

SIGMA TAU DELTA
CAYEY STUDENTS WRITE



**LIFE DURING A
PANDEMIC**

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Winter newsletter submission "1st
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ISSUE: JUNE 2021

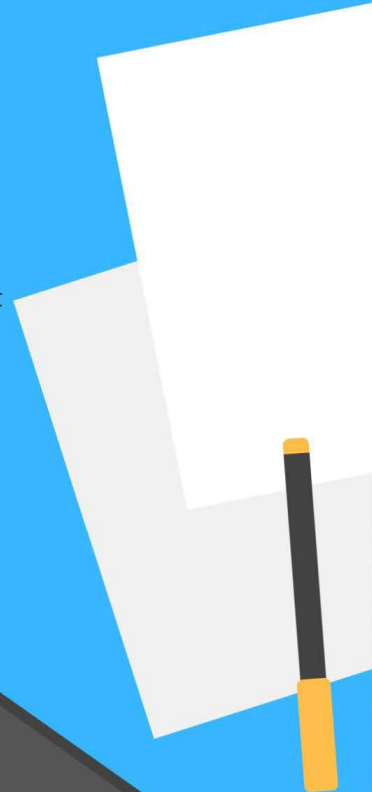
AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR...

For a second straight year the editorial board of the Alpha Zeta Alpha chapter of Sigma Tau Delta closes out the year producing another issue of our (the English Department's) Cayey Students Write creative newsletter at the end of a second anomalous academic term. One distinguished by being conducted completely via remote-mode instruction, administration, and even extracurricular activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruption of physical and social interaction and contact in this new reality of endless hours in front of computers and/or cell phones, and life in isolation for many, altered everyone's world, especially those of us at the university during 2020-2021. For the first time we went through a year where we hardly really saw each other, except by camera, avatars or initials on a screen; where we held highly anticipated activities virtually or as masked, drive-bys-to think that a few years ago to mention such a term brought ideas of violence, tragic shootings, and criminal activities; walking into a bank masked and asking/demanding money, of course, your own, hopefully!-yet now these are the norm. We experienced the first virtually-transmitted Dean's List ceremony. Now we anxiously await an in-person graduation ceremony for two cohorts this July, the Classes of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021-while still uncertain if it will come to fruition (crossed fingers), while uncertain about how many members of these outgoing classes will attend amidst the restrictions that may still be required, conditions imposed, circumstances each graduate may have, or even their (dis)satisfaction with these proceedings- outside of our university's usual commencement setting, our beautiful campus, in lieu of the municipal baseball stadium, which may deter some participants.

In the midst of all of this, the student editors of Cayey Students Write, which for the first time is comprised of all graduate candidates, still came through with its annual issue, albeit a minute one, and similarly serving as a continuation, if not follow up, to the previous year's edition, under the theme of: Life During a Pandemic. They placed the call for papers early in the academic year, but only received a handful of submissions, extending the period for the entire year, and in the end coming up with the current issue consisting primarily of poems, artwork (drawings & paintings) and an essay related to the theme specifically or that reflects upon or recollects this abysmally-long period.

This issue contains six entries. Each one shares ideas that their creators reflected about during these trying times, expressing themselves regarding emotions ranging from anxiety, fear, anger, desperation, hopefulness, and even knowledge gained from such experience. We hope that you enjoy this issue of our creative newsletter, and that it may serve to make you reflect, recollect, identify, embrace, and share experiences that life during a pandemic may have brought to your lives and those of loved ones, as well.

**BY: DAVID LIZARDI
SIERRA**



Life During a Pandemic

by Lionelys Alsina Moreno

I remember those times when I could walk in public without using a face mask, the hugs received, and those friendly greetings when I met with my friends every day. Today those are just memories. Every time I go out, the only friends that hang out with me are my face mask and hand sanitizer. Talking about memories, the last hug I received was back at the beginning of 2020. I haven't seen my friends since the pandemic started. Everything has changed so drastically in our lives that we didn't notice how quick it was. We never expected that we were going to take virtual classes and that due to the pandemic, we weren't going to be able to see each other again in a classroom.

Before the pandemic, I remember saying that I wanted to travel more. Today I am afraid of traveling and of going to the supermarket. When I touch something at the supermarket, I immediately want to wash my hands. I don't remember having any of this fear before the pandemic. Life before the pandemic was completely different; now, we have to adapt ourselves to the present. Life during the pandemic is constantly not knowing when this is going to end. It's been more than a year, and we are still battling against an invisible enemy.

I never imagined how much the pandemic was going to change my whole life. At these times, we value our health, and protecting ourselves and our families is the most important thing. Before the pandemic, we didn't value our health in the same way as we do now. Being in our home during quarantine has made us think about how much our daily lives have changed and how privileged we are. After all, the most important thing is that we are healthy and that if we work together to protect ourselves, we can get over this pandemic soon.





Hopeless

What is this?
I'm lost in this abyss,
Alone, tired, nowhere...
I am a nobody,
Looking for that glimpse.
Where are you when I need you?
Did you forget me?
Shattered, depressed, anxious.
What should I do?
Pray?
Cry into numbness?
Shout to the void in my heart?
What you want me to do?
Please, answer me.
I'm lost once again...
Where is the light you promised me?
I am just waiting for your divine signal...
Even if I am lost,
You are there...
I am waiting for you.
I'm lost, but you found me.
There it is... Hope

BY LORRAINE CAÑO RUIZ

The March

BY: LYMELSIE APONTE RAMOS

January
February
March...

Time stopped... but the march began.

A march through a day
of routines and burnouts.
Day and night were alike,
and to save time,
marches to the fridge began
to fill up with ease,
but hunger was still there...
an end was not near.

A march to the news to update with
fear...

a monster that crawls inward
making us question our existence.
It felt like marching to a pit
that swallows us,
traps us in depressing darkness.
And wait! Don't you hear her footsteps?
It is our sister marching!
She took our loved one's hands in
solitude and lifted them.
Now they march a new march.



And maybe the virus-fiend that
crowned itself resilient,
took their lives.
But remember that the tiredness of
the marching,
also took the lives of many.
For us that stayed, we had to keep
marching.

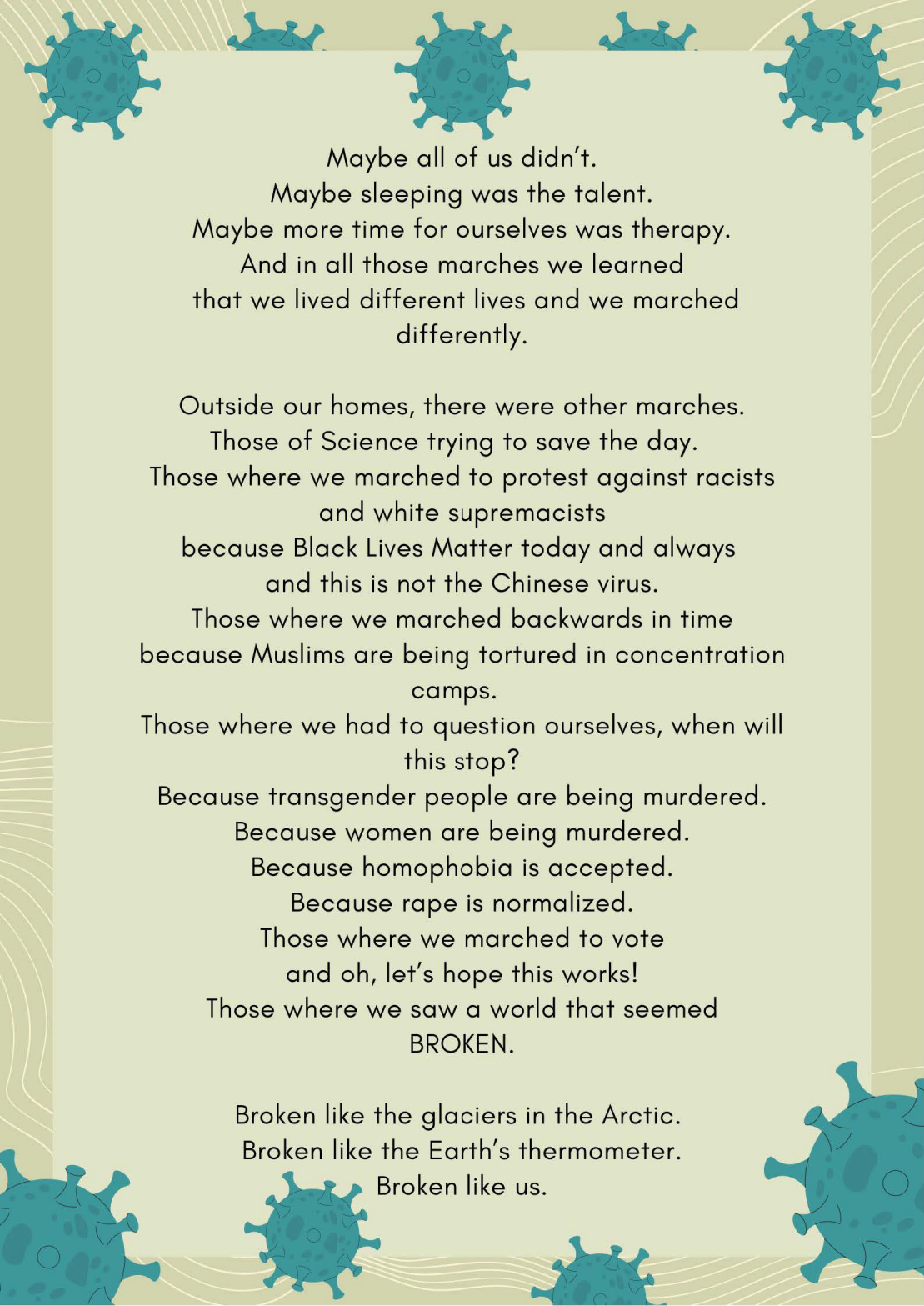
Through unemployment,
seeing our bank accounts empty,
then full, then empty again.
Through screens and laptops,
seeing our neurons stop marching.
Through anxiety and overthinking
each step of the process,
seeing us lose faith in the marching.

I was tired; you were tired.
But somehow, we danced.
We painted.

We learned a new language.
We opened a new business or at
least fantasized about it.
We finally swiped the dust out of
that instrument.

We developed new talents.
We fought that addiction.
We marched with honor.





Maybe all of us didn't.
Maybe sleeping was the talent.
Maybe more time for ourselves was therapy.
And in all those marches we learned
that we lived different lives and we marched
differently.

Outside our homes, there were other marches.
Those of Science trying to save the day.
Those where we marched to protest against racists
and white supremacists
because Black Lives Matter today and always
and this is not the Chinese virus.
Those where we marched backwards in time
because Muslims are being tortured in concentration
camps.
Those where we had to question ourselves, when will
this stop?
Because transgender people are being murdered.
Because women are being murdered.
Because homophobia is accepted.
Because rape is normalized.
Those where we marched to vote
and oh, let's hope this works!
Those where we saw a world that seemed
BROKEN.

Broken like the glaciers in the Arctic.
Broken like the Earth's thermometer.
Broken like us.



But with marching comes a new
perspective.

I refuse to live through a
pandemic to see this world...

Keep being broken.

Damn! What does it take to make
us understand that we must do
better?

No. We need to do better!

So many things to process,
but March is here again!

Vaccines are here...

Are we about to finish our march?

Look behind...

Look at how much we have
marched.

I am proud.

Now, look at our footprints in the
ground.

They mean something...

We are capable of keeping the
march,

when everything wanted to stop
our march.

Dear humanity,
this poem is for you.
We must know that...
Although powerful, we are
mortal.
And although mortal, we are
powerful.
Let's march for all and not
forget what we are marching
for.
A virus made us understand
that our divisions are the ones
that we need to fight
because they too are a
pandemic that we need to end.
Then, as one, we must keep
marching...



WHIRLWINDS

All over the world
and in any season,
that's when whirlwinds
take place.

Always expected,
with no certainty of when.
Always expected,
but never prepared.
Always expected
and always
damaging.

This whirlwind took a home,
crushed it.
Left only memories
in the shape of dust,
fallen trees and flooded roads.

This whirlwind took a home,
broke it down.
Left only sleepless nights
on cars and sidewalks lit up
by flashlights and uncertainty,
When will I sleep inside again?

This whirlwind took a home,
tore families apart.
Left only the dreaded routine
of staying home, staying safe.
Safe? What about sane?
Neither safe nor sane.

Now? We wait for the next whirlwind.

by A. M. H. L.



LIFE DURING A PANDEMIC



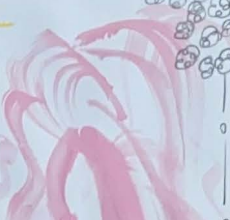
UP NEXT: ART BY FERMARIE RUIZ VÉLEZ



Jernarie



I just don't understand what I'm feeling right now...



I'm just tired

My head hurts

Good night

You're welcome

I appreciate you

I can't sleep



I LOVE YOU

I'm embarrassed

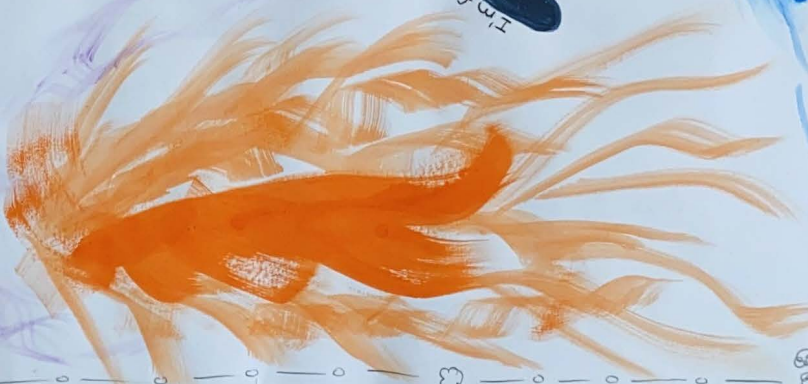
Good morning

Thank you

I'm okay

Talk to you later

I'm fine





Amorie



SIGMA TAU DELTA

JOLLY TIMES



Winter Newsletter

Submission by Paulette Aymée Correa Rosario

DECEMBER 2020

1st Christmas

LIKE MOST LOVE CASES,
THEY ALL HAVE AN ENDING.
ONE DAY YOU WAKE UP,
BOOM!
YOU'RE HAPPY, BUT SOMEHOW
SOMEWHERE, I ASK HOW?
HOW CAN I BE SO NAIVE?
CAN WE HELP SOMEHOW?
CAN I GO ANYWHERE?
IT'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT,
I'M SITTING HERE BESIDE YOU.
YOU'RE REAL.
I'M NOT DREAMING.
AM I BREATHING?
SOMETIMES I FEEL AS THOUGH,
DESERVING GOOD IS NOT,
SIMPLY NOT FOR ME.
STILL, LIKE MOST CASES,
ANXIETY KICKED IN,
I GUESS DUE TO COVID.
ONE DAY YOU WAKE UP,
BOOM!
YOU'RE SAD, BUT SOMEHOW
IT FEELS VERY REAL.
LOVE CASES LIKE MINE
ARE NOT AS NEAR
THAT SIMPLE.
SIMPLICITY MAKES YOU WANT,
YET I DON'T WANT THAT MUCH.
I GUESS JUST TO BE HAPPY
WITH ME.
MY LOVE CASE ENDED.



YOU LEFT,
BUT NOT REALLY, SEE.
I SEE YOU.
I HEAR YOUR LAUGH,
THE MANY LAUGHS YOU HAD.

IT'S CHRISTMAS NIGHT,
I HOPE YOU'RE PROUD OF ME.
I HOPE YOU FEEL ME BREATHE.
I CAN FEEL YOU.
BOOM!
I MISS YOU.
YET, NAIVE ME
FOR BELIEVING I DID NOT DESERVE.
YEAH, DESERVE GOOD.
I HAD YOU,
AND YOU WERE GOOD.
THANK YOU FOR
HELPING ME BREATHE.
EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT HERE,
ON THIS VERY FIRST
CHRISTMAS DAY.

By Paulette Aymée Correa Rosario

