

the world that emerged in my mind

in my empty mind

p

delicate *flowers* grow u

roses and daisies

and small buttercups

we all long for each other

to be reunited with school

but our dreams c

r

a

s

h

and splash

like a jump in the pool

beyond the *flowers* in my head

lay **freshly - paved streets**

where we *used* to ride our bikes

now, remembering is bittersweet

i miss talking between classes

i miss the students and staff

this situation goes to show

we always want what we can't have.

memories

there was laughter, there was joy
it was all better than fine
we rehearsed for a play
that's set in 1969
we were a family full of members
jam-packed with **realtors** and surfers
like sisters and brothers
who hung out at Surfin' Burgers

but all of a sudden
the good times halted to a **stop**
we couldn't be with each other
let alone take home a silly prop
and from that moment on
all that we had left was **memories**
at the time i didn't know
if they would last seconds or centuries

some are **funny**

some are **sad**

some are **grateful**

some are **glad**

i could go on for hours and hours
since i'm not going anywhere in a hurry
but there's one word that will never describe those memories
and that word is blurry.

the sound of silence

HONK

WAIL

BEEP

VROOM

SCREECH

sounds that i rarely hear outside now
the sounds i hear now are more like this:

see? it's the sound of silence
the sound that could fill up the room
and stay there
like an enormous, heavy boulder
that you can't even try to move
stubborn and defiant
yet sadly, it's one of the main sounds our ears can listen to at this time
like a movie for your ears that plays on repeat all day
over
and
over
and
over again

“Silence”

the new movie directed by no one
starring every single person that is stuck inside

the small things

school

with the floors in the office
that make your steps sound different when you walk
more *CRISP*, more professional

school

with the *special* hand sanitizer in LL4
that smells like watermelon Jolly Ranchers
but still a little like chemicals

school

with the smell of fresh bread
w a f t i n g from the kindergarten classroom
that makes you count the periods you have left until lunch

school

with the teeny tiny auditorium
that still finds a way to **expand** on opening night
seating all of our family and friends

school

with the hallways
that keep impatient students
from **bursting** into an ongoing class

school

where we greet other people on the way to class
a “hi” or “hello” to teachers, a high five or a hug to other students

school

the place that you might love or not love
but i think we can all agree
we’re going to miss this place the most.

blub

blub

my goldfish rests in his bowl
he does this all day
despite his occasional swim
the slight movement in his fins
i wonder why all the people complain
about quarantine and isolation
yet my goldfish has been stuck inside his bowl
since we got him
he never complains
not a word
just a

blub

i think about
how people are dying
left and right
right and left
yet they have lived much longer
than my little goldfish
i think about
how my goldfish hasn't croaked
yet
he just sits there
in his bowl
he acts like he's playing dead
and i say playing
because i know he's not dead
and he knows too
but does he know
what's going on in the world?
i wonder.
he just sits.

our fate

we didn't expect anything

the school year was *breezing* by

it felt normal

regular, but better

average

and then we all heard the news

we rarely spoke about it

but other schools we knew of

were briefly closing

s l o w l y

one after the other

was this our fate?

no, it couldn't be.

and then one day

it was a normal

regular, but better

average

english class

when patti comes in

with a joyous expression on her face

and asks for the *Surf's Up* kids

to follow her d

o

w

n

so we go

blindly

not knowing what was happening

there we sat

in the **cold**, metal chairs

staring at our stage

that seemed empty and lifeless
without us on it
and there stood dr. fasano
and out of the blue
patti started to cry
silently
but we all watched as her eyes
turned **red** and **blotchy**
the tension arose in that auditorium
“due to the virus, you will not be able to perform tonight.”
i saw the way dr. fasano regretted saying that
as soon as the words escaped from his mouth
it took a while for it to sink in
but once it did
i felt the wet tears of yvonne on my shirt
who sat next to me
in the **cold**, metal chairs.
and one after the other
just like the closed schools
we were all in tears
some of us holding them in
others letting them rush out
like waterfalls
it was like someone had passed away
the spirit of *Surf's Up*
that was supposed to live on
for
one
more
night.
one
more
performance.

no title.

there are days

where my mind

is blank

vacant

unoccupied by everything and everyone

yet those days happen

more often now

because

there is nothing for me

to think about.

nothing

absolutely

.

groundhog day

groundhog day.

i don't think i will watch

because this is us right now

we relive the same day over and over again. and

it's not necessarily fun

we are **stuck inside**, and

we have to do school from our bedrooms instead of a building. in other words

it's not really fair that

we were just placed in this situation, and

there was no survey, no quiz suggesting if we wanted this

no one cared if we wanted this

and it is coming to an end, yet

it's only the start of middle school.

(now read from the bottom up)

tearing our world apart

thick air
that reeks of
citrus scented Clorox
nurses and doctors
frazzled and exhausted
the tiredness
visible on their
worn out faces
anxious friends and family
being still in the waiting room
patiently sitting
impatiently waiting
where minutes feel like hours
and bad news can crush you
hard
where the
no mask no service rule
has become a law
and where innocent elders
are most at risk
lucky infants and toddlers
will have no memory of this
situation
that is
tearing our world apart
STOMPing and POUNDing
CRUSHing and CRUNCHing
will we make it through?

one day

and then one day

i had a realization

a revelation

that could come true

if we wish

that we this will be over

it might be granted

it may sound wild

but think of all that

we are missing out on

school

the small things at school that we've never missed before

friends

moments of laughter and pain that you wouldn't want to share with anyone else

family

gatherings where you see family, even family you've never met but connect with immediately

summer

trips. late nights of celebration and talking non stop with the people that you love the most

do you really

want to let all those things

pass you by

?

like the blink of an eye

they will be gone

vanished

so

what's the harm of wishing?

Synopsis of *Stuck Inside*

I decided to write *Stuck Inside* as a book that can relate to everyone during this hard time. I wrote these poems in my perspective, so they can speak out to everyone, yet still have an even closer relation with myself. I purposely put them in an order that makes sense to read, so it starts off with quarantine first beginning. It then travels to me remembering the things we used to do before self isolation. That passion turns to anger, and after that, it's just me thinking about everything going on. The last poem is the breakthrough poem, that changes the story! *Stuck Inside* starts out with the longest poem in the book titled *our fate*. It's about my class and school hearing about other schools nearby closing temporarily because of the coronavirus, and not expecting it to happen to us. This was when the coronavirus wasn't too serious. The poem also shares the true story of when we found out that we wouldn't be able to perform *Surf's Up* for the last time, and how we reacted. The poem following after *our fate* is called *the small things*. This poem takes place on the same day as *our fate*, specifically when we had to leave the school for quarantine. It's centered around the little things I love about school that I hadn't paid close attention to before. The next poem I wrote is called *memories*. *memories* is about me remembering all the memories that I've made while being a part of the *Surf's Up* cast. I describe these memories using a ton of different adjectives, and this poem is definitely one of the poems in *Stuck Inside* that I resonate with the most! The fourth poem in my book is called *groundhog day*. It's about an old movie my mom told me about of the same name. She explained the concept, and I was shocked about how similar the real world is right now to the plot of the movie. In the poem, I talked about how I didn't need to watch the movie because we are basically living through it. A fun thing about *groundhog day* is that once you read it, you can also read it from the bottom up, and it makes sense! I think I had the most fun writing this poem. The next poem is titled *the sound of silence*. I think this poem is the one that was mainly influenced by Sharon Creech and her writing techniques, and you'll see why when you read it. *the sound of silence* is focused on me talking about all the different sounds that remind me of the city, but explaining that the main sound our ears listen to in quarantine is silence. This is a really relatable poem. The poem that follows *the sound of silence* is called *blub*. *blub*, being my favorite poem in the collection, is about me observing my goldfish,

and comparing him to things in the real world. An example of this is when I talk about how everyone is complaining about quarantine, but the goldfish has been stuck in his bowl ever since we got him. The title of this poem is supposed to sound like the noise a fish makes! I don't actually have a goldfish, and I wrote this poem inspired by how the character Luke in Sharon Creech's *Moo* thinks about things. The poem that comes after *blub* is *the world that emerged in my mind*. This poem was the first one I wrote, and it originally was for an English class assignment. I realized when I was putting together *Stuck Inside* that it fit perfectly with the theme I was writing about, so I added it. *the world that emerged in my mind* is about me dreaming about this world where nothing abnormal was going on, and that world just made me miss everything a whole lot more. The eighth poem in *Stuck Inside* is called *tearing the world apart*. It's a poem that talks about what the doctors and nurses are going through, and how this virus is tearing the world apart. The next poem in the collection is ironically titled *no title*. There really isn't a purpose of this poem, but it's about how sometimes, my mind just goes blank, unoccupied by everything and everyone. Where it's placed in the collection makes sense, and there is a hidden part to it that I think only a few people will figure out. Where I meant to write the word nothing, I actually left a space blank, to symbolize that there was nothing there. Get it? The final poem in *Stuck Inside* is titled *one day*. It's placed in the collection where the poems surrounding it are a little depressing, and I knew when I wrote *one day* that it had to go last. It's about how one day, I had a realization that if we wish that this was all over, it may come true. I list a few things that we are missing out on currently, and close out the poem and book by saying, "what's the harm of wishing?" This can also be interpreted as the message of the book, how wishing can put a dent in what you are trying to accomplish if you believe it will. In conclusion, *Stuck Inside* is a book that shares my experience throughout this wild time. I hope you enjoy reading it, and I hope that you can relate to this story!

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i n s i d e

by Daphne Tsarnas

