

Thursday, March 26, 2020: I wrote this on Facebook. It had been two weeks since I had seen them:

I miss the kids from my field study classroom. They were such wonderful kids, and they warmed up to me right away and made me feel like a part of their classroom. I'm just missing their wonderful smiles and creative minds.

Tuesday, March 31, 2020: I wrote this on Facebook after my first day in Zoom University:

Just had one of my first Zoom meetings for class. Let me just ask: can we all stay inside please, unless absolutely necessary?! My ADD brain can't handle learning this way, and it's incredibly frustrating and stressful, and on top of everything else that is going on, I do not need more stress in my life. I hate Zoom with a burning passion. I hate the Corona Virus. And I hate not learning in a classroom. STAY. THE. F\*\*\*. IN. SIDE. so the rest of us who are doing what we're supposed to, can return to normalcy. Thanks.

Saturday, April 18, 2020: I had originally written this in my notes on my phone. "Today was my sister's 15th birthday and I wasn't there to celebrate because of COVID-19. Feeling disheartened, cheated, I miss my family, as annoying as they can be. I love Jared, but the fact that I can't go and see them whenever I want, and all I see is him, is getting to be boring."

On this day, I also shared a meme on Facebook that was a screenshot of someone's Tweet. It said: "these online classes are emotionally and mentally draining. I don't feel I'm learning, nothing is sticking. I'm so unmotivated and yet I know quitting isn't an option. I'm stuck and I'm sick of this."

The caption I wrote was: "Couldn't have described it better myself."

Wednesday, April 22, 2020: I am fucking annoyed right now. I don't want to do anything and I am not motivated enough to work. I envy Jared. I don't know how he does this. I feel like my mind has been blank - like it's been clouded, or like I haven't been thinking clearly lately. My brain goes off in all different directions.

As soon as I think about one thing, it immediately thinks of something else. I don't know what to do. I can't do what I did when I was in my last semester at Dean. I can't practically fail my classes. I just can't think clearly; I don't know how I am supposed to get anything done. I'm honestly lost, and I feel alone. I don't want to die, but I had a suicidal ideation of pulling my razor across my wrists and letting my body slump to the bathroom floor, and letting Jared find me. As soon as I sat down on the toilet, I didn't like the thought of doing something like that, so I ignored the thought and pushed it off to the side. (Also I'm a wuss, and the thought of doing something that painful to myself makes me cringe.) I know this isn't normal. I just don't know what to do about it. I hate making people panic about me, and I know saying something like that is going to cause alarm to some people. The idea of confessing that aloud to someone physically repulses me because I know the responses it will get, and I don't want to send anyone into a panic with this thought that I might try to kill myself, because I don't want to kill myself, the idea of dying scares me, I just don't want to deal with all this work when Jared's bed is right there beckoning me back under the covers. I wish I could spend as much time on my Annotated Bibliography as I am on this, although I think this is more beneficial to my mental health than an Annotated Bibliography ever will be. I want to tell someone that I am not okay, and that I am not mentally stable enough to handle these classes. Even the simple task I was given for my French class would normally take me like maybe twenty minutes, but I am too bored by everything to actually sit my ass up and do it. I also hate when I get like this because my brain makes me want to disappear off the face of the earth and just sleep in my bed (really Jared's bed) and turn in no assignments to anyone without any explanation, but then my mom, my best friend Julia, or Jared are in the back of my head nagging me about how rude that is to my professors. Also, I don't want to be one of those people. One of those people who just drops off the face of the earth because what happens if I run into these professors again? What am I supposed to say to them? Will they even care for an explanation or will they barely remember me? How am I supposed to handle a situation like that without any awkwardness? I spent two hours of

homework time starting a story about life and CoronaVirus, convinced that I was going to write a novel about my life leading up to Corona Virus and that it would be beneficial for me to get all my feelings and opinions out about this and how it impacts my life. I know it's miniscule, but I am suffering, and I felt like writing about it would help. I know I am probably never going to return to that piece of work, which is sad because I actually liked where I was going with it. I haven't felt like this since high school. I am not sure if the medicine made my situation worse, or if this is the same feeling as from before the medicine. I'm kind of just writing as I think and feel and process, so this is really a stream of consciousness kind of thing, so I hope I am forgiven for this long-ass paragraph. I think it's incredible that despite my unclear thoughts, I am able to write so cohesively and grammatically correct. I want to show this to Jared, but I feel like he's going to think I am the most fucked up person on the planet. I need to do something. I can't just sit here and do nothing. I feel like an idiot. Why couldn't I spend this time on my Annotated Bibliography? Why? Because I can't think clearly enough right now to even think about organizing an Annotated Bibliography. I don't know. I'm tired. This is stupid. I just want to sleep all the time. Also I am stressed because I have been reading articles upon articles about how to cope with all of this COVID-19 stress and none of it is helpful. I can't establish a quiet work-place for my own because I am not even in my own space. Nothing here is mine except for my clothes, my laptop, my shoes, my toiletries, my school supplies, and my car keys. I can't minimize distractions because my mind won't let me. I zero in on anything and everything. I'm zoning out in class. It's the screens. I'm zoning out because I'm staring at a screen. I don't know how I'm supposed to do this next semester if this is the way it's really going to be. I'm zoning out because I am not physically in class, so I'm not being stimulated properly. I don't know how anyone is doing this. Even in my 19th Century European Novel course that I actually found and do still find interesting, I am having a terrible time getting motivated for. I hate being stuck in the house. I hate being stuck in a space that's not mine. Nothing about it says, "Emily lives here" because none of this decoration says anything about me; it's all

personalized to Jared's taste, which is fine, it is his apartment after all, but how do professors and other university staff expect their students to do well and actually be motivated to show up when their students might not even be in their own space to begin with? I hate that I am freaking out right now. I don't know anymore. I don't know. I think I'm done writing. That's it.

Thursday, April 23, 2020: I lied to Jared about having my Annotated Bibliography half done. I haven't even started it and it's due at 12:30 PM today. LOL...

Somehow supposed to have that done in two and a half hours... This is so dumb, I knew as soon as all of this started I was going to "fall off the wagon" and lose track. I don't even want to respond to e-mails at this point. I don't know. I only feel motivated for my Field Study course. I give zero fucks about the rest of them. No offense to the professors; they're all lovely and nice, I'm just not enthused by the course assignments. I'm not really enthused with much lately. I miss my friends; I miss my family, and I miss my cats at Mum and Dad's. I miss my nana and papa, even though they're cuckoo for cocoa puffs sometimes. This sucks. I'm just not in the mentality or the headspace. Jared called me a quitter last night... which didn't make me feel any better about myself, so yeah, you could say I'm pretty messed up right now.

Monday, April 27, 2020: Last night I played Animal Crossing for eight hours, even though I had the intention of doing homework when I got home from work. Clearly I have lost the ability to function. I am basically surviving, but that's about it. I am not living. I feel motivated to do work, but I still sit here and stare at my computer screen, waiting for something to happen. My body is tired. I am nauseous. It's dark and gloomy outside, and it looks like the trees are wrestling with all the unrest going on in the world. I feel numb. What I really feel is anger, and it's numbing me. I haven't brushed my teeth since Saturday. Luckily, I still have the energy to shower. On Saturday we spent the day outside in the sun, helping Jared's parents re-mulch their yard. I needed it, but I feel guilty about it now. It was a beautiful day, sunny and breezy... I spent time with Bell-Bells the

kitty, and we put her in the kitty cabana so she could be outside with us on the porch, but she thought I was playing with her so she scratched my knee and made me bleed. Apparently she's only done that to two people: me, and Jared's grandmother. I had brought my homework, but I couldn't focus, so I ended up helping Jared and his mom and step-dad with the yard work. It was therapeutic. We are not supposed to be visiting people outside of the home, and yet we did anyway. They are pretty clean people, but it's still taking a huge risk of spreading the virus in the chance that one of us has it. That's the annoying thing about this. I haven't seen my family in two months. My sister came through the drive-thru at work on Friday and I told her I loved her. She said she missed her sibling when I said, "What are you doing out? You're gonna get people sick!" I said it jokingly, but I don't think anyone else found it funny. It was relieving for me to talk with her and joke about life's circumstances, like we always usually do. I miss that. But there was almost a hesitation of everyone around me when I made the comment, almost as if it wasn't funny. Perhaps it wasn't, but I needed to joke with my sister. It's our way of communicating to one another. My dad called me Friday morning after we dropped Stanley off at the animal hospital to say goodbye, and I broke down crying because I actually miss my loud, obnoxious, and brash father. Even with all the fuck-ups he has made, I realized that this virus has affected us ALL in so many emotional and mental ways. There was a hesitation in his voice, like he was trying to restrain himself from crying, as if he was scared: scared for my safety, scared for the future, scared for my mom and my siblings' health and safety. We talked about our jobs and what we're doing to stay safe, and he asked me how school is going. I forgot that he's human too. I can't blame him. I can't blame anyone in this new world. I cried again today. Because the uncertainty of this is just beyond real. I feel like what's the point of wasting all this time and energy if I have to change direction and reverse course; start all over to adapt to the new world that might emerge from this. I wish professors put everything else on pause and asked us to write journals about our feelings and share them out loud in class because I certainly would get good enough grades for these. I am not quite sure why I can't focus on anything. Jared

gave me a nice little pep-talk, but yet it is still very difficult to clear my brain and stay focused. I am not sure how I am supposed to do all of this and still come out on top. I think that's it. I keep finding myself staring at the time in the corner of my computer screen, so that must mean I am running out of things to talk about, while I simultaneously strain my brain about all the things I still have to do for classes. That's it.

This is a post from Facebook I made on the same day:

Bulger Veterinarian Hospital in Lawrence did Stanley's paws in memory of her. They gave us a handwritten note as well. They handled her with care, respect, and kindness and let us say goodbye to her in the midst of this pandemic. We're very grateful. We'll miss her. She was an adorable little animal who loved pumpkin seeds and running on her wheel endlessly throughout the night.

(Throwback to when we thought she was a boy - and a gerbil - and before she would bite people.) 🥺🥺

She was a great little companion

We had to drive to Lawrence to drop our dwarf hamster off the Friday before this (the 24th). We noticed changes in her behavior, and how she had trouble breathing and opening her eyes, and after an examination by the vet it was determined she needed to be put down. We had to say goodbye to her in the parking lot before they took her away and put her down so she wouldn't be suffering anymore. Then we drove home in silence with tears streaming down our faces behind our masks. I had to get ready for work. I had to leave by eleven to get there for twelve. I think I was a little late that day.

Tuesday, April 28, 2020: Why doesn't he get it?! He thinks I'm lazy. He probably finds me so unattractive. I don't find myself attractive right now. I don't want to be this way, but I am, and I know I can change. I just don't know how to. I feel like I

could if my brain wasn't stopping me. I still feel clouded. I feel like my judgement is poor. Like I'm in this cycle that I can't get out of. I'm in a cycle of certain habits that I know I can break, I just don't know how to do it. I don't understand why Jared gets so mad at me. Well, I do understand it, but I don't. It's because he doesn't want to listen to me complain when I get bad grades, so he doesn't understand why I don't just do my assignments, but he doesn't understand that I CAN'T just DO them. I wish I could just DO them, but my mind finds another way to redirect itself. So many things pop up into my head while I read that I start thinking about how what I am reading relates to my own life, and then I think about something I have to do, and start doing that task, and then I realize I didn't get this other thing done, and it's just a never-ending cycle of jumping from one thing to the next. My brain either hyper-focuses on one thing for hours or can't seem to focus on one single thing for very long. That's usually how it goes, but right now, my brain is just caputsah. It basically said, "Ugh, all these things to do and no motivation to do any of them." Basically, it's not focused on anything. It won't focus on anything. I know it's either depression or anxiety, or both. But, the thing is I am usually like this anyway, even when I'm not exhibiting signs of anxiety or depression. Like, I have the motivation, but I can't focus for very long on one task that I jump from one thing to the next. Now, it's a combination of no motivation, and inability to stay focused, so the double whammy. My brain is doing another interesting thing it likes to do, right now; it's thinking back on things that have happened in the past. It's thinking about the future. It's thinking about times when I could be productive. I feel like nothing is worth doing because I have to do everything I can to survive and help others survive. I feel like that's what it is because I get home from work, and I'm more tired after my two shifts a week than I ever was working four days a week on top of going to my classes throughout the day. I work harder to make sure everything is deeply cleaned and sanitized now than I ever did before, on top of taking care of customers and it is physically and mentally exhausting. I remember describing to Jared what it was like seeing the customers come in with face-masks on. It was almost terrifying in a way. Now, it's weird to see a customer without one. Now Jared's in a bad

mood. I feel bad. Maybe I should leave. I'm more of a burden on him than is necessary. And he'll tell me I'm not because then he'll feel bad, but deep down he knows it's true. I feel like he's had his fill of me, and obviously I'm not very attractive, and it's a lot of work to deal with someone like me, which can be troublesome for him when he has his own priorities to deal with in life. I would understand if he got mad at me and wanted me to leave right now. I would understand if he started screaming his lungs off right now at me. I wish I could be good. I wish I could be motivated for life. I wish I could be normal. I just want normal. God, I have so many racing thoughts in my head right now, this is just awful. I can't seem to put them to bed. 8:30 PM: I want to read this book we were supposed to have read today for class, but I still find myself hesitating. It's like my brain doesn't want to. It's like if I start getting invested in something it'll take me off my game of being on guard. I think my brain has fully kicked into survival. I haven't felt like this since high school.

This is something I posted to Facebook on the same day:

Am I the only one going back and forth from really motivated to "just not feeling it"? From hyper-focused to completely inattentive? I feel like, alien??... like I'm the only one who finds myself staring at my computer screen with intentions of starting my homework, but find myself coming back to Facebook. Something about world pandemic just doesn't scream "Your Annotated Bibliographies are very important right now."

I remember kids in class wishing for in-person classes to be cancelled when professors were first discussing with us the uncertainty of whether we were coming back after Spring Break - "Hey, you'll save on gas money", "Ugh, yes. I hope we don't have to come back." Even back then, there was something about that that sounded like a trick to me. I remember seeing the fear in some of the professor's faces when they said, "Prepare to bring your things home with you in the event that we're not allowed back on campus." Perhaps not fear... I'm not sure what it was. There was something uncertain in their voices. At the time, my substitute professor's



wife was in England for work and he almost choked up in class when he said, "I don't know. I figured I'd talk to you guys and get your thoughts about this virus because I'm kind of a little worried. I'm seriously wondering whether I'll see my wife again." Before online classes were decided upon, I had a bad feeling. The idea of not returning to campus left a bad taste in my mouth, but I was like, "Oh yeah, you're right, I will save on gas money." (I'm a commuter.) Now, I'm thinking wow... I wish I was still spending money on gas. I wish I was still driving my beat up Ford Focus to my school's parking lot and walking the horrible hill up Maynard Road to get to May Hall. That life feels a million light years away. It all feels like distant memories... I remember driving home from my last class before Spring Break and feeling really weird, almost like I knew something was off.

I don't know. I miss my campus. I miss walking up and down the stairs of Whittemore Library to find the vending machines to grab snacks. I miss my quiet study space in the lower reading room at the big table where I could spread out all my notebooks and textbooks. I miss the beautiful scenery of my school.

I know these measures are in place for our health and safety. I know a lot of people have it much worse than I do. I know there are healthcare workers on the front-lines doing everything they possibly can to prevent the spread of this and save those suffering from this terrible disease. I just want to go back to normal, but obviously that's not a safe option right now. That's one thing about this, it still beats the alternative. We could all be sick. I'd rather be struggling with mental health and classes than struggling to breathe.

I do miss my campus though. I miss not being cooped up in the house. I miss not fearing that I might accidentally pass the disease to someone. I guess I'm just feeling really emotional. It feels like Marty and Doc brought us to the alternate timeline of reality. Anyone seen a DeLorean with a flux capacitor lately? Trying to have a little humor... I don't know. I'm just trying to grapple with things. Sorry for the rant. Thanks for reading.

Wednesday, April 29, 2020: I'm feeling better today. I cleaned the house up a little bit and I took a shower, so I feel better. I'm still anxious about my

coursework. But I guess I just have to do it, even if it hurts my head to do it. That's kind of it for right now. Every time I start to write I get emotional, so I'm going to stop for right now.

Saturday, May 2, 2020: Still having a terribly difficult time focusing. I feel like everything went haywire in my brain. I try to read for my homework and everything is fuzzy. Trying to focus makes me tired and groggy. It makes me want to sleep. Also now that everything has piled up, I guess I kind of don't know where to start, really. I don't know how to fix it. I feel like it's rude to e-mail my professors and be like, "Yeah, I know I'm like ten days behind on my assignments, but where do I go from here?" Like...? I just... I've given up. I know it's their job to help, but I feel like I'm that annoying student that no one wants to deal with. My brain won't let me half-ass these assignments either. I don't know where to start. I'm feeling really lost and tired and emotional and numb. I get really tired after staring at my computer screen. I'm more irritable lately. I get ticked off pretty easily. I don't know if that has to do with my period, or if it's the medicine, or if the medicine just isn't working. That's it for now, I'm going to stare at the computer screen until I decide what to do.

Wednesday, May 6, 2020: Why do I still find myself gravitating towards Facebook and arguing with people online who say they're refusing to wear a mask?! Why don't we all just do what we're supposed to to get through this and then maybe we can go back to normal?! I don't want radical change, I just want this virus to stop so I can at least go back to being able to visit my family. I haven't seen them since... February? I've talked to them on video chat and such, but it just makes me sad. I'm still not motivated to do anything. I'm more motivated to do things not school related... Yesterday, I spent the entire day buying gifts for my co-worker from her baby registry, buying things to be delivered off Amazon, like a new hairbrush and razors, because it looks like I'm going to be at Jared's indefinitely until this virus lets up. We're considering moving in together at the end of the summer anyway, but I really miss my own

bed and my dresser with all my pretty jewelry. Being cooped up in a studio apartment fifty minutes away from family and friends is not easy - although I can't see them right now, anyway, even if I was still at home at Nana and Papa's in Holliston. Especially considering my car is now broken and is not safe to drive anywhere, so she's just sitting on the side street across from Jared's apartment here in Saugus. I can't get it fixed right now because my Uncle isn't working on any cars until the virus is over, and I would have to have it towed to his house in Wrentham. He also doesn't think I should be spending any more money on the car, but I need her for when this virus is over. I don't have the money to buy an entirely new car. I spent maybe, MAYBE three hours of my time doing homework. Maybe longer. Not sure. Like I said, I'm surviving right now. I just want school to be over and done with. I really just want to play Animal Crossing all day. It's not like I have many plans for this summer anyway. I don't know what the right courses of action are anymore. At least, I have my last Skype call today and then I can focus on finishing up the last of my schoolwork. I never even picked up *Professor's House*. I can't believe I paid rental fees for all these books and out of all of them, two of them I never even picked up and read. I'm surprised I even finished *Anna Karenina*.

Wednesday, May 13, 2020: Yesterday, after an entire day of not even knowing what I did, I fell asleep curled up on the couch around four or five PM. I woke up at 9:30 disoriented and wanting tacos. Jared and I always do Taco Tuesdays, and the fact that I slept through it (it's my favorite night of the week) was alarming and annoying. I had no trouble falling back asleep two hours later when Jared started getting sleepy. His birthday is in three days and I don't know what to get him other than these cute little coffee mugs I got him. My sister gave him a mug for Christmas but it slipped out of my hand and broke in his kitchen, so we've been sharing the snowman mug I got from his step-mother since January. I figured it's a win-win: we don't have to share anymore, and I got him something he was planning on getting for himself. I just want to do something special for him since he's letting me stay with him while we wait out this COVID-19 crap, but

it's looking like I'll be here indefinitely, so I at least wanted to put together something special for him, but I'm having trouble being creative. I still have homework/finals to complete, so I'm gonna get to working on that. Wish me luck.

I want to provide some background of myself because I realize this journal might be confusing to some without some context:

I normally live about twenty minutes from campus, so I was living with family members while attending school. These family members are my elderly grandparents, and have conditions that put them at risk of contracting COVID-19. When I first heard of the pandemic, I didn't think it would blow up as immensely as it did. I really didn't believe it would get this bad, and I didn't know enough about it to understand how dangerously serious it was. I work at a local fast food restaurant in the town I normally live in. My boyfriend lives in Saugus, MA, and we were only seeing each other each weekend. He would come see me, and I would go see him, switching off every weekend. When the pandemic started getting more serious, my grandparents asked that my boyfriend not come to the house anymore. That weekend I ended up going to his place for the third time in a row, with the intention that I would go home Monday after my shift at work. Then I learned that COVID-19 struck close to home - in which, someone who works above my manager had come in contact with a worker from another Dunks location that tested positive for COVID-19. I learned this from my manager after we had been discussing the disease. She had mentioned that this guy, who is her boss, had been in quarantine ever since he found out. But I recalled that he had just been in the store that past Friday, and that I had been working in the same vicinity as him. My manager said, "Don't tell anyone else about it though." Like, REALLY?!

Anyway, later that night I texted my grandmother to ask her what she thought the best thing to do was. We both agreed it was probably safer if I didn't come back home until this virus is less of a threat to her and my grandfather's safety, especially considering I couldn't just give up working at my job when I had

student loans, car insurance, and gas to keep paying for. So, as I was informing my boyfriend of this, he offered to let me stay with him until things clear up. Ever since then, my company reduced their store hours, which rendered me incapable of working Mondays through Thursdays. On Monday of Spring Break though, when I returned to my boyfriend Jared's apartment in Saugus after a scary drive with my beat-up Ford Focus, and after I had picked up some clothes and textbooks from my grandparents when the decision had been made for me to relocate for the time being, I started experiencing some flu-like symptoms. Although my primary care doctor didn't think it was COVID, she still advised me to stay home for a week. So, I was out of work for a full two weeks, as my manager didn't schedule me the week after Spring Break, either. She asked me to come in to cover someone's shift. By then my symptoms had been gone for almost a week, and I was back to classes.

Ever since then, my hours were reduced to maybe 16 hours a week, if I was lucky, so I was spending a majority of my time trying to figure out how the MA unemployment site works to claim lost hours (before COVID-19 I was working up to 27 hour work weeks on top of my regular school hours, so I was losing a big chunk of money), while also spending almost three hours a week traveling back and forth between work and my boyfriend's apartment in Saugus, and spending time disinfecting both the car, the doorknobs, and myself after each shift, and somehow staying on top of my regular homework assignments, as well as maintaining laundry responsibilities and the cleanliness of the apartment, and lastly, my social interactions with my friends and family, mostly through social media and phone calls before we discovered video calls as the best method. Needless to say, maintaining all of these things was exhausting, and by the time I was done disinfecting the house and myself, I was too exhausted to actually want to do my homework.

I had already not seen my family for a good two months, as it is difficult to see them while working and going to school, especially when doing that while living forty minutes away. My friends all go to different colleges, so getting us all together in one room is nearly impossible regardless, never mind with COVID-19

social distancing restrictions in place as well. Once my mental health started deteriorating, I found myself increasingly surfing social media. My doctor had told me to stay off my phone, yet somehow my phone was now my only communication with my family, siblings, and friends. I felt lost and alone, and half the time, I found it difficult to verbally communicate to my boyfriend how I was feeling. How was I supposed to maintain healthy communication with loved ones if my phone use was not only distracting me from my classwork, but aiding in my deteriorating mental health?

I had also discovered that my main issue with taking online classes from home somehow meant that I was supposed to establish a workspace in a tiny studio apartment meant for a twenty-three-year-old guy, not a twenty-three-year-old guy *and* his girlfriend. We tried everything. Originally, he was working from home at the couch and coffee table, so naturally I took the bed. Then, I realized that what I was missing was the giant tables at the library on campus, where I could spread out all my textbooks and notebooks and not feel discombobulated. We tried setting me up in the kitchen at the kitchen table, so it felt somewhat like a desk, but I only further found myself getting distracted by my sensory issues, such as my sensitivity to the cold - the kitchen in his apartment is unbearably cold. I tried setting up a routine in which I had breaks every once in a while. I had a designated time (the morning, before breakfast) to go for daily walks with Jared. I had all of this written down on the whiteboard, and I still found it incredibly difficult to stick to the new schedule. At home, I didn't feel the social pressure of my schoolwork and responsibilities. I had my boyfriend take my phone away, to assist me from surfing social media, but then I would log into Facebook on my laptop. I set up time restrictions on my phone to limit my screen time, but would hit the "Remind me in fifteen minutes" button every time my limit came up because I wouldn't be done with something.

I tried everything under the sun to make school from home work, and none of it worked. I read all the articles, I stayed in touch with all my doctors, and still, I struggled to stick to the schedule I had written out on the white board for myself. I struggled to get in a school mindset when my boyfriend's work calls

were distracting and I was craving social interaction with humans other than the talking heads on my computer screen and my boyfriend. I struggled to get in the school mindset when my boyfriend could just declare he was done with work for the day and start chatting with his friends through his headset and get to play video games. Absolutely no success. Eventually, I ended up working on homework in the living room, and Jared moved to the kitchen to work from home. My productivity increased slightly, I was more apt to read my books, but still unable to complete big projects like essay assignments, or projects that required a lot of critical thinking. It just wasn't processing. I was having enough trouble concentrating on the reading assignments, even as interesting as I found them, never mind coming up with my own original theses for my research essays.

I just wasn't motivated to do the work, especially when my entire world became: go to work - don't forget your mask - listen to music while you speed down the MassPike, deal with annoying customers, go home, disinfect the car, strip as soon as you walk in the door, disinfect the doorknobs, hop in the shower, dry off, eat something, look at phone to see what everyone's up to, complain to Jared about how stupid the customers were today, somehow not kick back and relax after a long day at work.

On the days I didn't have work, which was most of the week, it was worse. My world became a summer vacation in high school before I was legally allowed to have a job. Getting up out of the bed is unnecessary when you don't have anywhere to be, and being able to zone out and snuggle up in a blanket on the couch while your professor lectures you on the meanings of a book you were supposed to have read is entirely all too easy when all you have to do is type in your meeting ID number into Zoom and wait for class to start. It is much easier than stumbling out of bed, getting dressed, putting deodorant on, packing your backpack, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, and throwing your shoes on to drive to school and make it to class on time and make sure you contribute in class. Yeah, I had assignments due, but I was having face-to-face video calls with only one professor out of the four for my classes, and the others just practically told us what needed to be done on Blackboard and only

communicated through e-mail. One other professor did Skype calls, but audio only as she found video kind of distracting, which honestly I could relate too, but it made it that much easier to zone out while snuggled up in my sweatpants and blankies. Not having an entirely set schedule made it hard to structure my time. I couldn't tell myself when to plan to work on assignments because I only had two of the classes meeting virtually out of the four I was used to meeting with physically in a normal class setting. Not only that, but I had lost out on my three hour weekly field study visits to the elementary school I had been assigned to as a Field Study teacher candidate. Basically, having more time on my hands was what was so detrimental.

I can't entirely blame the professors though. I understand. I wasn't putting in the work, so why should I expect the professors to do the same? They were probably just as confused, tired, exhausted, and worried as I was. I also don't think anyone could have predicted how bad the pandemic actually got, so I can't blame the professors in the slightest. I imagine a week of preparation time was hardly enough to restructure the entirety of the remainder of their courses, so I'm not entirely trying to put the blame on one group over another. I'm just merely trying to explain why, for someone like me, with a history of mental illness, school from home just does not work. Not having to be anywhere, but on a virtual screen, does not motivate me to be an active participant in my community, especially when I'm that much further removed from my beloved campus. Just to make this that much more understandable, the only times I made sure I looked somewhat presentable and actually dressed like a normal human being was when I was getting ready for work. I would actually brush my teeth, brush my hair into a ponytail and make sure my clothes were clean for each shift because I HAD to. With my virtual classes, the pressure was off, which made the pressure of my schoolwork non-existent, as much as I knew I still had to do it all. Without my physical presence in the classroom, the pressure to perform and do well was non-existent. I honestly believe that something about staring at a computer screen made it absolutely impossible for me to stay focused and able to retain information in class. I even found it difficult to take notes when I was actively



trying to listen. All ability to process and filter what I took in went out the window. Now I'm wondering how it's already past ten o'clock and I've managed to not finish a final that was assigned at 8 AM this morning. He literally gave us fourteen hours to complete it, and I'm still turning it in late. I guess, I better get cracking on that. Thanks for asking for these, it was nice writing this out and getting to document and share my experience. Hopefully this isn't too lengthy or too dull or too boring, regardless I figured why not submit it. It can't hurt.