

D A Y 1 & 2

March 30, 2020

TL;DR: I probably have a case of the VID.

Hey fam. So it looks like your girl likely has a case of COVID19. I'm sharing this because I think it may be likely that I'm the first person you know locally to present with a likely case--because I am the first person I know locally to present with a likely case. I live alone and have not seen another human indoors within reaching distance since this began. None of the handful of people I have seen from a safe social distance outside have reported being ill.

I say "likely case" because even though I have mild presentations of all of the symptoms, my fever isn't high enough to qualify for a test at this moment. I have a low baseline temp (96.4F), but the cut off for a test is 100.4F. For reference, I am usually hallucinating and dehydrated by the time I get over 100F.

I am ordered to self quarantine and treat this like it is COVID19.

At this moment, I am not afraid. My spirit feels strong.

My symptoms so far are mild, but enough that I feel unwell. I felt totally fine two days ago, not great yesterday, and worse today. It feels both like and unlike a memory of every illness I've ever had, all at the same time, and also in waves. My first very obvious symptom was diarrhea, followed by all the rest of them.

I feel grateful that my symptoms are so far mild, because there are plenty of people that are much sicker than I am at the moment. I also know that I may get much sicker at any moment.

I can share that the energetics of this thing are very strange. Yesterday it felt like being hit by grief. Today feels like pressure and wringing in all of my body's systems. I feel pressure in my chest, digestive tract, muscular system, nerves, and head. Previous sites of pain are pulling focus (like the sites where I experienced nerve pain when I had shingles, or the location of back pain I experienced for years, my hip flexors, my ears, the heart center of my back).

Another reason I'm sharing this is because I don't think the shame and fear around contracting the virus is helping anyone. More and more people are coming out with their experiences with the illness-- and I greatly appreciate their candor.

Many of us will be untested. Many of us will have mild or non-life threatening manifestations of it. Many of us will have more serious manifestations and complications. Some of us will die, many already have. For the vast majority of us, though, we will survive this. We may not even

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know about all of the survivals because we were never tested or even recorded, because we were not close enough to death. Remember that tests are not the only form of knowing.

It's totally normal to be scared, freaked out, angry, or numb right now. But I also know that sustained panic and fear are not helpful. It's imperative that we move beyond panic and fear into a place of informed action (which can also be non-action, like staying home). And while it is hard to know anything right now, you know me. Remember that we are not the enemy, we are in this together, and this will impact all of us in one way or another.

It is essential to follow the rules of social distancing, hand washing, and sanitation to give our healthcare system a fighting chance at protecting themselves while treating the sickest among us; and to protect the lay people out there running errands and making deliveries for those of us who can't leave their houses. I am deeply grateful for the folks that constitute my beautiful support network. I see your labor as a brave act of love. Thank you.

I'm also going to relink the video from the doctor and Weil Cornell hospital in NYC in the comments. It made me feel much more empowered and calm around COVID19. Please watch it if you haven't already.

On a practical note, I can share a few simple tips based on several years of living with chronic illness. In my experience, all of these things help to reduce the severity and length of illness:

- 1) Hydrate. Make sure you are hydrated all the time.
- 2) Reduce or eliminate dairy and added sugar (and other things that contribute to mucus and/or inflammation, like gluten and heavy starches) from your diet. This doesn't have to be permanent, but in my experience, I get much less sick without dairy and added sugar in my diet. I have been craving both of these in recent few weeks, but resisted, and am glad I did. I wouldn't recommend going cold turkey on gluten and sugar right now (the withdrawal is real), but you can increase consciousness around how they fuel or inflame your body. Dairy is easier to quit on shorter notice. Since eliminating dairy: I get sick less frequently, with less intensity, and for less time. (Pro tip for those in Western and Central New York: Eat Me ice cream makes an incredible coconut-based non-dairy ice cream that hits all the spots. Woman owned, handmade in Rochester.)
- 3) Run a humidifier in your bedroom.
- 4) Keep your energetic channels open and moving. Deep breathing, walking outside, yoga, and doing emotional/spiritual/energy work are all things that can help.
- 5) Stay connected to people. These connections are so, so important right now.
- 6) Listen to your body. REALLY listen to your body, and act appropriately.
- 7) SLEEP.

TAKE CARE, BBS. I LUV U.

DAY 3

March 31, 2020

Scenes from quarantine: A morning delivery from dear friend Margaretha, a former colleague and herbalist (@the_doctor_and_the_spy). Featuring teas and tincture to support my body and spirit as the VID moves through me.

I've been drinking chamomile and lemon balm, chai spices, and fresh ginger teas— and it helps. (FYI: These are all good to start drinking now, before you get sick.) I drink tea by the qt. jar— and constantly.

Margaretha has also got me eating an onion/ginger/oatmeal gruel, which sounds gross but is actually kind of good with cardamom and cinnamon (and my body really likes it). Recipe: sauté a medium red onion and a pile of fresh cut ginger in olive oil. Add rolled oats (1 part) and water (4 parts). Add some salt, cinnamon (powder), and cardamom (pods cracked open). Bring to a boil, then simmer until the consistency is right. Add water as necessary.

I can report that today I feel much the same as yesterday, but incredibly tired and sore upon waking. Things are still pretty mild, but they come in waves. Laying on a heating pad helps. Rose oil on the chest and back helps. The brain fog is very real, and time doesn't really exist anymore.

Also had a call with my homeopath, Rosemary (@weavingenergyhomeopathy), this morning— and my experience is consistent with what homeopaths around the world are finding. She prepped me for what's next: could be more of the same, or things could escalate with a very high fever and increased brain fog that slips into anger, loneliness, feelings of hatred or being hated, or feelings of being persecuted. Margaretha confirmed that this is consistent with her research, and recommends Flower Essence of Holy (which I've ordered).

It seems as though it will cycle in waves and last longer than we're used to. The lethargy will remain. But for today, spirits are high and I'm super grateful to my fam (blood and chosen, near and far) who are checking up on me throughout the day. I see you, love you, and am so grateful for you. You are showing me this: It is possible to be alone but not lonely, physically isolated but deeply connected. Thank you for showing me this is possible.



PLZ NOTE: I'm sharing things I'm doing that are helpful to me in what is currently a pretty mild—but still quite unpleasant—manifestation of the VID. Plz be smart and consult your healthcare team if that's what u need to do. Listen to your body. Do your research.

I've been working with alternative modes of healing for several years now, and it works well for me. I know that plant medicine and homeopathy can speed recovery and soften the intensity of

illness by supporting the body—especially once the body is conditioned for it. There are centuries of traditional medicinal practices that have brought relief to people long before the pharmaceutical industry colonized these healing wisdoms, practices, and materials. And considering that so many folks are weathering the VID alone at home with Tylenol as their only line of defense— it cannot hurt to get in the habit of making your self a cup (or quart jar) of tea. That you will drink constantly if/when you become ill—because plain water may make you nauseous. And because plant friends help.

I'm convinced that the energetics of this thing are important, so be prepared to feel A LOT of feelings if/when you get sick. You will likely feel A LOT of old pain: physical, emotional, spiritual, and interpersonal. I think a positive outlook helps immensely, which can be hard when you feel like garbage. Do the work you can now to prepare, so that things can be a little more pleasant if/when the time comes. Find a buddy or twelve that will help shop and drop stuff off for you, and will check in on you if/when you get sick (and you for them). Start practicing gratitude in a bigger and deeper way, now. Do your laundry now. Scrub the bathroom. Stock your house with the things that make your body feel good: oils, lotions, fuzzy socks, nice pjs, whatever. I, personally, am putting little branches of white pine all over my house and above my bed (it's good for the lungs).

Luv u.

D A Y 4: INTENTIONS

Apri 1, 2020

Hey, folks. I'm going to be posting about my experience with this illness over these next few days, or as long as it takes and as long I have the energy for it.

It's probably going to be largely diaristic, personal, foregrounding the emotional/spiritual aspects of this thing, and long-winded and rambly. In the far and recent past, people have communicated they appreciate my vulnerability, candor, and emotional openness. So that's why I am doing this. Please move on if you're not into it.

My intent in sharing isn't to solicit attention for myself, but to share a record of my experience so that things might be a little less scary for the next person. I am an artist, a writer, a storyteller, and a sharer. This will not be my finest work, but it will be honest to my experience inside my meat suit while it moves a very strange illness.

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Knowing more about other people's experiences has been very helpful to me in finding my own peace in this moment. So if it helps one person feel a little calmer about what we're collectively experiencing, it is worth it to me.

It's very likely that it may seem like I've fallen off my rocker, into the deep end, and have become a complete loony toon by the end of this. This virus is known to mess with your brain, and I'm already feeling extreme brain fog, having difficulty finding the exact right words, keeping focus, or organizing thoughts and sentences in the ways that make the most sense. Thoughtful editing--something I love doing and am good at-- is not accessible to me right now.

I'm also going to be posting with my experience with "alternative" modes of healing that have transformed my life for the extreme better over the last decade. I have been very private about this healing path, so it feels like another kind of very public coming out. It is scarier than coming out as queer or as ill, because there is still much stigma around "woo." However, I think dismissing these wisdoms is short sighted, and erases the centuries/millenia of relief and healing that these modalities have brought--and continue to bring--to people around the world for a very long time. I believe in and value science. Full stop. But I also know that the pharmaceutical industry colonized indigenous, herbal, and traditional healing knowledge for capitalist profit. So do with that what you will.

Homeopathy, plant medicine, shamanic practices, meditation, acupuncture, body work, connecting to spirit, yoga, psychics, diet, reiki, and other energy-based forms of healing have been central to healing my body, mind, and spirit. I, myself, am a Reiki practitioner, energy worker, highly intuitive, empathic, and a little psychic (that's not the right word, but it will do). Through all of this, I remain a skeptic. I have spoken with my teachers and healers about this, and that's just part of who I am. My skepticism is also where my shame and privacy around these practices have lived. At the same time, these practices have transformed my life in astounding ways. Through my hand, they have also brought relief to many people I care about: partners, friends, family, students, and the general public. My art practice-- including the way I use social media--are extensions of this messy magic.

I believe that now is as good a time as any to come out with this stuff because we need all the tools we have in order to ease the suffering of the moment and to heal our bodies and societies on many levels. This is slow, long work that can also work incredibly quickly and with great efficiency. It is not easy and requires commitment.

Right now our medical system is giving us tylenol and ventilators as the leading treatments for this disease. Those are both important and life saving, and I am grateful for them. I am endlessly grateful for the medical professionals caring for the sickest among us, and for everyone providing service to those of us in need.

However, there are many ways to ease the experience of being mildly ill, afraid, and in grief. Naming these experiences is empowering. Gaining more knowledge and taking control of things you can (like making tea for yourself or a loved one) in this great moment of loss of control can also be empowering. At the very least it is mindful.

Obviously, I can only speak to my own experience. I am not a doctor, so please do not take anything I write as medical advice. Things I write will engage and discuss the body from the perspective of an artist, a person who has done extensive theoretical and artistic research around the body, a person with at least a decade of experience with intensive energy-based healing work, and a person with a body that experiences things. As a kinesthetic learner, I am actually excited to better understand what this illness feels like in my body--and then as an artist and writer to try to find language for it.

In most other times, I would keep these more diaristic entries to myself in my "journal" file. But these are strange times. I'm opting to share them publicly and in real time in the hopes that they have some use value to someone as we figure this thing out alone/together.

Luv u.

D A Y S 4 & 5

April 1 & 2, 2020

TL; DR: These are long winded diaristic entries of days 4 & 5 of my experience with the VID. Writing is one of the few things beyond sleep and sitting in the sun that comes with ease right now. It's hard to explain. As I mentioned in a prior post, my editing brain isn't easily accessible; so this is all quite languid, indulgent, and raw. Don't feel obligated to read, but if you do, please be kind.

A recommendation: go watch @morgankindof's Quarantunes on Instagram. This is some of the most important work happening on any platform in this moment. Sound on. Listen.

D A Y 5

April 1, 2020

Today is the day that I moved my rolling saddle stool into the kitchen, after I realized I didn't have the energy to cook and make tea while standing. Attempting to read emails while watching my oatmeal simmer was a mistake. Do not assume you will be able to do more than one thing at a time, unless you like burned soups and gruel.

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Cue: my deep gratitude for the electric kettle! (I highly recommend getting one of these now.) I measure my life in kettle boils and quart jars of tea now. Languishing in my teenage obsession with T.S. Eliot, as I wash spoon after spoon. :::insert cry laugh emoji:::

Today is day 5, which is exactly when you're supposed to start feeling worse. It hits like a brick wall. The fever, muscle pain, fatigue, brain fog, physical/mental/emotional exhaustion, and digestive pain are all elevated. The exhaustion begins the moment I wake up, after 10+ hours sleep (most of which is deep). It's still not the worst I've ever felt, but worse than the prior four days which were unpleasant but stable—even with occasional glimpses of relief and hope.

Today I had to choose between expending my energy to make myself oatmeal and tea or meeting with my students on ZOOM. I deeply wanted to show up for them this morning, because I miss and respect them; but I figured it was better to be honest about the limits one faces while dealing with this than to self harm. I used most of my energy to email them instructions empowering them to meet on their own (early reports seem like it went well), self-organize, and continue their important individual creative research.

I did not have an embodied understanding of spoon theory until today. And hoo boy, is it a helpful framework. Please google "Spoon Theory" if you're unfamiliar with the term.

This morning, had to write a course description for a new online class I'm developing for the summer at Emily Carr in Vancouver: "Building a Resilient Practice: Ritual, Transformation, Mindfulness, and Material Bodies in times of Unknowing, Precarity, and Change." I'd been having trouble getting these words out, but this morning it flowed. Lolz at the long title, but I'm looking forward to this one. I intend to eventually build it into a workshop available for the public.

A few days ago, I wrote that I had no idea where I'd contracted this thing. I'm actually now fairly certain where, how, and when I contracted it. It is consistent with what Dr. Price from Weil Cornell Medical Center describes in his video (I've posted it a few times, will link again in the comments) about transmission. So follow the rules: don't touch your face with your unwashed hands, wear a mask (to stop touching your face), sanitize, and social distance. To which I'll also add this common sense nugget: if you wouldn't share it with someone who has the flu (things like food, drink, cosmetics, eating utensils, etc.), don't share it with anyone while we're under high alert. People are contagious before they show symptoms.

People are reaching out to me to tell me to get tested. I'm not against it, I've tried. But I'm also exhausted and really don't want to leave my house. I'm more interested in getting tested for antibodies, and also wish that I was part of the official numbers. It's frustrating to me that I'm basically being gaslit by both the gov't and my doctor's office about my experience, because my temp doesn't meet an arbitrary number based on an average that I fall outside of due to a

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shortage of tests due to a criminal response to this pandemic by our government. I am angry about this. I am angry that despite that I am five days in and that my symptoms and the timeline of my experience are consistent with people managing this at home, that I will not be counted. I've been sick with many viral illnesses, and this one is very different. I want people to know that this is, indeed, already everywhere—it is larger than we know.

My mood today is a little more blue. I'm conscious that this is a product of my exhaustion, and the virus messing with my brain (which I've been warned about).

I made a schedule for myself this morning, which is really now my daylong ritual for everyday this continues. I'll share it some other day, as this entry is already very long.

D A Y 4

April 1, 2020

NOTE TO READER:

This is going to be an assemblage of notes I jotted to myself and other people throughout the day. It was high on emotional and poetic metaphor; and then I tanked in the afternoon (which is why it's getting posted together with Day 5). Writing seems to be the only thing that is coming with ease at the moment, which is ironic (for some reason I always deny myself the indulgence of doing it, but recently it's the only thing I'm driven to do besides feeding myself, sleeping, and talking with friends and family (when I have the energy, which is waning)).

My advice for everyone in quarantine: Start regularly practicing the creative thing that feeds your soul now, especially if you've dismissed it as self-indulgent, so that you're already in a rhythm if/when you get sick. Pick something you can do from bed.

NOTES TO SELF AND OTHERS:

My main focus of the day is remembering to drink tea and water and eat food. I forgot to feed the cats this morning. I feel bad but not that bad, they have dry food and didn't remind me, so I set an alarm to "Feed Cats"—just like I did to "take my pills," "check the stove is off," "drink the night tea," "take the tincture," and any other number of things I can't remember to do. If you get sick, you will want to do this.

Making breakfast exhausted me today, spiking my low grade fever and sending me into the sweats. But in general, I feel about the same or slightly better than yesterday— the diet and herbal remedies are making a difference.

Much of my today is filled with communicating with friends and family, which I'm super grateful for; but it's beginning to feel a bit emotionally exhausting. I've been processing a lot of big

personal emotions as well during this time—which ironically feels like the only thing I have the focus and energy to be able to do. It is coming with ease where everything else feels hard. As I work through these things, so too my body seems to relax where there was unknowing, grief, or fear. As if my emotional and physical body are completely in this together. I feel foggy and sore, but also manic.

I'm prioritizing healing, intentional foods. I know how my body does when I'm less intentional with food when I'm sick, and I'm grateful for the privilege of being able to fuel it with things that make fighting off illness easier: lots of onions, lots of citrus (Vitamin C), ginger, eggs, cooked leafy greens, salmon, oatmeal, soups, teas, herbs. To be honest I don't have much of an appetite right now. I'm thinking about it like fuel and medicine.

Let your friends and family drop things off for you. Practice gratitude by accepting care graciously. If they're comfortable, press your face up against a closed window when they come. It's funny. It's funnier if you do it in slo mo. (But don't tell them you're gonna do the face thing, or do, whatever). Make sure it's a window, not a door. A door might freak them out. You can try to have a conversation through that closed window. Keep it short.

I bathed in sunlight today, and found a new symptom: sun downing.

Earlier in the day, at magic hour, i felt like I was rolling: the light, my body. It felt like a gift—“Remember the euphoria you feel right now because this too is the chemistry of your brain. This is what we want you to see first so you can hold on to it, to remember for when things won't feel as good.” I crash. I wake up and I sun down.

I'll say that the way it feels in the body is like it scans the body for previous sites of pain, illness, healing, and scar tissue. It conjures them right back up as a memory. But the memory is as real as nerve pain. It's really wild to also feel that emotionally, and to also hear stories like yours that confirm that pattern. Most people are using the language “scans the body for weakness,” but I do not think that is the right language. I think it's scanning the body for sites of healing (to remember) and for sites that need healing (to push that). Like it re-opens a scar to remind you that you're still flesh that has healed before, that still needs healing.

I realize this is problematic in terms of the deadly and permanent damage this virus is doing to so many people; but energetically, emotionally, this is the way it feels in my body right now.

As a theme: more information feels like empowerment, and the symptoms feel less severe with less fear. I also feel better through connection to people and myself.

In talking with my homeopath, she mentioned that the worldwide homeopathic community are discussing mushroom remedies— because of the way mycelial networks grow, communicate, and can take down entire systems. I made a connection to the forest and mycelial

communications between trees— they are the network that connects the entire forest (there's a great Radiolab episode about this: From Tree to Shining Tree). Yesterday, the first witch I ever met and I talked on the phone, and her poetic interpretation of this crisis was that the lungs of the earth are the trees, who are dying at our human hand. When the crisis hit, people ran to bring the trees into their homes in the form of paper products. She also started growing a bunch of mushrooms when she got sick. Before I got sick, I started putting branches of the White Pine that keeps dropping boughs in my backyard into the rooms I spend time in. I sleep with one on the window sill above my bed.

Image: A tip of White Pine and round purple stone rest on the windowsill above my headboard. A large, old spruce tree is visible through the bedroom window. It is backlit by sun.

D A Y 6

April 3, 2020

TL;DR: Thoughts from day six of living with the virus. I talk about what that feels like, a breathing exercise, and a discussion on food (among other things). It's another long one.

A disclaimer: So far, I have a mild case of this, and I am managing quite well. I am privileged in the support that I have, and I trust I will get the care that I need. In addition to the herbalist and homeopath I'm chatting with daily, I also have multiple RNs checking in on me. I am very lucky. I also want to disclaim that the things I'm sharing are not medical advice, they are things that I am doing to help manage symptoms based on practices I have been working with intensely for many years. If you are having difficulty breathing, or have a very high fever; please seek medical attention ASAP. The things that I describe that work for me may not work for you, as they have been recommended to me based on personal consultation. Please be smart.

It's midnight: My fever is 99 degrees (2.6 degrees higher than my normal 96.4—equivalent of 101.2 for someone with an average temp of 98.6) after a bath of epsom, rose, and the remains of tonight's tea. Even though my fever is the highest it's been, I feel at ease. I'm sleeping in long underwear and on a heating pad to support the fever in the hopes of helping my body fight this virus. Hoping to sweat it out tonight. On Day 3 I starting taking a homeopathic remedy which seems to be intensifying everything as a means of moving it along (which often happens with me and homeopathy). I know how to slow it down if I want to, but for now I'm here for it. Things are very unpleasant, but not unbearable. Spirit feels good.

Yesterday I became concerned with my brain, because the levels of forgetfulness, spaciness, and distraction are new to me. And to be honest, this is scarier to me than my other symptoms. I talked to my herbalist, and will be adding yarrow I dried last year to my teas. I'm eating things that support the brain: salmon, eggs, leafy greens. I'm sniffing essential oils for the brain (Rocky Mountain Oils makes one called Brainstorm that I like). She suggested I meditate more regularly, which I'm going to do. She points out that Corona means crown: the crown of the head.

It is morning: I was definitely hot last night, and found myself having kicked off the covers multiple times, but my fever neither peaked nor broke. I still have a low grade fever, but it is lower than last night. Sleeping on the heating pad seems to have helped with my muscles: they feel more relaxed, more languid. I feel surprisingly better. Not all better, but better than yesterday. Heat seems to help me (though based on things I've read, it won't for everyone).

As I've been foretold by @Rachel Herman: this experience is a process of days/weeks—with progress and set backs, better days and worse days, that come and go cyclically and nonlinearly. It's helpful to know this. My training as an artist is immensely helpful going through this process, as are my experiences with durational performance art and meditative retreats.

In a meta sense, the virus feels like an ongoing series of slow contractions: there is pressure and release, but never a letting go. It cycles over the day, over the week. There is always a grip. My chest feels like it's in a vice. But so far, for me at least, I'm not too concerned about my breath. My normal breath is not too impacted, but the ability to take my deepest full breath is inaccessible. I am, however, easily exhausted by simple tasks.

This morning, I practiced some breathing exercises which really helped my lungs feel better. This is something anyone can do at any time, and I recommend you start now to learn your own lung capacity (it's like taking your temperature before you get sick). Overtime, this exercise can condition the lungs and help expand your lung capacity. I learned it in yoga. It is a great meditation exercise for calm and stress release, and works on a lot of levels. Consult your healthcare provider if that's a good idea for you.

I taught my Dad how to do this over the phone today, with the assistance of his sister (my Aunt). It was hilarious—but also helpful! She mentioned that a doctor had her do something similar once upon a time, and you better believe it worked! My dad tried to use a stopwatch to count his breaths, but don't do that. Just count to yourself, inside your head.

EQUAL PARTS BREATH:

1. Take a comfortable seat. If you're in a chair, consider: feet flat on the floor, thighs parallel-ish with knees and toes pointing in the same direction (no man-spreading), sit up straight but with a natural curve to the spine (no slouching), shoulder relaxed, hands resting on your thighs, neutral head, relaxed jaw. Cross legged with a neutral spine is also a nice position. Propped up in bed is also lovely. You can do this in any position.
2. Count to yourself while you Intentionally inhale a full deep breath through the nose until your lungs are full. Breathe into the belly. My dad's count today was 3 seconds. My "normal" is 10-12, though more recently it's around 7 or 8. (Please don't compare yourself to me: I'm a yogi, a singer, and a performer; and I've been trained to breathe for my whole life.) Your count number will depend on your lung capacity and the time signature of your count. Don't judge this number, just notice it and remember it.
3. Gently hold that breath for the same amount of counts as your inhale.
4. Calmly release that breathe through the nose in the same amount of counts as your inhale and hold. Relax you lips, jaw, and shoulder.
5. Repeat until you are done. If this was intense, take a short break between rounds. Stop if you feel light headed or dizzy. If that happens, try shorter counts so you can sustain the practice a little longer. The goal is to be present in the moment with your breath. A nice side effect of this exercise is that you'll gently learn your own limits, as well gently condition the lungs to hold more air for longer. This is a slow and gentle process. Be gentle on yourselves, bbs!

Please note: if you are new to breath work, meditation, or emotional work—it's possible that this breathing practice may bring up feelings. That is ok. Allow yourself to feel the feelings: notice them, feel them, name them, and breathe into them as if they were a ballon with no boundaries—gently dissipating into the air around you. Try not to contract around them, but breathe with them. If you become flooded with emotion, return to counting with your breath. Always return to the breath.

—

After 5 days, I've started to notice the rhythm of my own body's energy throughout the day. I tend to wake up already tired, but will have a burst of mental mania before getting out of bed. I've been writing. I am then tired. I become exhausted by making breakfast for myself and the cats, but feel better after food and tea. I crash for a while or read or watch something (which often means napping). I make myself eat again by 2pm. Between 3-6pm, I usually feel pretty

good and have the ability to do some tasks: dishes, light cooking, writing, talking to people. By 7 I'm down again. Between 9-10 I'm awake again and hungry, so I eat. I usually get a burst of energy to get ready for bed: take a bath, wash my face, brush my teeth, set up the heating pad, fill the humidifier, go to bed. I'm usually asleep by 11 or midnight, though this varies based on how long my morning and evening naps are. I'm usually awake again by 7 or 8am, rousing from the bed by 9. It's interesting to notice the rhythms, because maybe I can support them by leaning into them. If I know food gives me energy, I'm more motivated to eat, and to eat foods that give me sustained and easy energy. If I know a crash is coming, I can already be cozy up in bed. I'm excited to play with this and see how it goes in terms of working with my body's new rhythms.

A RECOMMENDATION:

Start eating and drinking like you are already sick.

When I say this, I mean: increase your fluid intake; evaluate your relationship to drugs and alcohol (as that is accessible to you); prioritize nourishing foods that support things like sustained energy, immunity, brain function, and vitality (as that is accessible to you); and evaluate your relationship to foods that cause inflammation, mucus, or digestive distress (as that is accessible to you).

I do not want to tell anyone what or how to eat, as I am not a nutritionist. From personal experience, I know that changing your relationship to food can be one of the hardest things a person will ever do, and for many this is a life long struggle. BUT I will say that the more the more I understood the impact that certain foods had on my body and her functions, and the more consistently I made informed decisions about the kinds of foods I put into her, the better I felt. I became sick less frequently, and recovered more quickly.

For me personally, this looks mostly like lots of veggies, fruit, meat, lentils, rice, fish, and dark chocolate. I eat little to no dairy, strictly no gluten (for medical reasons), little added sugar, and few processed products (though I do love chocolate, occasional gf bread, and dairy free cheese and ice cream). I never pass judgment about anyone else's eating habits, and I present this info for reference, not as a recommendation for what you should be doing. Please honor your body and your body's needs: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Feed your body and feed her with love.

AND FINALLY

THE INTERNET PARTY I BIRTHED A FEW WEEKS AGO IS HAPPENING TONIGHT!

PLEASE JOIN US:

QUEERANTINE.NET

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AND FINALLY FINALLY

Thank you to all of the folks that have reached out to me as a result of these posts. I am glad to continue making them as long as I have the energy, and I am grateful to hear that they are meaningful and helpful to you. I go back and forth with doubt around sharing these things in this way, so it means a lot to have your encouragement. I know there are a lot of lurkers out there too, and I'm grateful to you for your time. And a special shout out to my friends and family also living with the virus: past, present, and future. I love you, I believe you. I got your back.

[Jess Posner is a transdisciplinary artist, writer, curator, educator, and energy worker](#)

DAY 6: END OF DAY

April 3, 2020

Too tired for a TLDR; but don't read if you don't want to hear about how today turned out worse than it started.

—

The day started a good day, and then I tried to do too much: I made soup because I wanted to. I felt good about it. And then I didn't nap, and I felt good about it. And then I showered because I felt good about it. And when I went to take my evening temp, when I still felt ok, my fever was as high as it's been: 100.9 (which with a low basal temp of 96.4 is quite high: equivalent of 103.1). The weird thing is I still felt ok, just sweaty.

So then I dug deeper than I should have, and hosted my internet dance party from my couch and bathtub—because I wanted to. Because I felt good about it. Because the magic of this party was something I wanted to hold tonight. But the reserve energy I called in instead fries my nerves. I mostly just showed up this week, and it honestly drained me in ways I couldn't have anticipated. It felt different, but that's maybe because I feel different. It's the first time I'm doing this sober, and the first time I'm doing it with a high fever. I wonder what the difference was?!?! Anyways, I wasn't present in the way I wanted to be, but Panda (the cat) made an appearance that helped immensely.

The internet party was very, very cute. It's a gift, actually. And I hope you'll join us next time—when I'm hopefully feeling better. Because it's amazing, and everyone that shows up and gives their energy to it is amazing! It's a collective queer magic that I can't really describe, and I'm grateful to everyone that co-authors this thing with us every Friday.

But tonight—as I was warned would happen— I'm doubting myself, the things I do, and the kind of impact they have.

After the party and from the bath (of rose petals and epsom salt), I called a best friend who held me in her voice, listened to me, and reflected truths to me I needed reminding of. By the time our call was done, by the time I'd gotten everything out I needed to: my bath water had turned from clear to black.

I broke three plates today. They just flew out of my hands.

I didn't listen to the people who told me to stay in bed even when I felt good, because I'm a stubborn kinesthetic learner. I guess I can call my doctor and try for a test now. I can tell you now: I wish I'd listened. The "better" I felt this morning is a memory (that I barely remember) now. My lungs still feel ok, though; which is a bit surprising since so far, when I feel worse, all of it feels worse. I wonder if all the deep breathing exercises helped—but they certainly haven't hurt. We shall see tomorrow.

Hello, roller coaster ride that is virus.

D A Y 7

April 4, 2020

Omg you guys today is a mess, it's not yet 8am, and I haven't even gotten out of bed. 🙄

I'm a weepy Wendy who's also, like, finding the dark humor of it all hilarious. 🙄

But also wash you hands, don't touch your face, socially distance and just be fucking nice to each other, ok?

D A Y 7: AFTERNOON UPDATE

April 4, 2020

Feeling less like hot garbage, more like soggy garbage that's been thrown out of a window and over a cliff. So. Busted. But the spirit feels good. My body is craving salty fermented things.

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Eating half sour pickles and miso straight from the container. Drinking so, so many fluids. Feel even more like garbage if I'm not constantly pouring liquid down my gullet.

Logged onto my first ZOOM Yoga Teacher Training meet up from bed. It's weird to do maybe one of the most embodied things you could do for yourself online-- but here we are. Very weird times. I love these people.

My new favorite joke is telling people "You know where to find me! 24/7." I laugh until I cry, every time.

I hear that some nurses are requesting nudes. My offerings:

"The Woman in the Waves," Gustave Courbet, 1868

"Woman with a Parrot," Gustave Courbet, 1866

Both accessed via The Met.

[#NudesForNurses](#)

D A Y 8

April 5, 2020

TL;DR: Kissing might kill you now. I write about touch, my early HIV/AIDS education, my mother, gay stuff, grief, a recent breakup, meeting new people, and food.

This one weaves and winds.

I've succumbed to the bed, I'm exhausted. But spirit remains high, lungs appreciate the breathing exercises.

One of the hardest parts about this experience is the absence of physical soothing. No physical soothing from another person at all: no touch. No being held. No being stroked. I spend a lot of time thinking about who I want to hold and be held by. Who I want to stroke my hair, who's hair I'd like to stroke. But none of that is accessible to me now. The wisdom of this virus of the moment is no touch. I live alone.

There's no one I can ask for this, because to ask for touch in this moment—as a person with this illness, or a person that might have been exposed to this illness (which is most people)—is to ask someone to potentially die, or at least suffer, for you. That is some big shit.

I'm actually deeply at peace with all of this—I've done a lot of work around this in recent years. But had I been a different version of myself, I'd be struggling. I'm really grateful that Panda the cat is the world's best snuggler. I used to find this annoying—but not anymore! Oxytocin! Razia is a champ too, I just wish she didn't hate Panda.

My mother was an operating room nurse and volunteer children's sexual health educator (she would do these skits in schools where she dressed up like a fancy moose and talked about consent and inappropriate touch). She educated me very early on about the transmission of HIV/AIDS. I was born in 1985, so she was both a nurse and a mother of young children through the crisis. A fun, perhaps related fact, is that she was at one point engaged to a closeted gay veterinarian who kept parrots in the basement (I kid you not).

She would tell my sister and me that we were at low risk because we were not men having sex with men, nor IV drug users sharing needles. We were little girls at the time, so this was accurate. She would then explain that she was at more risk than we ever would be, because sometimes blood squirts in your eyes when you're an Operating Room nurse. She would explain that we now know that some people have blood borne diseases like HIV/AIDS, and that's why doctors and nurses have PPE and tests to protect themselves while providing compassionate care to patients.

Despite the fact that she regularly put herself in situations where she could get blood in her eyes, she felt safe because of these tests and PPE. It felt radical to me when she would tell me that some medical professionals wouldn't go near HIV patients because they were homophobes; but that she always would because she wasn't afraid, and homophobes were assholes. As a kid, I understood fear but not homophobia. My mother is wickedly funny, charming, and smart; and I'm sure she made people feel seen and cared for (even if they were under anesthesia at the time).

She would use language that I now recognize as Gran Fury's: *Kissing Doesn't Kill*. She would tell us that you cannot contract HIV from kissing, hugging, sharing food or drink, being nice, or using a public toilet. She would explain how transmission worked. She repeated this information all the time, or at least I remember like she did. While I was afraid (I was an anxious kid), I was soothed that this very scary thing would not be transmitted through touch alone. I found peace in knowing that even in the face of this terrifying illness, kissing wouldn't kill you. Touch wouldn't kill you. I've thought about this almost everyday of my life.

I have other thoughts around touch too that I won't get into now. But let's just say that I've thought a lot about touch, in complicated and nuanced ways, every day of my life. There's theory in there somewhere, but we will not be accessing that today.

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So this moment of compulsory non-touch weighs incredibly heavily on me. The only other plague many of us viscerally remember, particularly those of us who are queer and over 30, was actively advertised by activists as not being transmitted through touch. Touch could be safe when the rest of the world wasn't. From a queer perspective: not being able to touch your friends, lovers, comrades, or face is devastating (gay people love touching their faces).

My cats are doing great as cuddle buddies, and I'd be cracked by now if it weren't for them. My friends and family are a pretty constant psychic presence on the phone and Internet (and making porch deliveries); but neither cat, phone, laptop, or contactless delivery have a lap in which one can lay your head; nor hands to hold you with and assure you that you are ok.

So: develop, identify, and practice self-soothing practices that don't require the touch of another human. They will help save your mind and heart. And keep your beloveds safer. This, too, goes for you partnered people in quarantine together. Maybe especially for you.

Nurture the heart through things like this: Rose, Hawthorne berries, rose quartz, flower essence of Holly. Do your research on these things before using them, so that you are informed. Keep your heart open and breathe into it. Every single day. Do this every day before things get worse, so you will be better off when they do.

The lungs are located at the heart center. They're the organ of grief. Deal with your grief: really feel it. Really process it.

The Jews (I am one) have a beautiful grief ritual. I'd recommend researching around these practices, and to begin grieving your grievances. Do it now. Sit shiva for a week with them. Slowly return to more of your regular programming for a month, but still honor your grievances daily by acknowledging your own brokenness. Pray for the grieved every day for a year. And then, you will pray for the grieved once a year every year for the rest of your life. The Jews designed this for mourning people, and there are lots of rules; but I think the rules can be adapted for all kinds of grief. When I have the energy, I will maybe return to this and see if I can cook up a ritual. Until then, be empowered to adapt your own.

In the last three years, I've lost a lot; and grieved an almost unbearable level of losses of all kinds. When I first heard about the Coronavirus; I immediately, instinctually knew it was a virus of grief. That this would be larger and deeper than the material biology alone. That there would be waves of all kinds.

Other healers confirmed the same feelings.

Before I got sick, I'd been speaking to students, friends, and family about grief. There is a lot to grieve: our freedom, friends, the way things were, our plans, knowing what our future holds, things that bring us joy, our sense of safety, privacy, social connection, touch, jobs, businesses,

finances, loved ones, our health, the health of others, and potentially our lives. And any number of things.

In early December, my partner of 9 years and I broke up. Life had become very difficult in the years prior, and unfortunately our relationship was unable to recover from the challenges of our lives, of how differently we grieved or supported each other through that grief and difficulty. It is very sad. I miss her, and have a lot of love for her; but the separation also seems right.

In the time since, some new, beautiful people have come into my life. Not necessarily in a romantic sense, though there are glimpses of that—but I'll say this is a very strange time to nurture new connections of any kind. It's very hard to be flirty, fun, and free in the time of the apocalypse and global contagion.

As my more astrologically inclined friends might say, "But Jess, you're a LIBRA. If anyone can be flirty, fun, and free in the time of the apocalypse, it would be you!" To which I'd say, "I know, girl. Which is why I'm telling you this is hard. So please come to my internet party, QUEERANTINE, where you can be as flirty, fun, and free as you want for 90-180 minutes. Everyone there is seeking and serving this, consciously. It's like magic, but you've got to show up with an open heart to feel it."

This is why I showed up Friday night. Because I'm a Libra, I guess.

The past few days have been a level of exhaustion I have never experienced in my life before. Typing this out is exhausting physically and mentally—but it also feels like if I don't do it now, I'll never do it. The early morning bursts of mania are gone, the writing is labored. But I'm practiced in it now, so I'm doing it.

I'm now only leaving bed for food, tea, water, and bathroom. I carry a tray of a gallon worth of liquids to my bed in the morning, at lunch, and evening. I drink constantly, or else I am parched and feel ill. Plain water often makes me nauseous. The quart jars of tea and lemon water help, though don't make them too strong. But don't make them weak either. I am starting to stretch in bed, it helps.

I highly recommend a breakfast-in-bed type tray. It will make it easier to eat and drink in bed. And if you are carrying it for yourself, there's less chance you'll drop it if you're consciously holding it with two hands.

Food is very important. It's the only thing giving my body energy to do anything: like fighting the virus or doing the dishes. I've never so acutely felt the "energy in, energy out" of the food I'm putting in my body— so this is a beautiful but very annoying lesson in this.

The more nourishing and intentional your foods are the better. You are healing your body, so make choices that support that process. I know this is harder said than done, especially for folks

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that don't have the ability to control the food they eat, or don't possess the ability to cook. If you are able to take this up, to start doing more of this, to understand cooking and the energetics of the foods you eat (beyond simple caloric info), I suggest starting now. If someone cares for you in this way, begin talking to them about this. This may be a difficult conversation to have.

Even as I write these paragraphs, I am too exhausted to explain things any more than I am. That feels mentally exhausting. I am a natural and trained teacher, and I have lost the faculty to teach in that spoon feeding kind of way. I recognize irony in this (LOLZ), as the above paragraphs are chock full of me telling you what to do. But I can't tell you how to do it. You're gonna need to figure that part out yourself. So good luck, kitties.

This shit is all very hard, and things will only get harder before they ease up. We can, however, invite ease and grace into our lives every single day—and it will take the edge off.

Like attracts like, so be the ease and grace you want. Learn to self soothe before you really need it. Learn to feed yourself before you really need it. Practice that thing that feeds your soul before you really need it. Practice those breathing exercises before you need it.

Because you will need it.

And if you already need it: Welcome, friend. I believe you.

Last night I watched "Into The Woods," "Cabaret," and part of "Edward Scissorhands" (I fell asleep). I've always found these to be pretty dark films, but I found myself wistfully romanticizing them:

How lovely to be in dark times in which the people were still congregating in public, eating with friends, kissing people they barely knew, casually brushing up against a crush.

A sigh is a deep breath.

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Image: A pink triangle against a black backdrop with the words 'Silence=Death' representing an advertisement for The Silence = Death Project used by permission by ACT-UP, The AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power. Colour lithograph, 1987.

D A Y 9

April 6, 2020

Have you recently sought testing for COVID19 because you are presenting symptoms, and were then denied testing (in Onondaga County)? Please reach out to Tim Knauss at Syracuse.com, tknauss@syracuse.com. I just got off the phone with him, and he wants to hear from you.

If you know someone that has, please have them reach out too.

The county is reporting "aggressive testing" and celebrating a reduction in COVID cases-- but this is a lie. Both myself and another person I know were both denied testing at different sites TODAY, for arbitrary reasons, and due to rationing of tests due to lack of resources. I've heard that healthcare workers are also being denied tests. Please reach out to this reporter if this applies to you. I, personally, am livid.

—

TL;DR: A personal update, including my experience getting denied testing for a second time.

—

My fever broke this morning, and I recognize my mind and body again! I still feel like my body has been in a terrible car crash, but I'm relieved to recognize myself for the first time in 9 days. I'm not so foolish to think that this is the end, but it's possible I've turned a corner. I expect nothing. But the sun is shining and the sky is blue, and I'm feeling energized in this moment. Grateful for this respite.

It's 5:40PM and I'm exhausted now. A lot of weird shit happened in the last day, and of course I have plenty to say about it, which maybe I'll get to share at some point. The woo people among you are going to love it, the scientists among you are going to think I've totally lost it (or maybe not?).

But for now, I am LIVID that my county is reporting 1) that they are aggressively testing people presenting COVID19 symptoms (which they are not, because tests are being rationed); and 2) that there is a reduction in the number of cases of COVID19 in the county (which cannot be true if testing is still being denied to people that are presenting with all of the symptoms).

The first time I was denied a test was on day 2 of symptoms. After talking to my RN nurse friend, I called my doctor. Based on my symptoms, I was told it sounded like I had it, and I needed to self-quarantine for 14 days. I asked about testing, and was told that I did not qualify for a test because my fever was not high enough (100.4). I explained that my basal temp is low 96.4 degrees, and that my temp was elevated 2 degrees (which would be the equivalent of 100.6

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if I had a 98.6 temp). They said it didn't matter, and to call back once I passed the 100.4 threshold. (I have since learned that both my parents and at least one of my aunts have low basal temps.)

Friday night my fever peaked at 101.9, 5.5 degrees higher than my basal temp. The office was closed, so I called first thing this morning to describe my 9 days of symptoms, my fever peaking Friday night, and fever breaking this morning. I reported that I still have some symptoms: chest tightness, muscle soreness, cough, headache. They call me back and tell me to get to the Urgent Care at the hospital where my PCP is to be screened in person for testing, and to do it within the hour. They call ahead to warn them I'm coming.

I leave my house wearing a surgical mask, given to me by a friend. On the way out of the door, I slice my achilles open on my storm door--because apparently I've forgotten how to use doors in these last nine days. I'm dripping blood (it's as long as my thumb and deep enough I can stick a finger in it), run upstairs to clean it, and put a knee-sized bandaid on it. I end up bleeding through the bandaid by the time I get to the hospital.

I pull up to a blue tent outside the Urgent Care entrance at the hospital. They tell me to park. I walk up to the blue tent outside, and the nurse comes out. I tell her they called ahead for me. They take my temp (it's something ridiculously low like 94.5), and asks me a bunch of questions, all of which support the likelihood of being a COVID patient. One of the questions asks if you've been exposed to someone who tested positive for coronavirus. This question is ludicrous when people seeking testing cannot get it. Answer this: "I have been exposed to someone who was presenting symptoms, but was unable to get a test."

I also tell them I sliced my achilles deep enough to stick a finger in it, and that I'm dripping bleeding through my bandage, and asked if they could take a look at that too. They say, "Why not, I mean you're already at urgent care." I feel dumb, but also I'm in a good mood and being funny because that's who I am; but it's confusing because I'm also a walking death threat. One nurse runs ahead to get a room ready for me, she walkies to the nurse with me outside, referring to me as "the girl with exposure and a foot lac". I actually love it when grown women call me a girl, because I'll be 35 in October.

I'm led into a familiar dingy room, where I once spent several hours getting several bags of IV fluids getting pumped into me. A nurse, decked in PPE, recognizes me from my tattoos and takes my vitals. I get tested for the flu, it's negative. I wait for a while, and eventually a care provider enters the room with a COVID19 test. She asks for my symptoms, we talk briefly, and she explains that she's conflicted about testing me or not because they don't have enough tests, I seem to be doing better, and the treatment plan remains the same (self-quarantine until 14 days after symptoms and 72 hrs non-symptomatic and non-febrile). She decides not to give me the

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test because of limited resources, and tells me if I take a turn for the worse, to come back and they'll test me then.

She then takes a look at the gash on my achilles. I feel awful that she has to stay in the room longer with me because of this, but am relieved that I'm face down, in a mask, and that I'm tall (so that she's nearly 6 ft from my face). She says that it could use a few stitches; and then says something about the location and mumbles something about all the PPE she's wearing. She wonders if she can get away with skin glue. I tell her to do what she thinks is best. She glues me up, throws some steristrips on. I thank her and start crying, and she does too. I'm discharged and sent home.

I'm so freaking grateful for these healthcare workers, who are not only putting themselves at risk with insufficient PPE, but are also being called to make difficult decisions about how to distribute already scant resources. I am livid that they are being put in this position.

I am livid that despite my desperate desire to be a data point, I am undocumented due to a lack of resources due to our government's genocidal ineptitude. I am livid that we will never understand the scope of this, nor be able to understand a model of community spread if testing is incomplete, arbitrary, and rationed. It is infuriating, unethical, and a threat to public health.

In speaking with the reporter about my experience getting denied testing for the second time (while the county is reporting aggressive testing), he rhetorically asked if anyone is keeping a record of people with symptoms but being denied tests. He wondered if that record even exists, and questioned how to find it.

What good fucking questions.

D A Y 10

April 7, 2020

I'm thinking more about wanting to create a community survey/database of folks that are presenting symptoms, seeking tests, and being denied testing. If you know how to do things like this, please reach out to me.

TL;DR: This might be the last diary entry, as I'm feeling much better. But it also might not be my last entry, because apparently a relapse right around now is not unusual. We'll see, a day at a time. A reflection and some woo below.

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Feeling more and more like myself again, which is a deep relief. I woke up horny, morning eliminations were normal for the first time in 10 days, I'm allergic to Panda again, my seasonal sinus congestion and post nasal drip are back, and I think I'm getting my period! Returning to "normalcy"! Yippee!

A few days into the VID, I started to notice that my allergies were gone, and that I wasn't allergic to my cat Panda anymore--which is weird since I spent 9 days in bed with him, and because I'm highly allergic to him. This morning I awoke with my eyes ON FIRE, and the back of my throat coated in snot: a beautiful sign that my hyperactive immune system is returning to it's normal programming. This morning I awoke from a sexy dream, the first dream I've remembered since this started, so that was cool.

My body still feels like it's been put through the ringer, which makes a lot of sense. Going to keep feeding my body with herbs and nourishing foods in this repair phase, to help return to full strength. But by goddess am I relieved.

The sun is shining. Aho and Amen.

—

Some woo reflections from the past few days, as promised:

I've been dropping things. The other day, I somehow managed to pour boiling hot tea all over my right palm and fingers. I applied fresh aloe immediately. There was never any sign of burn, blister, inflammation, or pain. The lines of my palm are now different.

Grief and heartbreak feel almost identical in my body to the way COVID19 feels in my body. I've had a lot of time to think and feel about the cycles of grief and heartbreak of my life, of all kinds, and all forms of relationships past and present. It's been an intense 10 days of being radically called into my body and it's energetics. There have been some critical moments in this process in which I was walloped with waves of feeling, right in my chest (front and back heart center: tight, heavy, hot, sore), and over my whole body.

The day before my fever broke was one of them. I received multiple messages that day that conjured different variations of this feeling, visceral muscle memories of the entire process of grieving. It weighed incredibly heavy on my heart. I still had the regular COVID19 chest tightness underneath, but on top of it was this other kind of heaviness that felt... the same... but different.

Because I know how to identify and work with the feelings of grief in my own body, I was able to sit with them and move them. As I was able to relax and release this emotional feeling, I was then able to sit with the feeling of the virus in my chest. I knew what it was, I knew what it felt like, and I knew how it was different from these other kinds of feelings.

The next morning my fever was gone and I have slowly been returning to feeling more like myself. My body is still sore as hell, but the virus seems to have lost hold of me. I'm not suggesting this is a 1:1, but I'm just noticing that the timing feels poetic and a little magic should one want to frame it as such.

COVID19 has definite mental and emotional impact on people while they are experiencing it, so please be prepared for that.

I've heard this reflected from other people too. I became extremely myopic and honestly have little to no memory from the 8 days I was very sick. I had little to no memory from day to day or hour to hour-- which is very strange and different for me. Time ceases to exist.

The whole thing feels like a bad dream in which your body is being hijacked by aliens scanning your body for memories of pain and suffering. It is nonlinear and recursive, it is both familiar and unfamiliar, and requires a complete surrender to the present moment. Because you're going through it alone, it also feels like maybe it's not real. You doubt yourself. You doubt your experience, you question reality. This is exactly what being gaslit feels like (I was gaslit for years by my ex-husband). We are continuously being gaslit by Donald Trump and his administration.

I tend to be a pretty optimistic, upbeat, and self-aware person; but there were times where that changed. Flower Essence of Holly was incredibly helpful for these moments. Bach makes one.

I've been describing that I was experiencing a mild form of this, but I'm now wondering if that was really true. I was basically unable to do anything beyond bare life for 8 days, and some of those days were a real challenge. On the 9th day I went to the hospital to get tested at my doctor's recommendation, to be denied testing for the second time. I had nothing to compare my experience to, other than people dying on ventilators, and some anecdotal evidence from some other people's posts. Somehow I managed to write these diaries through the whole thing, which is more or less the only memory I have of last week.

[Rachel Herman's](#) posts were the most helpful texts for me through this time. I shared her long post about what to do when you get sick last week, and it is definitely worth the read. It was a helpful roadmap, and much more concise than what I've been doing.

I also can't understate how much the homeopathy and herbalism helped me through this. I know what my body is like without them, and I know that they ease and support my body, mind, and spirit in ways that take the edge off and make things more gentle. They also provided me with a structure and things to do to care for myself in this wacky time.

I have SO MANY friends and family to thank for your support and generosity and care for me, always, but also especially now. You know who you are, I love you. I don't think any of you are

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accepting new friends and family "clients" from the internet at this time. So we'll leave my gratitude between us for now.

My homeopath Rosemary Thompson of [Weaving Energy, LLC Homeopathy & Neurofeedback](#) is accepting clients, and she has helped me change my life in ways I cannot begin to describe. I'm happy to answer any questions you have about working with her, or if you're curious about homeopathy. I never want to believe that it works, until it does. Every single time. She has a specific coronavirus remedy, but will also work with you on all of your other shit too. It is worth it.

My amazing friend and herbalist [Margaretha Haughwout](#) is happy to help with herbal support. Let me know if you'd like to get in touch, I can help connect.

I love you all, this is all very weird.

Please take care of yourselves.

D A Y 11

April 8, 2020

Today's another "good day." I continue to feel better, like a very sore version of myself. The soreness is concentrated in my back heart center, low between my shoulder blades. I often feel things here. Feeling sad. Still in bed. The wound is healing.

Three days fever free, two days symptom free—except this residual sad soreness. It's possible I'm out of the woods, but it's also possible a relapse is coming (as it does for some).

I spend a lot of time finding my bones.

Digging fingers deep into my flesh until it yields, and then yields no more. My grip a ballast to pelvis, clavicle, ribs, jaw, and hands. Relief comes in riding crests and edges of my skeleton, firm pressure by my own hand.

Feeling doubt around sharing these things today, and for the last 11 days. I do firmly believe that more voice and more information is the way we work out what we understand to be truth. I also trust that anyone reading these things is discerning, and is going to do their own research; and that maybe what I write is good for thought. I also know that sometimes we screw up, sometimes we are wrong, and sometimes good intentions cause harm. I'm currently doing very ok in a time where so many people are not. I'm perhaps delusionally predisposed to hope the

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majority of the time—which I think is a tricky double bind. Hope is contagious, but so is delusion.

We know so little right now, other than the familiar feelings of fear and grief. That I just want to share the other side of this too. Many people have reached out to say they find what I'm doing helpful, which makes me wonder if it's also causing harm. I just know that knowing about other people's experience with this is so helpful for me—and so I'm just trying to be public about it to further that reach. And because I'm an external processor, and because it's exhausting to repeat this stuff too many times. But it's also just my experience, and it may not be yours. It may be too much for you, I've been told this many times before.

I suppose time will tell, as we all attempt to heal from this challenging moment. A sigh is a deep breath.

EVENING UPDATE:

LOL CRY. I think I attempted to do “too much” by doing some dishes, one load of laundry, and some brain work today. I was feeling really pretty good, but then then I started down a negative thought spiral about what a terrible person I am. I know this isn't true, and I recognized it as the virus, grief, and the loneliness of living through this alone; but it's the first time I've really felt this since I've gone into isolation. My fever spiked, but it's slowly come down With chilling and deep breathing. Now stretching out my upper back with a yoga wheel—passively. And I can't believe I wasn't doing this sooner.

It's really important to condition your lungs as much as this is accessible to you, especially if you don't already have an intimate awareness of your breath. Deep breathing (check a prior post for “Equal Parts Breath”), Seated twists, cat/cow, and anything to to open, stretch, and condition the heart, lungs, and chest. Like stretching out a balloon before blowing it up. You want to do this with your heart, lungs, and chest. Push into discomfort, you're after flexibility and suppleness. Keep things open and moving. Gently. But firmly. Stretch and fill the chest cavity as often as you can, into discomfort, and then into release. Repeat.

D A Y 11

April 8, 2020

A Passover Contemplation.

And what of those among us who are the plague?

What story do you tell when a person who should be at your table carries the plague from which our people fled for 40 years in the desert?

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What will be of those among us who, with the plague coursing through our blood--now the blood of affliction--are kept separate from our families and collective narratives this year?

What happens when those narratives start to feel bad, because your blood, your breath, is now lethal? What happens when you realize that you're your mother's first born child? How are you, sick and straining for air, supposed to feel about this?

What happens when the tears are no longer metaphorical? Can I just wipe my face with Karpas tonight? Is that Kosher?

How will you keep us in your hearts, those of us who have cooked and sat and sang with you around the Seder table for more years than we can count?

How will you rewrite this narrative, the language of liberation and justice to includes those of us whose blood is yours, but is also infected?

What is the real plague here? Is it the virus infecting our people? Or is it Pharoah?

I'd suggest rewriting the four children this year:

The child who is an Essential Worker

The child who is Quarantined and Angry

The child who Does Not Yet Understand

The child who is Too Sick to Be Present

Before I got sick, I made a joke to myself about getting a bloody shank bone from my butcher to literally smear blood across my door this Passover. I thought if I couldn't get a shankbone, maybe I'd use menstrual blood. That was going to be my personal Seder. But I was too late. The plague came, knuckle bones in the freezer, no paschal lamb at the door. I half-heartedly wonder if it would have made a difference.

Weirder things have happened.

For the first time in my life, I'm not helping make a seder this year. My family is doing a ridiculous 30ish person video seder that I'll hopefully be able to make part of (due to multiple time zones an online teaching), but we do Passover and we do it big. We love it. So for the first time, I'm not really going to be present for a seder. I don't really want it this year. I don't need to remember, because it is here.

I've decided that I'll be meditating on the true plague of our culture this year, and asking for guidance on how to best navigate it for the greatest good. Please join me.

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D A Y 12

April 9, 2020

Yup, had a weird flare up last evening. Afterwards, a cute night zooming with some friends; but am now extremely exhausted after ZOOMing with students, dialing in for the last 10 minutes of the absolute wildest family google hangout Seder, and eating some soup. Those things were all very good, but that might be it for today. This thing is the weirdest least fun rollercoaster I've ever been on. My upper back is so tight.

In my class, we read Gregg Bordowitz's "General Idea: Imagevirus" this week. It is a collaged text, a close study of a single artwork (General Idea's "Imagevirus,") contextualized within the AIDS crisis. Students shared some beautiful thoughts about the language and form of this text, reflecting how it provided a certain kind of connection to the current moment that felt familiar in terms of thinking about language and the body. If anyone is interested in reading it, DM or comment with your email and I'll email you a scanned copy. They are impossible to come by now. It's good to know our viral history.

This is all so weird. The ups and downs of this are very weird. The emotional turmoil of this is all extremely intense. I've only just yesterday started feeling the acute loneliness of this experience. It feels awful. Like a hole blown open between my shoulder blades, ripping out my throat.

D A Y 13

April 10, 2020

I'm existentially tired. But come to my internet party tonight, plz & thank u? It's medicine, I promise.

QUEERANTINE.NET, 9PM eastern

D A Y 14

April 11, 2020

TL;DR: I get so emotional, baby. It's exhausting. But today I remember what joy feels like.

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Today so far is a good day, and marks almost 2 weeks since falling ill two Sundays ago. I awoke today feeling the best I have since March 10-- the last time I'd see my students in person in class, and the last time I'd see most of my friends at the same time or at all (at the Hott Wheels roller skating meetup at Skate Estate in Vestal, NY). I can't believe it's only been a month, and I also can't believe it's already been a month. I feel happy for the first time in weeks. I know it's going to fade, but it felt amazing to wake up this way.

I owe this joy to #Queerantime, the gorgeous beings that co-create this magical event week after week, and especially my friend, collaborator, and stellar Queerantime DJ [Andrea Kennedy](#). It really is soul medicine, and my immense pleasure and joy to create and hold this space in this very strange time. It's more than pure escapism, though there is definitely some of that. It's an embodied memory of what joy feels like, and we all need more of that now.

For me, #Queerantime is more than a party. It is an artwork that falls in line with the rest of my practice: an experience that brings people together to be in their bodies and feel and move feelings. There's an intention that makes this deeply transformative medicine.

To some, I realize this may be a stretch. That a dance party may come across as flippant fun in a very serious time. I've often encountered disbelief that I can be both so committed to dumb fun and serious thought and action; or confusion that I'd take something dumb, simple, and pleasurable so seriously (like the 7 years I've spent working on and through butter). I've also been the person that can't reconcile these differences. But we require one to balance out the other. Strength is fragile without flexibility, and vice versa. We need roses alongside our bread. We need dancing in the revolution. We need lifted spirits for heavy hearts and broken bodies.

Emma Goldman knew what was up. To show up with an open heart and zero expectation is a challenging, transformative, and revolutionary gesture. I know dancing isn't everyone's jam, but I'm personally not interested in a world that doesn't have dancing, music, and camaraderie.

The movement requires movement.

"Open heart, zero expectations" is my current mantra.

My other current mantra is "Bring the snacks, be a snack."

The past few weeks have all been the most incredibly wild, twisty, turny, un-fun roller coaster. It is truly unlike anything else, and probably the most intense and durational physical/emotional/spiritual experience I've ever had in my body and life (and I've had a fair share of all of these). I've reached a level of existential physical and emotional exhaustion that zapped my ability to

really process or communicate the way I am feeling. So many emotional meltdowns and breakthroughs this week. I'm the kind of person that likes to really feel things out in the moment, but I just haven't had the energy to even cry, or try, this week.

I do have a superpower to dig deep to conjure energy to do things, and I did this a few times this week: for teaching, for feeding myself, for #Queerantime. Sometimes it wipes me out (like teaching did), but often these things fill the well too (like regularly eating and #Queerantime do).

I keep learning more about this virus in my body: the fever seems to peak from exertion. But I've also learned how, in my body, at this stage, to bring the fever down through doing the following things: deep breathing, eating salt + protein + butter, drinking teas, self soothing, taking breaks, rhythmically moving, stretching my heart center/upper back out on a yoga wheel, doing light yoga, and being in my joy (which is really hard to do right now). I don't want to believe it, but I've replicated it enough times that I now know my personal protocol. I figured this out by intimately listening to my body. I dialed into my intuition, turned off all doubt, and followed my body's instructions. I've also had little to no concern about my breathing through this whole thing; so please don't take this as anything other than some words that an able bodied someone in otherwise good health wrote, who is not a medical professional, but who is curious and unafraid of her own body that she knows quite well.

Example: Just like last week, my fever spiked to over 100 degrees (my basal is 96.4) after taking a shower and getting dressed for [Queerantime: A Virtual Dance Party](#). Last week I was in really rough shape before/during/after the party, and I half-feared that I'd get there again. But this time it was different. I had been feeling alot better before, kind of knew what to expect, rested all day, and treated some severe menstrual cramps with some herbal medicine. Over the course of the night (which included doing all the things I listed above), my fever slowly dropped. After three hours of dancing and being "on" in a space in which I feel fully alive, my temp dropped to 95.8. The well was filled with cool water. I woke up this morning fever free, and have held steady.

I don't know how or why this worked, but this was the third time in as many days that I was able to bring my fever down by tending to my body in ways that I know make it feel alive and connected to itself.

And I woke up feeling the way I often feel after beautiful nights of moving my body to very good music with friends, feeling cute: incredibly alive and ready to get out into the world. I almost asked a few friends to meet me at a local coffee shop, but then I remembered that I'm a walking

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contagion, there is nowhere to go. Thankfully, the coffee shop was open for takeout, and Andrea makes contactless deliveries. Closest thing I've felt to normal since New York paused, nearly a month ago.

I don't know what tomorrow holds, maybe another fever. But today the sun shines and I remember what joy feels like. And that feels like really important medicine.

[queerantime tiles image]

D A Y 15

April 12, 2020

LOL. CRY. WTF. This is a very un-fun roller coaster.

I'm sure there are many of you reading this who feel somehow different than two weeks ago. I can't believe it's already been two weeks, I can't believe it's only been two weeks. I. am. so. exhausted. How are you feeling?

Though I'm physically feeling much better (with the exception of exhaustion and a nauseating headache), yesterday's euphoric feelings gave way to waves of grief last night, and convulsive crying this morning. This almost feels worse than the full body aches. It felt good to cry though, because I've wanted to, but have just been too exhausted. I've wailed in my life before, but never convulsed. It's weird and almost terrifying to feel my body so out of control over sadness. Just when I was almost out of my body, my 15 year old cat placed a paw on my leg, bringing me back to earth. Homeopathy and my familiars (AKA Panda and Razia) help to soften these waves, but the waves just keep coming. Currently watching Six Feet Under to keep perspective. LOL. CRY.

LOLCRY. 🥹🥹🥹🥹

Yesterday I chatted with a friend who is a few days behind me with the sickness, and he's uncontrollably crying at the West Wing. He accurately articulated that this thing is really difficult to describe to anyone that doesn't have it. But those that do, we know. I described it as an alien highjacking every system of your physical, mental, and emotional body.

Feels kind of like that. In an interesting turn of empathy, I now fully understand what it's like to be a person that can't process emotions because it's too much to handle. It's too much energy, and feels like a melodramatic form of torture. I now understand how bad it feels to not be able to process feeling because you are empty.

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I keep hearing of people in my network who are dying. Not from the coronavirus, but from other things. I can't imagine how unbearable it is to lose a loved one you cannot bury, you cannot mourn.

I've started wondering if I'd be able to do more if I didn't expend all of my energy on doing the dishes and simmering, steeping, warming, pouring, and consuming so very many different forms of liquids. Would I have more energy to move my body more, to do anything at all, if I wasn't the only person taking care of me day in and day out? Shakespeare wrote plays in the plague because he had a wife and not the plague. Maybe.

At the very onset I kept asking people, "If this really is the end, what would you be doing differently?" This now feels very romantic, as choice has become so contracted in recent weeks. This certainly is an end of something.

It's been hard for me to watch shows or movies this month because seeing people gather publicly or in proximity is painful. I don't have the focus to read for pleasure. I've been listening to a lot of music, but too many lyrics conjure feelings I'd rather not have right now. It's a very strange state of existence. I know it'll pass, but I don't like it. Time is so slippery.

Today I laid in bed until 2pm, and can't remember what I did yesterday, other than make a pot of soup with the last of my fresh vegetables; and to fill an instacart order with no available delivery times. I'll try again tomorrow. Or the next day (ad nauseum).

Sometimes I feel like the internet dance party and these posts are the only evidence that I still exist.

NOTE: I know this seems really gloom and doomy today, so I want you to know that I feel a lot like any of the scary emojis that are also making funny faces. Like the ghost, poop, alien, scary clown, eyeballs looking left, and the fog cloud. Like, I'm definitely laughing under this. But also crying, a lot? But only today! It's ridiculous. So, like dealing with this virus and other forms of nonsense in my life is so dumb. I'm glad that I'm a generally positive person, because all of this together is totally whack.

BUT ALSO: WHAT WAS THAT FULL PINK MOON IN LIBRA WITH THE SUN IN ARIES.
Basically, the moon couldn't be mooning any harder; the sun couldn't be sunning any harder. They're totally in love with the shine and reflection of the other, but also can't stand it because it's too intense and too much whatever! A Libra moon is a very sexy mirror luxuriating in the light of a shadow; opposite Aries' fiery out of control bonfire, started by a stick of dynamite. It's a half-real mirage that feels a whole lot more intense than maybe it actually is because of the way things happen to be happening in this moment, blinding light sources in the dark void of the universe. In a different context, this dynamic might be thrilling until it's not. There's a bunch of

other intense astrology happening this week, so try to chill out with your feelings before hitting send.

D A Y 16

April 13, 2020

One of my favorite things about my block is hearing my neighbors call for their inside/outside cats. We have: Hershey AKA Hersh, Nova, Buggy (not a cat, but my next door neighbor's lil dog), and Panda (who is mine). I also love these sounds of life on my block: bird song, wind chimes, kids gathering and playing across the street (though not recently), chop saws, the wind blowing through the giant spruce in my front yard (the largest tree—by far—on the block), people working on cars, and actually good music blasting from loudspeakers pointed out windows when the weather is nice on weekends.

I live in a city neighborhood, so it's relatively dense, but we all have backyards with wonky fences. We pretty much keep to ourselves, but it's friendly. We have a silent agreement to help shovel for each other in winter. No one polices anyone else, or how long their grass is getting. The only yard sign is my next door neighbor's: OG's Against Gun Violence. I have a very funny herb garden and many unruly flowering bushes in the front yard. We live and let live. Please tell me what you love about your block, what gives it unique character.

It is so windy this morning.

One of the symptoms I was warned about early on with the virus is that it can trigger irrational anger and feelings of hate or being hated. I knew this was coming, so I was prepared to recognize it. Last week, my hate spiral was (of course) directed at myself, coupled with my real and imagined perception of other people negatively judging me in this moment. Flower essence of Holly really helped when this.

The feeling and energy of the virus are not limited only to people infected with it. It is everywhere. We are all feeling it.

Lately I've been using both the Holly and homeopathic Ignatia (I highly recommend working with a skilled homeopath vs. just treating yourself) to help with the toxic negative feelings (Holly) and grief (Ignatia). I've also been keeping up with Margaretha's tea prescriptions, which help a lot. I added yarrow to help with my brain, and then upped the dose for supporting my achilles gash (which is healing well). My favorite tea at the moment is Lemon Balm, Chamomile, and Yarrow. I just pour hot water over the whole leaves and flowers in a quart jar, steep for a while, and drink. I steep a few rounds until it loses flavor. It all helps and makes a difference.

I spoke with a wise friend or two about an issue that has been weighing heavy on my heart. It helped a lot.

I want to give a shoutout to all the people who have been ill, who are ill, and who have not yet become ill. Many folks have reached out to me privately, and I see you. There is still stigma and shame around this virus—and around any illness—and understandably so. But I will share that I have received such an outpouring of support and care since deciding to be public about this, that it astounds me. It is, for me, a real exercise in humility, gratitude, and self worth.

I'll also add that the virus gaslights you into questioning your reality. Allowing other people to witness you helps to validate this very strange experience in ways I can't fully articulate. So even if it's only one or two people, tell someone that will listen and believe you. If you can, spread it out over a few people, as it's a lot of intensity over a long period of time for one person to absorb.

Of course, the real heaviness in this comes in that sometimes the folks you may want the most in this moment are nowhere to be found. Or they show up in weird ways. They just cannot show up for you in the ways you wished they would, for reasons you will likely never fully understand; for reasons that likely have little or nothing to do with you, that are possibly none of your business. I have a short list of people like this spanning my entire life. I'm getting better at relaxing my disappointment, and am becoming more practiced at recognizing how my own expectations and intensities contribute to this dynamic. I have also been the person that couldn't show up for someone I cared deeply about for reasons that had nothing to do with them.

None of this makes it any easier, though: cue waves of grief triggering waves of grief. Try not to resent the people that disappoint you, they're likely suffering too. It's possible you'll be astounded at what they're dealing with.

But this doesn't mean you can't have your own healthy boundaries with yourself around these people. Try to give more focus to the people in your life that are being present and good to you. Don't short change them your gratitude and presence because you're disappointed someone else isn't there in the ways you wished they were.

All that being said, I am truly [#blessed](#) to have a beautiful network of care that humbles me on a daily basis. I am so grateful. Please know that if you are reading this, I am now part of yours.

D A Y 17

April 14, 2020

I am just so tired of this. I am so tired of unlearning. So tired of dismantling my physical,

psychic, and emotional bodies. I'm exhausted from decimating my expectation that better means anything at all.

I am 17 days in and if I'm being honest with myself, I have yet to have a day where I am totally symptom free. I had a few days of being fever free here and there, and occasionally gave some good hours where things feel akin to normal; but my temp cycles between the low 95s and the high 98s almost every single day (my norm is 96.4); and sometimes peaks over 100 (which is high). At best I'm operating at 60% normal energy. I've forgotten what it feels like to have a fever or not, so it's hard to tell unless I'm constantly checking my temp. Which fuels anxiety and depressive thoughts. I'm still rolling around my kitchen on a stool, because holding myself all the way up while doing dishes and light cooking (basically all I do anymore) is exhausting.

We have to unlearn what progress is.

Yes, I feel better than I did two weeks ago. Do I recognize myself more than I have over the past two weeks? Yes. But do I also recognize that self as different now? Hell yes. Do I understand it? No. With the exception of that one half day of Euphoria this weekend, have I ever felt better than good? No. I've not felt good at all. This all feels bad.

I've made some good soup, and I felt good about one of these posts, but I can't bring myself to reread it because I'm afraid of what my mania did. I felt good about some things, but then there are always aspects that don't feel good. And it's so much harder to ignore or over look those parts now. I have less patience for the parts that don't feel good. As I require more and more patience for myself, it's harder to practice it with others. I usually love surprises, even sometimes unpleasant ones, I find them exciting. But I can't handle them now because I'm just too tired.

Verifying my experiences with friends has become an important part of me checking my own reality. I still have a sense of humor, but I don't find any jokes about the coronavirus or our current moment funny at all. The absurdity of it all, though--that's hilarious!

I don't know what to do with this new layer, this residue that has taken up residency in me. It's going to leave me changed, I just don't completely know how yet. She feels more discerning. More quick to the quick. My listening skills are deepening. I do not feel like I've lost my mind, but I do think it's being rewired.

I'm listening to things I was previously unattuned. I am listening to other people's fear, to my own grief and emotional needs, to trees, and the ghost of someone I'd rather not be haunted by (but to whose soul I'm bound, so it's complicated). This sounds fucking crazy, but, like—anyone that's ever had an experience with a psychic or tarot or spirit knows that this too is real.

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I was feeling particularly heartbroken yesterday, and last night the cat called me outside to stand beneath the giant White Pine tree in the backyard. The wind was intense, the wind chimes symphonic, and the hammock billowing. It was warm.

I directed my attention upward to her impressive, playful, and protective boughs:

“You will break your own heart a million times. She will break it a million one.”

And then this morning, with warmth and lightness:

"You're nowhere near a million.”

D A Y 18

April 15, 2020

Today I'm feeling the most myself since this all began, and in a more balanced way. It feels good.

And yes! I see and acknowledge the irony of my text from yesterday about how everything felt bad and nothing at all feels good. This is the pattern of the last two and a half weeks: an unfun roller coaster with occasional reprieves.

And today we have good! Slightly better than ok (in a world where ok means surviving), but still far from better (in a world where better means very little anymore). But we have good! We also have several days worth of dishes and pots to wash, but the general vibe is good!

Yesterday, which began with that rather *melodramatic* post, turned into a day which turned into a night that found me feeling more relaxed and connected into myself. Still run down, but not run off the road. I felt seen and heard and validated by folks in my life, and that went a long way. Do that for the people you care about. Keep listening and reflecting. See them, and tell them you see them. It means a lot.

I found myself really working with that White Pine yesterday—in earnest, tenderly, and carefully. Really listening with reverence and trust. I've been getting to know White Pine in the last year in a very clumsy way, in ways I couldn't really understand; in ways that felt more like an energetic collision and less like a gift/lesson of healing. That dynamic is shifting. It feels good to have more understanding. I have deep gratitude for all those guiding and holding me here. It is deeper than I have language.

In recent months/weeks, I've been working on relaxing my grip around the many things to which I've been holding tightly. Examining my scarcity mentality, poverty mindset, and fear. I started this work many months before we came into isolation; and have been actively, clumsily

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working with these themes for about a year. As a result of the great exhaustion that this virus has brought into my emotional, mental, and physical body; I'm finally actually letting go of so much right now. Just relaxing the grip all the way. I'm a person who doesn't know how to fully relax ever—so this has ironically been work! Until I had no choice, because I had no strength or will to hold any more. So we'll see what falls away, and we'll see what eventually returns—full of breath and life. Whatever will happen will happen.

As part of this work, I'm finally drawing up firmer personal boundaries for myself, for maybe the first time in my life. It has been very scary, and as my closest friends will know: painful. But today there is ease in myself in knowing what I can control: the limits of my own expectations. It's a balance of surrender and protective knowing that feels new. It feels like a product of time.

Like a cocoon.

It's certainly a time of transformation. Doing my best to relax into trust that change will come. That if I survive, I will emerge. And that when I emerge, it will be different.

The change is already underway.

There is no going back once you've entered the cocoon.

D A Y 19

April 16, 2020

A later post today because I actually managed to have a somewhat normal day feeling like a somewhat normal human! I taught, I emailed, I cooked, I cleaned, I read some news, fantasized about my summer syllabus and some community programming, connected with friends, and still feel like a human being. WOWZA!

I'm still taking it quite easy, but I was able to do all of these things easily today without accessing emergency energy reserves. I may even join one (or two!) social ZOOM events tonight. WHAT?!?! This was inconceivable prior to today.

I cannot believe that nearly three weeks has passed since becoming ill. When I look at the cat hair in the corners of my stairwell, I believe it. When I see the dust gathering on my window sills, I believe it. But beyond the indexical residue of time; time has pretty much ceased to have meaning these last few weeks. But I have only started to see the dust and dust bunnies today, so maybe I'm finally coming out of this. Maybe I wasn't meant to see or feel time until now.

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I had a really wild and scary dream last night. In it, I was overcome and thrashed by a very dark energy. I managed to recognize it and shake it off. I woke up screaming and with a sore throat; but I also felt... better.

In acknowledging how much more "normal" I feel today, I'm also accepting how sick I've actually been. People have been reflecting to me that I've been really sick based on my posts-- and I'm always surprised at how bad it sounds. Honestly, I think there is part of me that never recognized or accepted how sick I was as a coping mechanism to get through it. When I write these things in my own voice, I imagine the delivery as almost... funny. When I talk to people on the phone or through a closed window, there's always laughter and funny faces. With the exception of one spiral, the spirits remain high. I'm bummed to hear that doesn't translate to this format, as I guess the content is pretty grim. But, anyways, I'm sure plenty of us are dissociating and distancing in order to survive right now. This all really sucks, and honestly for the first time in my life, I have felt so overwhelmed and exhausted that I couldn't fully face my life. It has been a humbling, enlightening, and hilarious lesson in empathy. It is possible that this moment, this experience, could crush your spirit. But it also doesn't have to. BA DUM CHING!

Staying connected to myself through writing (even if I have no memory of what I've written, which is very strange for me!); and staying connected with friends and family (even if I sometimes felt annoyed about it) has been so important in these weeks. As has staying hydrated, resting, and fueling and supporting my body with good food, liquids, and herbal/homeopathic support.

Today in class, we did a bunch of cute things that actually felt very, very big. Our conversation centered around a few chapters of Rebecca Solnit's "Wanderlust: A History of It Walking," which I really recommend right now (I also recommend her book on victory gardens, or really any of her books). At one point, I asked for the international students in my class (three very bright women hailing from China and Western Asia) to reflect on how they see this moment unfolding. The thing they all reflected on was the blatant disregard for human life in American culture. They could not believe that people would refuse to wear masks, because masks save lives. They could not believe that politicians would sacrifice the elderly for the economy. They could not believe that American culture could imagine a democracy or an economy that didn't include human life.

They articulated:

There is no economy or democracy without people.

They asked:

Why would you choose not to do simple things that save lives?

Why would you not value life?

D A Y 20

April 17, 2020

Day three of feeling much better, hoping this feeling is here to stay. Still not back to 100—I think that's still probably at least a week or month away. But safe to say I'm feeling myself, and that feels great.

A photo from the only time I left my house in past 20 days: April 6, 2020. It was my second attempt to get tested (which was ordered by my doctor, and then refused at the clinic). I tore open my achilles on the way out the door. Still healing, doing ok.

D A Y 21

April 18, 2020

Without fail, for the last three weeks, I spike a fever of about 100 every Friday night right before Queerantime starts. It could be the energy I exert arranging pillows or putting on fun clothes-- but who knows. It's the highest my fever ever gets, and the only time it gets so high. Sometimes after days of feeling fine. And then, as it did last week, after 4 hours of dropping into my body and shaking my ass to EDM: it drops into the 95s. And today I feel ok, but I still have a low grade fever.

The thing that was different about last night was that, having now emerged from my own little sickness cocoon, I was able to perceive everyone else's energy holistically again. I have only been able to read surface interactions since falling sick (which have been generous, kind, caring, curious, and such a gift), but not the unspoken underneath.

And that energy is so heavy right now. So hard. Existential exhaustion. Deep sad.

I actually had these feelings in moments inside the container of this weird gathering the first few weeks-- and friends who hadn't yet started feeling the depth of this held the space in those moments I felt overcome with the deep sad that so many now feel themselves in.

It's so strange to now feel like I've awoken from a nightmare feeling somewhat rested and grounded, only to realize that you and everyone else is still in it.

I was reading the words of a teacher of mine, who I respect but sometimes disagree with-- and he was writing on how now is the time time to do away with the cult of fun.

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But fun isn't easy. At times like this, it's a choice. There's real work happening here, especially in this context. To insist on holding space for dropping out of your mind and into your body for an hour or two a week (or day) is a radical act of survival. It's a barometer for what your body feels like. For what your energy is. It's the opportunity to make a decision for how you're going to care for yourself this week. It's a choice to make a choice. It's an opportunity to feel and remember, however that shows up.

It's hard to explain until you feel it. There are relationships being deepened, clarified, nurtured, and fomented. To the self, others.

After sharing some of these feels this morning, a friend expressed they too had similar feelings of "WHAT AM I DOING?" while dancing last night, in ways that felt hollow and empty. I have these every single week. But I look good doing it. And something in that feels shallow, but another part of it feels deeply authentic: to be able to feel the depths of the sadness of my interior while recognizing my own painted face feels somehow profound. Honest.

The mask is not a distraction but a window. A gesture of survival. A conscious public face. A radical acceptance and performance of what a public face now looks like.

Many of us choose not to have a public face right now, and that's ok. We all have masks, and we now have the choice to put one on when we go out into the world; or to not put one on and stay inside.

So, for those of us that continue to choose to have a public face right now:

What's your mask?

What's underneath?

D A Y 22

April 19, 2020

Had a pretty full yesterday, doing things that fuel me: Yoga, grilling food, cleaned the bathroom, shaved my legs, connected with many people I care about, listened to things out of curiosity and fun, and finally thought carefully about some things that vexed me under the spell of the virus. Still having some memory and brain fog issues, still setting alarms to remember to eat and check the stove—but it's not as bad as it has been. Listening to Fiona Apple's new album on repeat, and I swear it gets better with every listen. I've been spending more time upside down—which feels about right. Slowly returning to feeling more normal; though the temp continues to vacillate in ways that feel disorienting and exhausting.

I remember thinking “that is such a long time to be dealing with a fever,” when I heard a friend was still dealing with one three weeks in. It is. It is long enough to both feel your reality shift, and to question if your experience is even real. Its nice to begin to recognize my energy again, but frustrating to wonder if I’ll ever forget the tightness in my chest or the deep fatigue of my flesh.

Once I got sick, I wasn’t afraid anymore. Still sitting in deep unknowing, and doing my best to conjure more patience than I’ve ever conceived as possible. Patience is an act of hope tied to surrender. It’s a confident gesture of trusting in time—which, as we’ve learned, is flexible and changing.

It’s now mandated that all New Yorkers wear face masks in public. Businesses will remain closed through at least May 15. We’re half way in, half way out of this current cycle of waiting and unknowing. 30 days is enough time to change behavioral patterns. It’s also enough time to wither in harmful habits and habitats. I’m asking my students to become more conscious around one thing they’re already choosing to do every day for the next two weeks. What kind of practice do you want to build?

I expect it’s going to be a lonely, dangerous summer. My wish is that we replace the fear of this virus with respect for it. It’s powerful. The earth has brought us to our knees.

I’m feeling like these daily posts are likely going to start receding. As my ability to focus increases, I’d like to start focusing my writing energy into a new project. I have deep gratitude for all that have held space for me through this process. Your support and curiosity is immense and beautiful.

I’ll continue on for as long as I can, and will keep sharing resources. When I have a little more distance, I intend to make a bit more sense from these long texts at some point. But for now, I know I’m going to need some space from this version of myself.

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Below is some of the best reporting I’ve found on COVID19 from a scientific perspective. SCIENCE magazine is covering the virus, supported by the Pulitzer Center. I recommend checking out their reporting and resources. We know so little, but this helps.

https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/04/how-does-coronavirus-kill-clinicians-trace-ferocious-rampage-through-body-brain-toes?fbclid=IwAR1rbgT_OjC6IYNjWPEdxeud56IjcrhlHdWHImGdi4eZQdeginde5HFRL8

D A Y 31

April 28, 2020

Hey Folks. It's been 31 days since I fell ill. Still haven't been tested, but apparently that's supposed to get easier. I'll be looking into it, but I've been more focused on moving on with my life (in ways that extend far beyond recovering from this illness alone).

This past week, I finally feel like I'm returning to who I know myself to be. I also feel different in ways I don't yet fully understand: freer, clearer, softer, more open. Friends comment that I sound like myself again. I experience joy, and am even starting to return to my old bad habits (which feels annoying and also great!).

All of the symptoms have receded, though I do still have a sticky tightness/soreness in my "back body heart center" (just beneath my shoulder blades at the spine). Sometimes it creeps around to my sternum. Still working with plant medicine to soothe, support, and repair my nervous system and heart. Doing lots of spiritual work too, which is something I'm convinced we must all begin taking seriously, in earnest. When I say spiritual I mean: our connection and relationship to ourselves, each other, the earth, plants, animals, ancestors, and all animate and inanimate beings sprung from woman, earth, seed, time, pressure, sun, darkness, and whatever magic it is that makes life on this planet possible.

Because I've gotten questions about the 22 days of posts I made when I was more ill, I decided to compile them into a single PDF. It's meant to be a reference, and I'll eventually clean it up. I don't have the energy to deal with it now, but I want it to be more accessible. There are a lot of words! 19,545 to be exact! I haven't edited or formatted them beyond copying and pasting them from facebook. But in time, hopefully. I hope this is helpful.