

Writ 326

COVID Experience

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My COVID Experience During the Spring of 2020

I guess I really did not think much of COVID-19 initially. I was chatting with some friends in New York; maybe about two weeks before spring break, they were telling me about how their schools were sending students home, and that all their classes were going to switch over to online. I was skeptical about hearing them talk about it, but at the same time I just assumed it would blow over. That “oh it can’t happen to me” mentality I guess. A little arrogant, absolutely, but I certainly wasn’t the only one. It seems like a problem that’s so far away from what we’re used to today; in fact it’s completely unexpected.

It’s ironic I got sick the Monday of spring break. I’ve had a sore throat, coughing (I’m always coughing), but no fever. Can taste everything fine too. Kind of trending the line of symptoms there, but when aren’t those symptoms. It’s whatever, I’m kind of upset it happened at the start of break. My father is home for the first time in six months, but I don’t think it’s a good idea to go see him if I’m sick. I’ve had asthma my entire life so I’m feeling a little stressed about it, but even if I had full-blown symptoms for COVID, the fact of the matter is that they won’t test people in my age group. I don’t really care that I can’t get tested, but it’s the fact my girlfriend

can't that is the issue. She works for the state, and state employees are eligible for 14-day paid sick leave... if her or someone she's been in contact with tests positive for coronavirus. Problem is that they won't test her until she shows of all symptoms and they can rule out anything else it might be.

I guess this really sticks with me in the sense that humanity isn't all it's cracked up to be. We've been taming and coexisting with this world for thousands of years, made countless scientific advancements, but ironically we've been shown that globally we are so underprepared for disease. As a global community the relationships aren't there, because if there is any time to be asking neighbors for help in research, now seems as good a time as any. I think with that being said we will see some serious changes to the way we as a global community approach virus and disease in the wake of the COVID madness, and I hope it's for the better.

My little sister just got back from school last Friday. She's going to college over at Lewis & Clark in Portland, and with everything going on there's fear of state borders shutting down. The University decided to send students home, so our father made a mad dash over to Oregon to bring her home. As of last weekend (March 20-22) New York City is has around 10x more coronavirus cases than Gallatin County, and Gallatin County has 6x the number of case than in Portland.

So, I've had it today with sitting inside and being socially distant. It's now the second Monday of school being online, and I felt as though I've done nothing but sit

at home, work on schoolwork, and get heated at trashy reality T.V. I hit up my buddy at ten or so and walked up there to hang out for the morning.

The neighborhood was desolate. There wasn't a soul at Cooper, and the one person walking down the street towards me walked in the middle of the street to practice social distancing. I don't blame them as I was about to do the same thing, although more as a courtesy to them, and I needed to cross the street anyways. Cutting over onto Fourth, I decided to alternate from the path I normally take up towards the school area. I don't know why but I felt like looking at the house with the eyes painted on the side there, take a gander at the welded sculptures by Southside Park. There were people further up the street already, walking towards me, so I decided to cut over at the next chance as to give them their space. I turned on to Third, and as I passed by a house this guy came out. His front door was relatively close to the sidewalk, so I moved some out the way. I caught a glimpse of this guys face and all I could make out was contempt, like that it urked him I was walking by right now.

It was strange to feel like that, just having eyes watch you intently as you walk in the same neighborhood you grew up in. It's different from typical unease of suspicion. It is a mistrust of neighbors, but it isn't something that's in anyone's control. A virus doesn't discriminate, and I think that as well as the nature in which Covid-19 spreads has a lot of the world in shock.

Well it's my birthday today, twenty-fourth to be exact. I hadn't planned on doing anything special, besides the whole lockdown it's not like I would really do much anyways. My best friend, another buddy and his employee came over for a couple hours to have some beers and hangout for a bit. We had drunk the majority of our beers inside, and decided to go finish them in the alley with a cigarette before they headed out. Afterwards we headed back inside, and as we are going through the door side door that leads up to my apartment my neighbor begins to yell at us, saying, "hey fuckwit, ever heard of social distancing"? At first we just laughed at her, genuinely thinking she was joking around, but no she was very serious. She proceeded to preach about a whole lotta that doesn't have anything to do with this paper, but what really struck me was the paranoia. Here this lady is, literally pointing fingers at people she does not know, basically insinuating that we are spreading the virus.

In a way I was offended, because I know these people haven't been sick and I wouldn't bring people into my home who were, but at the same time I guess I can't blame her skepticism, even if misplaced. In the famous words of David Foster Wallace, "this is water", and I find myself thinking more and more about that as this whole epidemic draws out. It's really not a big deal that she got upset, probably just feeling cooped up in the house... like everybody else. No really it's kind of a big deal, there's a right and a wrong way to ask people to work with you, and calling them fuckwits is certainly not the route. And it's ironic with this whole thing; first it's toilet paper and cleaning products being bought up and becoming scarcely available.

Then it's medical masks and gloves that are in decline of supply, and America is blaming China for hoarding supplies and hiding the severity of COVID. Since when did we stop looking for a solution, and start pointing fingers? And I don't mean that there aren't people out there fighting like hell against this virus, but those aren't the stories I see on my newsfeed. Instead I see Trump saying something about how "since bleach kills corona virus lets find a way to inject that", and then read the next day about some poor idiot who took that fools advice. I'm just saying, it's pretty bad.

It's been a few days since my birthday now, and the mother of my best friend who was over that day has just been reported missing. She was over in Billings staying in a sort of 'help house' in the middle of March last he had talked to her. Around when all us students switched over to online classes the facility stopped allowing visitations, and so he hasn't been able to get in touch with her. It's April 25 today, and she's in the local paper posted as missing. I'm not sure how to think or feel about the situation, it just feels surreal. How could a human being just be lost, especially when she was already at an institute? It makes me think too that this can't be the only instance of someone becoming lost amid all the COVID madness. I mean if you look around you'll find stories of people murdering their spouses during the lockdown, and no one notices a thing because we are all in a bubble.

It just shows that isolation, struggle, hardships, those are some factors that will show the boundaries of a community; where it has cracks in its foundation, where it stands strong, and where it can be rebuilt. This is an example as to the

importance of establishing that border, and although we are encouraged to social distance from each other, it's important to find those borders and stick with the people you love and trust.