguise. Well today I had my first Zoom session today with my yearbook advisory. It was... refreshing and comforting to see new faces other than my family (no offense) and know that we all are going through the same hectic circumstances. With online schooling and/or

work from home during the shelter in place everyone has different schedules, it gives me a sort of independence to help me manage my time wisely. I bet parents globally (especially mine) now more than ever value teachers that had to deal with children's craziness and energetic behaviors.

Friday, April 10 2020

Quarantine Day 25

Good Friday

A Glance of The Outside World

Today I finally got the chance to go outside. The only reason I had to go outside is because I have to get allergy shots for allergies monthly. With my mask covering half of my face and medical blue gloves protecting my hands I was prepared to face the dangerous outside world. As my mom and I were driving by the streets that once were filled with joyful people were now empty and dark. There were only a few cars driving by and needless to say the grocery stores were crowded with people waiting in long lines that seemed to go on endlessly. The reason for that is that in order to stop the spread of coronavirus employees are only letting a small group of people enter at a time. This makes the waiting time even longer, but it's worth it if it's saving people's lives. The world was tremendously shifting right before our eyes.

Seeing this makes me thankful that I have a generous uncle that is in the army. He selflessly brings us food essentials that the armed forces program has provided for devoted people that serve or once served our country. Even though my uncle has a family of his own, he manages to bring us extra food that we may need. Always seeing him in his camouflage uniform makes me swell with pride and reassures me that thanks to humble people like him, this world is going to most definitely overcome this lethal disease known as the coronavirus.

It might be a long while before everything goes back to what we're used to, but while it lasts, I'm going to make the most out of it. I now have longer periods of free time that I could use to spend quality time with my family, learn more about myself, meditate, and even find a new valuable hobby. Since this hopefully is a once in a lifetime occurrence, I can try to find the rainbow in the storm.

Saturday, April 11, 2020
Quarantine Day 26

We're All In This Together

High School Musical Song Starts Playing In The Background

Other than the ironic summer-like weather, today isn't much different from yesterday. Everyone is inside their homes trying to survive and most importantly trying to stay safe. But at least it's Saturday, the best day of the week, so no work till the weekdays! The first week of online schooling has already passed by faster than lightning. This new school experience is... unique. School work with this situation is definitely less than what a normal week to week used to have. It's honestly way easier, but it still does not make up for the sad empty feeling that hangs around.

Today in the morning my family and I watched the news, and what we saw was not hopeful. Long story short, the majority of people are NOT following the coronavirus precautions, they are in denial and continuing with their unnecessary human interactions. Not only that but the situation in some countries like Guayaquil, Ecuador is much worse. People infected with the coronavirus are DEAD on the streets as if they were trash. Most likely these unfortunate people cannot afford medical assistance and their only option is to accept their loss and keep on fighting the never-ending battle. To make matters worse, the place where these wretched things are happening is my home country, Ecuador. I just hope that my family stays safe and endures the

awful circumstances. I know that medical staff are trying their utmost to assist people and defeat this virus, and that is all that matters.

Something else I observed is the increase of racism towards Asians. Since the virus initially originated in Wuhan, China some people believe that all Asians are guilty for bringing upon the virus. Although people do make memes or jokes about the coronavirus to lighten up the atmosphere, this deadly virus is no laughing matter whatsoever. Instead of tearing each other down, we should be building each other up because at the end of the day, we are all in this together.

Saturday, April 12, 2020
Quarantine Day 27
Easter Day

Happy Easter!!

This is the first time in Easter in my life that I haven't actually gone to church to celebrate such a joyful time in history or even had a reunion with family and friends. I'm trying to make the most out of it because at least my family and I are safe at home with plenty of food. The only advantageous piece of technology in these troubled times is facetime. This allows us to at least see the faces of loved ones and communicate with them through a safe distance. Just a simple hello from my sweet grandma, silly cousins, or supportive friends makes my day a whole lot better.

I for one thought that today was going to be a much happier day, it would make us appreciate ordinary day to day things while being with family... and

it was, but this morning I got troubling news from my parents. According to CNN due to Covid-19, the US has the **WORLD'S** highest number of deaths with at least 21,692 people in America passing away as of Sunday afternoon. Every day I keep on waiting for this nightmare to end but it just keeps on getting worse as each minute goes by. CNN's prediction is that Americans will continue dying in large numbers until this country comes across a reasonable and consistent solution to the malignant epidemic.

Many people are blaming our president, Donald Trump, for not taking the lead when the warning signs were there. They are comparing how the situation was handled in other continents such as Asia. For example, in countries such as China, South Korea, Singapore there are less than 5 deaths per million. Unlike Asian countries, for every million people, there are 62 deaths in the Us. This might not seem like a lot but remember that the numbers keep adding up each day. Although Mr. Trump repeatedly stated that everything was under control when it clearly was not, it does not change the fact that this outbreak is here right now, there is no changing back the past. As humans it is only natural for us to blame others for the disastrous events that occur. But whether we want to accept the truth or not, it was our own fault one way or the other. What is done is done and we have to keep on moving forward until success is at the door.

Monday, April 13th, 2020

Quarantine Day 28

An Unusual Definition Of Normality

Coronavirus. Covid-19. Quarantine. Social Distancing. Outbreak. Pandemic. In what seems like a distant faraway time in the world, these words would have been meaningless to people. It really is a mystery on how our universe rapidly changed... and not for the better. It's day in the indescribable life of social distancing, a word that is now common among people worldwide. Like mentioned before, extreme precautions are being

taken for (you guessed it) coronavirus, yet some people, mostly teens, don't seem to care or even acknowledge the seriousness of the situation. I realized that today when my parents came back with an unbelievable true story.

It was that time of week again... my parents had to go out and face the dangerous outside world in order to obtain food and other daily essentials. Luckily, we had protection like masks, medical gloves, and hand sanitizer for them. If they took the right safety measures, they would be fine. After hours of waiting (3 to be precise), my parents finally came back not only with groceries, but one heck of a story. Filled with gratitude, I wanted to embrace them, but I reluctantly stopped myself. They first had to disinfect themselves by washing their hands and changing their clothes. This virus could be transmitted through unlikely places like food, clothes, shoes, or even a small strand of hair.

Once settling back into normality, my mom began to narrate the bizarre event in their grocery shopping expedition. She told us that as they were in line for the cashier, they heard a high pitched shriek from what seemed a teenage girl. Following that poor teenage girl was a teenage boy, her boyfriend it seemed, taunting her by yelling to the shoppers "I'M POSITIVE!! COME HUG ME!! WHO WANTS TO BE CORONAFIED!!" Now my parents nor the people there knew if that was a joke or serious. It might've been a joke, but what if it turned out to be true?? What was even worse was that a senior lady was nervously shaking at the entrance door as she heard them yelling. Everyone tried to keep calm, but you see worry wash over people's faces.

This is just one of the many incidents that have happened around the world, since the pandemic took over. Sure, it may appear hilarious if you're hearing about it, but once you experience it, it suddenly isn't. Young adults need to be aware of what their foolish actions may lead to. What might seem like a joke to someone, could be another's nightmare. Plus, instead of playing pranks or doing dumb jokes, you could be looking for ways to help others.

This event just broke my heart, it's because of people like these that our world is falling apart.

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Quarantine Day 29

One Day At A Time

Sneeze. Cough. Everyone flinches. These might be simple flu or spring allergy symptoms, after all they're all signs of your immune system fighting against a virus or infected cells. It is finally springtime in California, the sun's shining brightly, flowers are blossoming, pollen is in the air. It really should be the happiest time of the year where everyone is outside enjoying the sun. But there's still a question that lingers in the air is your sneeze a sign of coronavirus, simply spring allergies, or if worst comes to worst, is it both? Although you may not have coronavirus you can never be too sure. The weird thing about Covid-19 is that its symptoms really depend on the person that's infected, in rare occasions it can even be asymptomatic.

An interesting fact that I learned today is that believe it or not is that coronavirus started in the most unlikely place you could ever think of... and the answer is straight out: BATS!! Actually, a lot of viruses and diseases originated from animals, like the flu came from birds or H.I.V. comes from chimpanzees!! Many scientists and doctors are unsure of where exactly Covid-19 started to spread, there's some guesses but all we can do right now is quarantine.

Well that's all for today. For me the days are starting to blend all into one long, tiresome, endless period of time. I realize it now, but I do miss my mom's complaints of me not spending quality time outside. Now more than

ever I long to see the clear blue shiny sky, the green lush hills, or just breathe some earthy fresh oxygen.

Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Quarantine Day 30

INCOME INEQUALITY AMONG FAMILIES

“UGHH I’M SOOOO BOREDDD!!” text all my friends even though we have lots of online classes and work we have to do. I know it’s only been a couple of weeks that we’ve been quarantined, but it feels like eTeRnItY!!! It’s not your usual summer boredom where you can go outside and have fun filled adventures with friends. Unless you are “The Backyardigans” then you are pretty much stuck at home, bored, with LITERALLY nothing to do until this unusual situation passes. I mean don’t get me wrong I am grateful to be inside, safe and healthy unlike the rest of the world, it just sometimes gets to be a bit much. I’m sure every kid is dealing with the same situation as my friends and me actually not every kid.

The reason why I say this is because not every adult is fortunate enough to be working from home, as my mom told me many are being fired. On the news last night, I saw a very sorrowful story of a single Hispanic mom with 3 kids fighting the battle with little to no help. Although the kids were younger than me by years, they seemed more mature as if they were mini adults. Just one look at their sunken eyes were enough to show you how much they were hurting for food, shelter, and warmth. The news reporter informed viewers that their mom worked 5 jobs trying to earn enough money to sustain their

small family. However, due to coronavirus she could no longer work. I'm sure this tragedy is just among one of the numerous worldwide. I would love to help people in the same position as them, but the only problem is I don't know where to start.

This only made me realize that my, what used to seem complex, problems are nothing, but dust compared to theirs.

Thursday, April 16, 2020

Quarantine Day 31

A Peculiar Approach To This Situation

Coronavirus. Covid-19. These days, those words are basically household words that once you hear them you get goosebumps. Which is why I am perplexed at why someone would name their children those terrible names. Yes, you did not read that sentence wrong, a couple in India ACTUALLY named their newborn twins Corona and Covid. When interviewed they said that the names would remind them of the adversities Preeti Verma, the 27-year-old mother of the twins, faced to successfully deliver her babies during the lockdown. This is definitely a different way to respond to the ongoing events in the world.

Like I mentioned before, you need to try to find the rainbow in the storm, so I decided to do that by reflecting on the positive aspects of these conditions. A ray of hope that I see could be the positive impact on the world's environment because of quarantine. Thanks to the virus, humanity discontinued their daily (sometimes harmful) activities. This leaves the environment pollution free from people driving endlessly, working in factories, or simply littering. Also, wild animals are benefiting from these changes because an example is that they are wandering the empty streets, finally in peace in their rightful habitat.

So, last week my Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Eelising, assigned us to write a poem about gratitude. I love expressing how I feel through writing, so this was a perfect way to destress. As I wrote the poem, it made me value simple

things that I usually took for granted. With that said I want to express how thankful I am for every little thing through this poem:

Gratitude

By Valentina Barros

A simple lucky charm bracelet, so lustrous, so delicate, so me,
it might not seem significant but just you wait and see.

Small trinkets hang around it,
each of them reminding me of how fortunate I am to be me.

With it comes a dazzling beehive charm,
a small reminder of how my Adams yellowjacket school,
the place of my remarkable friends and teachers,
is a blessing in disguise.

With it comes a radiant sun charm,
a small reminder of good health
and comfy clothes keeping me warm through it all.

With it comes a puzzling gift charm,
a small, but powerful reminder of the greatest gift of them all:
a loving family that is always there every step of the way.

Where they will always be waiting in my cozy home, away from it all.

Where there is always an abundance of food even in times as such.

With it I don't seem to be afraid if it's wrapped around my wrist.

I suppose this bracelet is not about luck,
but what it reminds me of is far more than enough.
With that being said,
I will forever wear it everywhere and anywhere
until the time comes to pass it on.

Friday, April 17, 2020
Quarantine Day 32

Looking Forward To A Not So Bright Future

“Did Jesus get rid of the coronavirus yet?” asks my 3-year-old cousin to my aunt Gaby every morning when he wakes up. The answer to this as of right now is no, I don't think they're even close to finding a vaccine or a cure for coronavirus yet.

According to “A Kid's Guide To Coronavirus” a vaccine takes a long time to make since scientists have to figure out the exact portion of the virus to teach the immune system how to fight against it, which might take a long while of experimenting. And THEN they have to start testing it out on

animals (to be precise ferrets work the best because of our similar cells). I know what you are thinking, “poor animals! How come they have to suffer?” But right now, they are our only hope, and I guess that’s a small price to pay. After all that happens, if scientists are 110% positive then doctors can start going to people. This vaccine to combat the virus might take months, years even! And while all that time passes just imagine how many people might get infected and... well pass away??

Now your social status does not matter, whether you are rich or poor you are not safe from this ferocious virus. Many famous celebrities like Tom Hanks have been infected with coronavirus and some have even sadly died. Their money or fame did not prevent the virus from infecting them. Yes, it might be heartbreaking, but after all they are only humans that are suffering with us. This only goes to show how vicious Covid-19 really is to greatly impact our society. Maybe there’s not a cure yet, but there is faith... faith that everything will get better... faith that we will get to go outside again... faith that we will interact with people without worrying about the virus... faith that kids will go back to school... faith that everything will go back to what it was once before. And right now, that’s all we can really look forward to. Although right now it seems like there is no ray of sunshine ahead, I am REALLY hoping there is.

Saturday, April 18, 2020

Quarantine Day 33

Positive News Since... Pretty Much In FOREVER!!

Okay okay! I have great news, so you know what I said yesterday... about not having medication for coronavirus yet and it might take even years to come up with one, well let’s just say that yesterday night things took a turn for the better. Okay you’re probably really interested to know what happened so let me set the scene...

At like 9 pm last night, I was wearing my most comfy pjs, eating a delicious night snack while my family and I were gathered around the tv to watch the dreaded nightly news. I never liked the news because surprise surprise it always seemed to be the bearer of bad news and only rarely did it bring hope. So, the news reporter explained that a drug used to fight Ebola could hold hope in the battle against coronavirus. The evidence for this was that trials had begun in China on 340 patients and it was “clearly effective”. Right as she said that the mood of the atmosphere lifted. Although it wasn’t a definite cure, it could help slow the spread! This meant that many lives could be saved.

Speaking of lives being saved, a 40-year-old man, father of 2, was freed from the chains of Covid-19 and could finally go home to see his loved ones. This obviously deserved a celebration, so all his nurses and doctor sang joyful tunes while taking pictures. This would obviously be a memorable event in his life! WOW! Imagine coming generations having the privilege to firsthand hear the story of a Covid-19 survivor. It would be an absolute honor. I know I wasn’t too sure of it yesterday, but I am definitely feeling more hopeful today. Once this is all over there should honestly be a big celebration party for all the people that had to endure it and survived. But most of all for the people that helped us get through it. With that said I want to thank all the coronavirus helpers: doctors, nurses, teachers, news reporters, grocery workers, gardeners, just to name a FEW! I know my thanks as of right now isn’t that meaningful, but hey I’m just one drop in the ocean.

Sunday, April 19th, 2020
Quarantine Day 34

FIGHTING FOR THE WRONG THING!

WOW. I am astonished. No, astonished is not a strong enough word to describe how I'm feeling right now. I just found out that states across the country like Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Michigan, Minnesota, Maryland, New Hampshire, Idaho, Texas and (I'm ashamed to say...) California are **PROTESTING** and **DEMANDING** to reopen the economy. They have foolish signs that read "STOP THE MADNESS IT IS JUST A COLD VIRUS! END THE SHUTDOWN FOR THE GOOD OF US ALL" or even ridiculous sayings such as "That facemask you were forced into wearing symbolizes you losing your freedom of speech" Honestly... I can't believe how oblivious these people (most of which are grownups) are to the countless deaths that happen every day due to coronavirus, do they not see people suffering and trying to endure this ghastly virus, or more importantly ... how hard all the coronavirus helpers are working for humanity's own good??

I am a 13-year-old girl in the 7th grade and **I** even understand the gravity of the situation! What makes matters far worse is that this country's **leader**, Donald Trump, is *encouraging* this type of corrupt behavior!! Although many medical professionals don't agree, he plans to **reopen** the cities of America before it's even safe. And of course, NOW some states like Texas and Virginia are obediently following his orders by reopening their beaches and parks. I know what you are thinking... "it's fine! If people just follow the safety guidelines then it will be okay" BUT that's the problem, they're NOT!! I know all of us want everything to go back to the way it was, I mean at least I do, but until that happens, we have to be coherent and pay attention to everything that is happening around the world. Most of us are soooo lucky to be bored, safely at home with loads of food, with loved ones! Like I said, not everyone has the opportunity to be working from home. Some people might not even have a place to stay! It's not the same for us to be filled with debt, working earnestly, and not knowing where your next meal will come from. Whether you want to accept the reality or not it's not up to me... but you.

(UGHhhh) Monday, April 20,
2020

Quarantine Day-uhh... I lost track- 35!

A Bittersweet Moment In History

“When I take care of myself, I’m taking care of those around me!”
a news reporter stated wisely. I wish everybody had the same mindset as her, but the truth of the matter is that only a minority of the world’s population does. If they did however, the world would not be going through this pandemic anymore and would not be able to affect righteous people like my mom’s friend, Linda.

Linda was 9 months pregnant with a baby girl right as coronavirus started to worsen and arrived at nearby hospitals. Thankfully, she had a successful delivery to a beautiful baby girl! Although it isn’t ordinary times for Linda to have her baby, the moment she saw her, her entire world faded away as she cradled her with lots of love (at least according to her husband’s testimony since we unfortunately couldn’t be there to share such a magical moment with them ... * in a sarcastic voice* thanks coronavirus). This only makes me consider of mom’s around the world that are expecting during these difficult times.

When I watched the news today morning, I heard about a brave pregnant woman infected with coronavirus. The reason I say brave is that she fought everyone that came in her way that told her that having her baby while being diagnosed with the virus was dangerous. She would **not** give up no matter what! And it inspired me because that’s how we all should be reacting to this virus one way or the other. Once the baby was born however, she couldn’t hold or even see her child for safety reasons. This brought tears to

my eyes as I thought “how can a place bring joyful and sorrowful news at the same time?”

Tuesday, April 21st, 2020

Quarantine Day 36

An App That Brings A Smile To Everyone's Face!

It's Tueeesdaaayyy!!! Yet everyday it feels like another dull Monday to me to be honest. I've done everything from cleaning the house to... learning new * I hate to admit it* TikToK dances! It's really weird but fascinating at the same time on how many people are using this *addicting* app. I know for a fact that many young adults, kids, and even some adults have downloaded it as a joke, but with quarantine... actually maybe even before... have probably spent countless hours on it.

What is Tik Tok you may ask?? Well.... It's basically an app for making and sharing fun videos of you and (before coronavirus started) your friends dancing, joking around, doing challenges, etc. I mean now that I think about it, it does sound like a truly fun app! But anyways that's not the point! You basically can keep scrolling and scrolling and scrolling... (well you get the idea) and the energetic videos NEVER SEEM TO END!! ANd trust me I am **NOT** exaggerating!! I guess the only positive outcome of that app is that during these dark times in history it's definitely brightening people's lives through all the dancing and silly songs!

For example, a couple months before the whole Covid-19 situation started to get out of hand, a teen citizen in Wuhan China drove around the lifeless city and showed how serious the situation was. And like nowadays, many teens are documenting their lives in quarantine, comforting each other until the world goes back to what it was before. Although....some people are using the app to spread panic or deliberately disobey the safety guidelines on camera. This all goes to show that the world is evil, but it CAN be good. It just takes the right people with a kind heart and intentions to turn this

dreadful situation around. You just gotta turn that frown upside down and cruise through life.

Wednesday, April 22, 2020
Quarantine Day 37
Happy Earth Day!!

DOGS, A Blessing In disguise!

Wake up. Get Ready. Eat. Online School. Free Time. Sleep.

Repeat.

That has pretty much been my schedule every day for the past few... days (although if I'm being honest I wanna say years). Not that there's anything wrong with my schedule, it's just that it's kind of... how I put this... BLAH. It's the **same** routine in the **same** place with the **same** people every single day!! Okay, now that I think about, there isn't that much of a difference with my normal schedule... ANYWAYS! I guess when I was at school it felt different even if I did see the same kind faces at school every day, it was just refreshing because there was always something new going on each day. And more than that there used to be a balance, something that made you get up in the morning even if you didn't want to and made you give it your best shot every day. Long story short: I *can't* *emphasis on can't* wait for all of this to be over. And... there might actually be a silver lining in this dark cloud.

The silver lining is that: specially trained dogs are being tested to sniff out coronavirus cases!! Yes, you read that sentence correctly: **DOGS!!** I mean it honestly isn't that surprising since they already do other heroic things like rescuing people in mishaps, finding people when lost, helping people with disabilities, and the list just goes on and on. Wow I guess it's true what they say about a dog being a man's best friend. The reasoning behind this theory is that according to James Logan, the head of the department of disease control at LSHTM, said: "It's early days for COVID-19 odor detection. We do not

know if COVID-19 has a specific odor yet, but we know that other respiratory diseases change our body odor so there is a chance that it does” Not only that, but these dogs are able to sniff 750 people an hour! This would be a major advancement to cities that are low on beneficial resources for testing kits. This could help not just slow but **STOP** the spread of this vicious virus immediately. Huh... I never thought that my happy little ball of fur could help save the world!

Thursday, April 23, 2020
Quarantine Day 38

Getting Creative!

hAaAaApPyY bliIrThHaAaYyY!! Well maybe not to you, but to all the other people around the world that have to spend the happiest day of their lives during such dark times in history. It's really not fair because there is a strictly “6 Feet Apart” rule, so no kisses, hugs, hand holding, or a simple high five. I mean who knows? Your closest friend might have coronavirus and you or them might not even know it.

But during these times, it's creativity that really shines through. For example: an alternative to blowing out the candles on your delicious birthday cake and spreading germs... why not use a blow dryer instead! Or simply have a social distancing “**Drive- Thru**” birthday party or even a party with all your friends through facetime! And if you *really* want to get risky/ creative then follow the 6 feet apart guideline at all times get together with your closest friends. It might not be what you are usually used to, but hey you have the greatest gift of all: **LIFE!**

Speaking of birthday cake, the majority of people (including my family and I) are relieving stress through..... (you guessed it!) **BAKING**. Yes, we are *stress* baking, that is really what this world has come to. For now, the only certain thing in my life is how many cups of milk I'm supposed to use in my better than store quality cake. As the saying goes, “When in doubt bake it

out!”. Although the result might not always be perfect, at least you occupied your time with something useful. Burnt pastries or not I am glad to at least be alive, safe and sound in my own home with my (sometimes annoying) loved ones.

Friday (I think...), April 24, 2020
Quarantine Day 39

New Symptoms...

Happy Friday! Yay no more work till Monday. The only reason I know it's Friday is because the sun's shining brighter than ever and... well it says so on my phone. About 2 days ago, to help reduce the spread of coronavirus Contra Costa County finally decided to issue a "Cover Your Face" order for anyone that is working or visiting essential business like the grocery store, gas station, etc. to wear face coverings. It sure seems like a small ineffective request, but as the days go on Covid-19 seems to be mutating bringing new and strange symptoms.

Along with the symptoms of fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, there are new symptoms such as repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell. Chris Cuomo, CNN reporter, was among those who reported having chills. He said he was shivering so much that he chipped a tooth. I know most people say kids shouldn't be worried about being infected with coronavirus, but CDC says in the US that three kids have died from what seems to be coronavirus as more and more kids are severely ill. This just goes to show that Covid-19 is not waiting for humanity to change and is evolving to an even tougher virus. With this information, I guess staying confined at home really is the best option. Just like this virus, we should start building up stronger defenses and becoming a better person inside and out. But more importantly, like mentioned above, just hoping for the best and just being grateful for simple things in our life is the most powerful cure against this destructive virus right now.

Saturday, April 25, 2020
Quarantine Day 40

Treat Yo Self Day!

Okay like I said, with the shelter in place we have a lot of free time in our hands, so I figured: “With all this time I have, why not have a ME day like a spa day or something, more like a glow up!” And so, I did... It was one of the most relaxing experiences in my life because I didn’t have any worries hanging over me, it was just me, myself, and I trying to make the most out of a terrible situation. To be precise this day included lots of pampering to fix I guess what you would call “flaws” (although I would like to believe that I don’t have any) so it was filled with: nourishing face masks & hair masks, feet & hand scrubs, lib scrubs, nail “masks” (yes I know believe it or not there is such things), cute girly manicure, and the list goes on. It really felt like an at home get away.

Although it wasn’t 100% like a real spa, it felt like it was so much more! Even if I didn’t have all those self-care masks and routines, simply turning on a candle and mediating was a form of relaxation. I know that there is a lot of going on in the outside world that I can’t control, so I technically have two options: 1) Stress Out about it or 2) accept it and learn to be content with it. At the end of the day, I am not going to have a “self-pity” party by binge watching movies/tv shows and eating tubs and tubs of ice cream or comfort food with no positive outlook of your life. I am so grateful to have learned this at an early age. Like I said, in life there are ALWAYS two points of views, but only one right answer. So, my question for you is: “is your cup of life half empty or half full?”

Sunday, April 26, 2020
Quarantine Day 41

Internal Glow Up

* the best kind of glow up*

It's Sunday!! YIKES! That means all my online schoolwork and hassles of life start tomorrow. Well, I guess that means that I am going to make the most out of today! So, you know how yesterday I had an outside appearance “glow up”? Well I thought about it all night yesterday and decided that there was something missing ... I wanted to be beautiful inside and out! Whether I want it or not my outside appearance is going to slowly fade as life goes on.

So, I guess what I'm trying to say is that I should maybe start working on becoming a better and stronger version of me, Domenica Valentina Barros Valin! (okay okay I know that sounds **REALLY** cheesy, but it is one of my greatest goals!) I could always just write about all the heartbreaking and tragic things that happen every day in this universe but hey it's Sunday, so I am going to stay on a much brighter side today.

Anyways, I guess my first step on achieving this goal would be to really understand my emotions, and since well as a teenager that is going to be really hard. I want to discover myself and find out my true meaning in life. And so, I thought (well technically, Mrs. Eelsing gave me the idea through the “Would I Still Be Me” poem assignment) “what better way than to express my deepest feelings through poetry? So here it is ladies and germs-ehr- gentlemen: my masterpiece!

Would I Still Be Me?

I love a good stuffed crust deep dish pizza with lots of toppings
along with delicious fruit dipped in chocolate
Just anything in the world of Italian cuisine

I am all for it!

But if I preferred

shallow, unstuffed, bare pizza,
with fruit submerged in caramel,
or simply preferred soul food-
wouldn't I still be me??

My style is classy, cutesy, and girly
depending on my mood, the colors are usually pretty pastely
always with lip gloss in hand,
and of course, topped off with matching accessories.

But if I changed to a more tomboyish type of look
mixed with clashing bold and black colors
and dull lips, no accessories-
Wouldn't I still be me?

I absolutely adore Why Don't We's music lively tunes,
and even if they get stuck in my head for days,
the songs from my favorite musicals always brighten up my days
I guess you could say that inspirational and good vibes only
types of songs are what I'm all about.

But say I preferred BTS instead,
or loud and electric hardcore rock bops
with no meaning or tune whatsoever-
wouldn't I still be me?

If I discontinued my usage of the fun-filled and cute Snapchat filters
or stopped making/viewing humorous memes

or Housepartying and Facetiming my friends and family was no longer a hobby of mine-
wouldn't I still be me?

But what if I dropped out of theatre and dance,
read a little less,
or even gave people unwise advice?

What if I didn't care a tad about losing my family
or shrugged off the thought of world disasters or pandemics
or even turned my booming laugh to a squeaky giggle?

What if I stopped fighting for what's right,
my determined goals and big dreams suddenly disappeared
what if I spoke Chinese instead of Spanish,
Would my thoughts ever be the same??

What if without my pen and journal
my mind stops running wild with imaginative made-up stories
That all makes me wonder,
Would I still be me?

Monday, April 27, 2020
Quarantine Day 42



Keep Your Social Distance Even If Summer Is On!

Ahhhhhhh!! It has been particularly sunny and warm these days because unsurprisingly, summer is **cOoOmInG!** *breaks out singing and dancing to the song “Summer” by Olaf * Perfect timing, I guess for such a bright and glorious season. Anyways, while most decent people were self-isolating, stuck at home over the weekend, some were out and about in California sunny beaches, avoiding critical safety guidelines like in the picture above. Hearing these news, infuriates me because with people like them our world is not going to recover any time soon.

The Orange County in Southern California is the only county in the area where beaches remain open! But what’s worse is that there are a lot of compassionate workers risking their lives every day, and what do people do?? They protest more and just keep on breaking safety regulations. In other words: they are extremely disrespectful and ungrateful. Well at least the governor of California, Gavin Newsom, is acknowledging this rude behavior. This Monday he started his daily news conference by scolding beachgoers in Southern California for getting too close to each other over the weekend, since they are "weeks away from making meaningful modifications to the stay-at-home order”.

He also wisely added that “coronavirus doesn't take the weekend off. It doesn't take any time off. It is ubiquitous. It is invisible. It remains deadly.

Ask the 45 families who lost a loved one in the last 48 hours. Please, please continue physical distancing!" We might not be perfect, but we should at least try to be considerate.

Tuesday, April 28th, 2020

Quarantine Day..... 43

Just Keep Swimming!

ALOHA!.... Actually, maybe not so much in Hawaii anymore. Since this breathtaking and peaceful state is demanding that visitors self-quarantine for at least 14 days, and even offering visitors that don't follow the self-isolation procedure a free return ticket back home! Wow so basically Hawaii to visitors: "We'll pay you to leave!" I mean I guess it is fair since you need to have consequences for your actions.

Speaking of actions, I've noticed that some of my friends (sometimes including me) are not really... what's the right word... ah: motivated anymore to finish or even start our schoolwork. It just feels like sometimes it's too much work plus well the year is almost over, and we just want to relax. But I fight that strong urge to be lazy and wake up really early in the morning to start off my day right! With a little bit of motivation, I think I can and will get through this.

In other news.... Guess what!! Despite concerns of deadlier coronavirus outcomes, the same states that were protesting last time are now reopening their salons, spas, barbershops, restaurants, and even movie theaters. I honestly don't know what person in their right mind would go to movie theaters or spas during these circumstances! Eww! Think how many germs are lurking in the seats of the movie theater and right now I could care less about a chipped nail in my nicely done manicure. And if you think about it this could all be done at home, the only place where it might be safe. Hmm...

this really opened my eyes to see that the root of all evilness is *definitely* selfishness.

As I'm out here writing in my beautiful outdoorsy backyard, I can hear nearby neighbors playing music, laughing, the sun's shining and even the birds are singing. This keeps on giving me hope to think positively and in the words of Dory from the movie *Finding Dory*, "Just keep on swimming!" (okay maybe not swimming, but you know what I mean).

Wednesday, April 29, 2020
Quarantine Day 44

Dedicated To All The 2020 Graduates...

Especially to my other half, my older brother, Alejandro

Well... I don't know what to tell you. I mean if you read the title which I am guessing you did you are probably wondering what this is all about. Here's the deal, I *literally* just found out that the Contra Costa Home Order will be extended to May 31 with "minor easing".

To put it differently, there will not be a graduation for the high school graduating seniors at all whatsoever. To you that might not make the slightest difference in your life, but it does to my high school senior brother, so it does to me. Like I mention various times in the journal entries above I know all of these safety regulations are for the own good of my family and I but... it can be **REALLY** frustrating at times. I've seen how my brother has poured his heart out in just studying endlessly, doing the best he is capable of at school, and spending hours and hours filling and writing essays for his college applications. As you can see I think very highly of him, he is my role model

even if he is a **tad** annoying at times. And I know for a fact when I say that my brother isn't the only one that has worked this hard.

So, that is why I believe it is not fair to not just my brother, but all the seniors out there that finally finished school and were going to start a wonderful journey filled with ups and downs called life, to not have a something to celebrate their grand success. No graduation. No prom. No anything! Actually... the only thing we *could* do was put up a sign in our front lawn that said, "Heritage Class 2020 #We are all in this together!" It was cool to see many of our neighbors put up the same sign, even if they did not have a senior, just for support. Another thing that we are doing though, is that there is this "Adopt A Senior" program where people basically "adopt" a senior and basically give them love through gifts and food of their liking.

But now that I think about it... even though my brother **will** have a graduation through Zoom, the graduating class of 2020 will definitely be the most remembered. As they say in theater... the show **MUST** go on! Only I apply it to life instead. So, in the wise words of Valentina Barros *clears throat ahem* "life must go on whether you want it to or not!"

Fri- (HA! I wish) Thursday, April 30, 2020
Quarantine Day 45

Oh-No...

Goooooddd morning! Okay maybe not morning for you because who knows you might be reading this in the middle of the night or something. Anyhow

It's been a while since I wrote about the number of confirmed coronavirus cases, and **YIKES** like I said the numbers just keep increasing! Umm.. well if you really want to know here's the cases overview:

Contra Costa County:

Confirmed: 862 Deaths: 25

California:

Confirmed: 46,500 Deaths: 1,887

United States:

Confirmed: 1.07M Recovered: 127K Deaths: 61,700

Worldwide

Confirmed: 3.21M Recovered: 986K Deaths: 228K

Wow.. I'm speechless (or should it be writeless??). Seeing these Covid-19 statistics is like a slap across the face that brought me into reality.

It is just *horrific* - no there is **NOT** a word accurate enough to describe what the world is going through right now. What is even worse is that- woah I can't even bring myself to write it- is that there are so many people that pass away *everyday* because of Covid-19 that funeral homes are **filled** beyond comparison. The only solution to this problem however was that... well you know those U-Haul trucks that people use for moving?? Hmm.. how do I put this... they now are used to store deceased bodies on ice. Yes, I assure you 110% that you read that right. It's okay if you just take a moment to let that sink in.... I think that's all for today though, sometimes in life we really do need a dose of reality to really see what's going on around us.

Friday (FINALLLY!!), May 1st, 2020

Quarantine Day 46

(A.K.A. Due Date of This Journal)

What Would've Been...

“Did you know that coronavirus can travel 13 feet through the air and be carried around on people's shoes??” texts my friend to our group chat. (Yes that is true by the way, it CAN travel around people’s shoes.. Well at least according to a report from CDC). Anyways, my point is that Covid-19 has become the main topic of everybody’s conversation, I would bet a million dollars that there is not **ONE** right minded single person on Earth that **does not** know that this deadly virus exists. And if they do well.. let's just say they might be living in cloud 9.

As I continue to look around I see Covid-19 awareness videos/drawings, tips on staying healthy, poems, songs, posts on social media, coronavirus news, etc. that are becoming a normal part of our world nowadays. With this I begin pondering “what would’ve been if this never happened?”

Well here are some things that I can think of that **would've** happened: I would have been at school with all my wonderful friends and teachers; there would be an abundant supply of food, water, home essentials (*especially* toilet paper) etc.; there wouldn’t be millions of jobless people with no place to call home,; movie theaters, parks, restaurants, would be open; no one would care about personal space as much or disinfecting stuff 24/7, medical professionals would just be taken for granted; and the list just keeps growing and growing. Just to summarize... the world would NOT be empty and dark like it is now..

But what can I say.. the only glimmer of hope is that I know for a fact that after all of this becomes a part of long faraway history, people will be more thankful with all the professionals that helped them get through it, they will be more self-disciplined, and learn to value the most simple things in life. Earth will be filled with hope and joy. Huh now that I think about it, maybe the world needs to learn its lesson and hopefully in the future change for the better. With that I want to end with this poem I made....

Valentine For Ernest Mann

By Valentina Barros

6 Feet Away

Wash your hands

Cover your cough

Stay home, save lives

To every human on this planet,
these guidelines are our new normality

But

not everyone seems to comprehend,
especially with the stay at home command.

“STOP THE MADNESS” they demand

“WE NEED OUR FREEDOM BACK” they complain

“IT IS JUST A COLD VIRUS!” they claim

“END THE SHUTDOWN FOR THE GOOD OF US ALL!” they protest

I ponder and wonder for hours,

“can’t they see there are sacrifices to be made?”

No more kissing, no more hugging,

not even a simple high five

“What kind of world has this turned out to be?” you might ask.

But just look closely,

and you might just find that there is a bright rainbow

in the middle of the storm.

As quarantine goes on, the world flourishes

Cooking, dancing, gardening, or
just that hobby that you've been wanting to do,
but never had the time to
is now possible.

You might even find yourself glowing up
internally and externally.

With endless amounts of time
anything *you* want to do, the sky's the limit

You all so suddenly start to value simple things in life.

Necessities like food, water,
toilet paper, and a home
are now luxury.

But most of all,
you form unbreakable family bonds
and unforgettable memories are made
with all the precious quality
time you spend together,
each day growing closer and closer.

With this new rule I notice,
the world coming together as one
to fight the same appalling
opponent.

This will be a major moment in history

that will impact society
as a whole now and forever.

So, if we just do our part
and wait a little patiently
we let all the selfless
workers defeat this deadly virus.

Maybe the answer to it all,
is to uncover the veil of uncertainty
that is wrapped around our head at all times
and truly see the beauty of life
through the virtuous eyes of our heart.