

WORD

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ISLA VISTA ARTS & CULTURE MAGAZINE



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free

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Friends,

What a long, interesting time this has been. At the time of our writing this at the start of June, COVID-19 is still having a profound impact on the way we are living—we are still under a mandatory stay-at-home order, although it appears as though the clouds are beginning to part in stages. We have no way of knowing what the world looks like as you're reading this, nor do we know if we'll ever return to the state of things we consider to be "normal", which is quite frankly a scary thought. But we do know that we still have a responsibility to ourselves and to those around us. Many have described this moment as something that we will later be able to find as a hefty chapter in a history textbook. With that said, we feel it's necessary to address the weight we all carry in writing out the days ahead of us as we use whatever platform we have with intent.

For this fall, the creators of *WORD* put together a truly unique issue. Never in the history of this magazine have we had to write, design, compile, and publish an issue entirely without seeing each other face-to-face. But allow us to say: we're awfully proud of it. Our writers tackled difficult topics with balance, sensitivity, and the occasional needed dash of humor. Our artists created compelling, talent-soaked work, like they always do. We reached out to our community to hear your voices and worked to include them under these strangely unifying circumstances, and we hope that in this space you will find encouragement in knowing that even in times of unprecedented uncertainty and turmoil, our community remains as strong as ever.

But our work is far from over. Though this issue was written before the start of yet another portion of this chapter, we would not be doing our due diligence for our community if we failed to acknowledge our immense grief and anger as we reckon with the recent killing of George Floyd as well as Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and many others. We stand in solidarity with our Black community and condemn the acts of hate, discrimination, and injustice that still manage to taint our country because of a corrupt system that refuses to see the humanity of Black people. We mourn with you, we support you, and we hope that the fire ignited within our country will not diminish, but be the fuel we need to create a more just future. We hope that the words we all write, truths we speak, and actions we take in this chapter, of 2020, will mark a turning point on the road to a better tomorrow, where we can all breathe, together.

We are used to fall being a time of new beginnings, though technically, it comes at the end of a year. We are left hoping that this season marks both a beginning and an end for us as a community of humans. Whatever you have ahead of you this year, know that we stand with you. Like so many other challenges we have faced, the only way through is together.

WORD Editors-in-Chief,
Hailey Gross & Michelle Politiski



Cover by Eileen Bettinger

UC SANTA BARBARA

THIS MORNING, I woke up in my room next to a window with a view of the ocean. I waved to my neighbors as I stepped out of the house to tend my garden and feed my cat. I'm so lucky to live where I do—my neighbors are all my friends, and we spend our days adventuring through our little beach town, listening to music together, and watching the sunset from our roofs. The days are warm and the nights are peaceful, unless a Creeper decides to wander too close and demolish the foundation of my home, or a Drowned crawls out of the ocean to stare at me menacingly through the window. Oh, yeah, this isn't IV—this is Minecraft.

The shelter-in-place order that came as a result of COVID-19 changed our lives instantaneously. Suddenly, people were searching for a way to connect with their friends from the safety of their homes. There is no way to replicate the experience of living in IV with your closest buds, but online Minecraft servers, multiplayer platforms of the popular open-world game, might offer us the next best thing.

Two major IV servers emerged from the pandemic: a Creative Mode server with a Survival section, and a smaller entirely Survival Mode server where players individually build homes and withstand the game's enemies, sometimes asking for help from other players if they need it. They are run by two different moderators and seem to serve two distinct purposes.

SURVIVING CREATIVELY

How Minecraft Servers Have Kept IV Together

WORDS // MICHELLE POLITISKI
PHOTOGRAPHY // LUKAS OLESINSKI
DESIGN // THERESA PHAN



Charles Kendo Neumann, a fourth-year Global Studies and Political Science double major who goes by the gamertag @LJN1970, is the founder and moderator of the Creative server. He made the server with the goal of building a replica of UCSB's campus and extending it into Isla Vista using the unlimited resources provided in Creative Mode.

"I created it to help create a virtual space to raise people's spirits and keep the UCSB student community connected throughout however long remote instruction will last," Neumann said. As I flew through the in-progress campus on the Creative server, some spots were unbuilt—a sign that said "Cheadle Hall" on a big empty lot; a random block of dirt meant to denote a placeholder; my personal favorite: a smattering of signs throughout campus that simply said "big tree." But I could tell that over the weeks the server had been up, there had been significant progress toward making this server feel like home.

The Survival server contrasts greatly. Players spawn in the middle of the jungle and must find their way out to where most people have set up camp—traversing rivers, deserts, and tundras. But the real fun is in earning everything you get from the "natural" world. John Makin, a fourth-year Chemistry major with the gamertag @Lszo, runs the Survival Mode server.

"I chose to make it a Survival server because I believe that is the mode that is most true to the game itself, and there were no other Survival servers strictly for UCSB students (and alumni) at the time. I saw a need for the server's creation and went with it," Makin said.

Neumann and Makin both pay out-of-pocket to host the servers with the accompanying plugins that make sure it runs smoothly. The groups who play each have Discord chat rooms, where players can talk to each other while they play or make plans for projects. The core purpose of these servers is to create a welcoming space for players of all skill levels who want a nonphysical place to connect with their peers. Part of a moderator's job is to regulate that space.



The writer, whose gamertag is @Smash_Fox6519, on "campus."


Makin elaborated, “I have to be online and checking the server frequently to ensure the safety of players’ hard work, and also to remove any potential threats to the safe environment that I strive to create and promote. We also have to be there to welcome any new players and make them feel right at home.”

For many college-aged people, Minecraft is nostalgic. When I first redownloaded the game onto my computer and realized my avatar still had the same emo-girl skin she had eight years ago, I flashed back to the late nights I used to spend as a preteen playing the game and building my world. Now, I get to do it all again with my friends.

“As a nine-year veteran Minecraft player I can see why Minecraft is so attractive during these times,” Neumann mused. “Minecraft is a game where you can do whatever you want, not only because of the game mechanics themselves, but also because

of the creativity and awesomeness of the larger global Minecraft community.”

There’s no doubt that COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on our lives—especially how we socialize. Everyone has their way of coping. Whether it’s calling your friends on Facetime every five minutes, eating food together in separate cars, or building a home together on Minecraft, it will do us good to try to stay connected. We are so accustomed to living in such proximity to each other in IV that the new limits on that closeness feel stifling.

As Makin put it, “IV brings people together in a way that is unique to our college town, and UCSB provides a backbone for this little community to stick together. Being at UCSB is one of the many things that residents have in common, and hopefully playing on the Minecraft server will be added to that list.” 

IP ADDRESSES TO THE SERVERS:

Creative: islavista.mc.gg

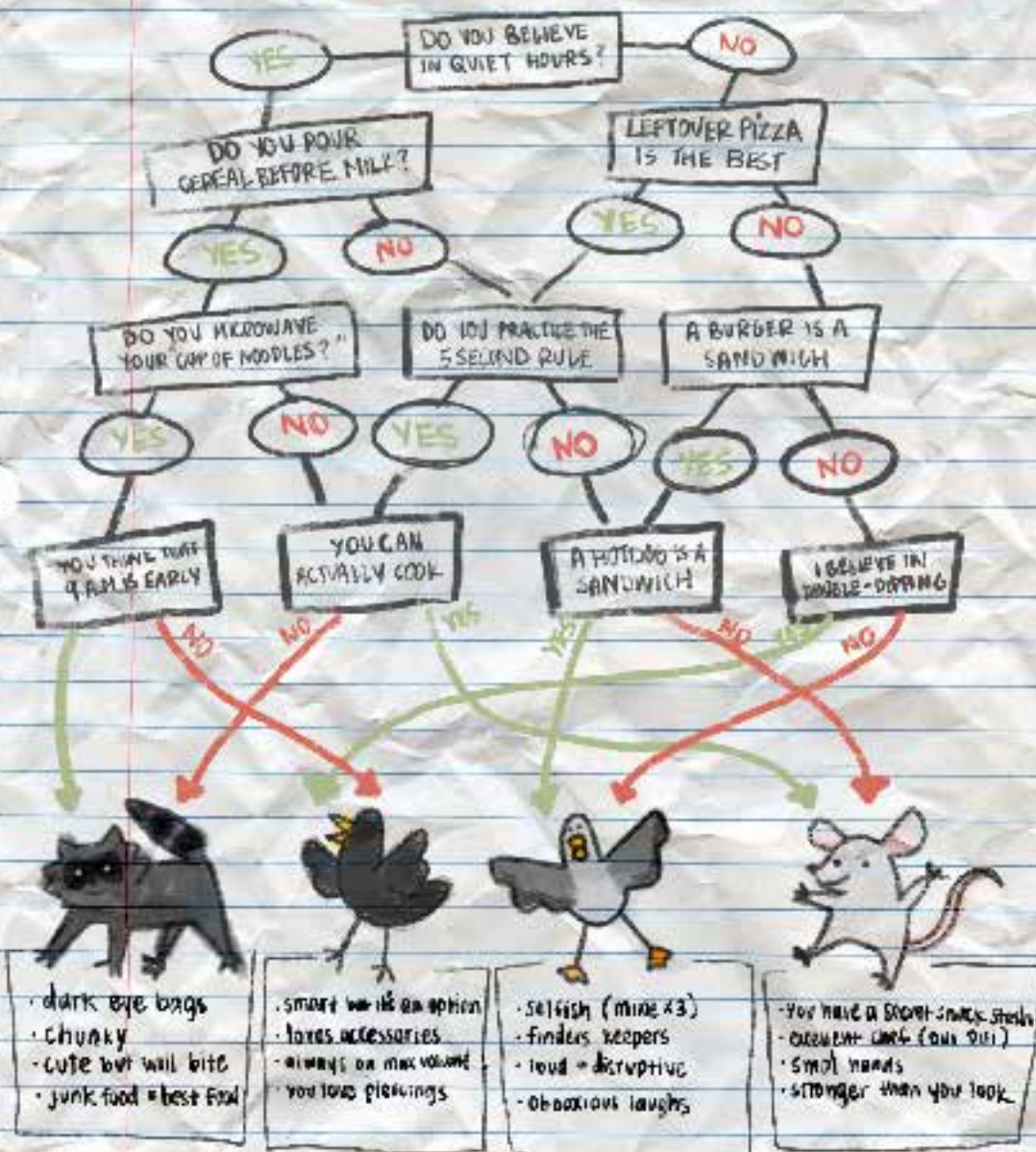
Survival: ucsb.mcs.cx

Oh, yeah, this isn’t IV—
this is Minecraft.



WHAT IV ANIMAL ARE YOU?

ILLUSTRATION // PHOEBE JIM + THERESA THAM



QUARANTINED EVER AFTER

How COVID-19 Impacts Dating + Hookup Culture in IV

WORDS // CHELSIE ALEXANDER
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ANNA MONZON



BEFORE CHAOS HIT, it was much easier to get laid. Known as a tiny beach town with beautiful people and a notorious hook-up and party culture, IV will always be a special place. With frequent parties within walking distance, and bedrooms even closer, hanging out and hooking up was easy, even convenient—especially during spring quarter, which is arguably the best 10 weeks of the year for Isla Vistans. Every day becomes a beach day, every party is a chance to meet new people, and everyone has a “Fuck it, this is the last quarter of the year, let’s get litt!” mentality. There are the lucky ones who meet their person, and for them, dating in IV is magical. Sunset beach dates and sleepovers can become a daily thing, and it’s easy for a month-long relationship to escalate to the intensity of a year. Anyone that’s lived here can tell you that hooking up or dating in IV is really fucking fun.

But at the end of last winter quarter, our lives were turned upside down. On March 10, 2020, Chancellor Yang confirmed via email that Spring quarter classes would be conducted online, urging students who could safely leave to go to our homes away from Isla Vista. No more going to parties just to see if your crush is there, no more lunch dates at The Habit, no more meeting up with the cute girl from class to “study”—nothing. For graduating seniors, the last chance to fully enjoy life in IV was cut short, and what should have been the best moments of our lives soon became the most uncertain. Our parties, our beach days, our last quarter of the year, our love lives—all ruined by a virus.

In deciding whether to leave IV, most people took into account what would be safer for them, physically and mentally. Some of us did not have a choice and were forced to spend the best quarter of the year in our hometowns. Those who stayed in IV now live in an alternate reality where Pardall is empty all day, everyone needs a mask, you can’t hug your friends when you run into them, and you haven’t



stepped foot on campus in weeks but go to the beach every day (socially distanced, of course).

However, for those in relationships, the choice was a lot more complicated. On top of the million other problems in the world due to the pandemic, people in relationships were forced to make a choice they were not expecting: whether to quarantine together, split up, or try long-distance.

For some couples, the effects of COVID-19 on daily life have been beneficial to the relationship, making them feel closer and more patient with each other as a result. One couple that had been dating for over a year at the time the pandemic blew up decided to quarantine together in Isla Vista. Because of the pandemic canceling most of their daily obligations, they were able to spend more quality time together and enjoy each other’s company and conversations without stressors from their normally busy lives. Quarantining together has helped some relationships grow stronger and made couples become even closer, creating bonds that would not happen ordinarily in IV.

But many couples have been forced to end things faster than they expected or wanted, because of the forced long-distance, uncertainties about the future, and the current state of the world. After three months of dating, Stacy* asked the guy she was seeing to become exclusive right before she had to go home for quarantine. He said yes, but after two weeks, he ended things because he couldn’t handle the distance.

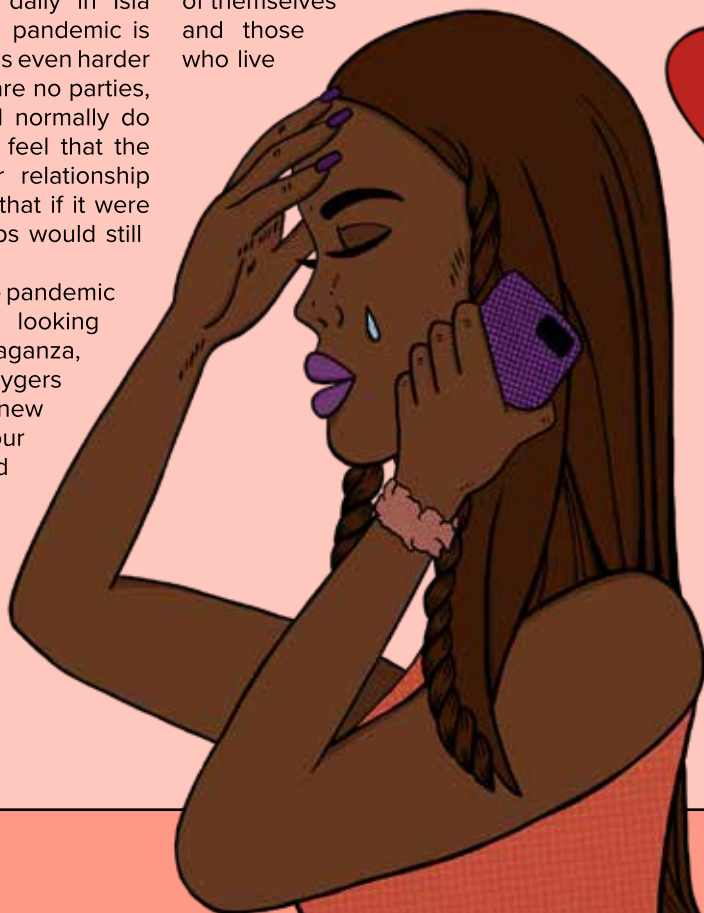
Another couple that was in a relationship for two years chose to quarantine together at her family's house for a month, and he became incredibly close with her and her family as a result. But suddenly, his family forced him to fly home out of state, and they've been separated ever since. After living together in IV for months, one couple, self-described as "basically an old married couple," were forced to sublet their places and temporarily move to their hometowns, suddenly torn apart with no idea of when they would see each other again. On top of the challenging separation, Sarah* has to deal with her homophobic family that has no idea of her sexuality, let alone her girlfriend's existence, which is a painfully hard adjustment all at once.

Dealing with long distance has been challenging for many couples, especially after growing accustomed to living with and seeing their partners daily in Isla Vista. Breaking up during a pandemic is incredibly rough and coping is even harder than before because there are no parties, events, or things we would normally do to distract ourselves. Many feel that the pandemic has ruined their relationship and wasted their time, and that if it were not for this their relationships would still be intact.

For single Isla Vistans, the pandemic hit differently. Many were looking forward to Deltopia, Extravaganza, and the numerous weekly daygers of spring quarter to meet new people, have fun after our year of hard work, and hopefully get laid. But now, there is nothing to look forward to after finishing assignments and exams,

and most singles are bored, lonely, and horny. Some have been hit up by their exes (because when is there a better time to think about your ex?), and others have slid into the DM's of those posting "stay-at-home" selfies. Some have been forced to stop seeing their fuck buddies, like Katie* who had to say goodbye to her friend-with-benefits of 2 years. After their last night together, he told her he was leaving that morning for his hometown in a different state, and that she would never see him again since he was graduating, losing both her good friend and an important character in her sex life.

Many have turned to dating apps as a way to flirt with new people while social distancing. Some are faced with the decision of breaking quarantine to meet, hang out, and potentially hook up, despite risking the health of themselves and those who live



with them. On top of that, with restaurants, bars, and most activities closed, date nights have had to get more creative. For two girls who met on Tinder, they had started sneaking out late at night to meet at the beach, secretly hiding their “dates” from their strict roommates with no idea if they’d be able to hang out at their homes anytime soon.

But for those who had literally *just* started talking to the person they had been into, it feels like the COVID-19 restrictions ruined everything. Eric*, who had been friends with a girl for about a year, started becoming close with her at the end of winter quarter and hanging out frequently. On the day classes got canceled, they spent their last night together before she left for her hometown, and have not seen each other since. The impacts of COVID-19 have forced singles to make

important decisions about their budding relationships much earlier than expected, like whether to maintain long-distance communication over the phone or give up talking entirely.

Essentially, the pandemic has, as one UCSB student puts it, “completely fucked things that were going super well at its most crucial step.” Many have had to adjust to talking to their quarantine crushes through text, Snapchat, FaceTime, or DM, which has been a difficult adjustment compared to the ease of hanging out in IV. However, many singles say that it’s been nice to have someone to flirt with during this pandemic, and having that “you’ve hooked up and you’re talking all the time but you’re obviously not dating or anything” relationship provides excitement and something to look forward to during these boring times.

So what does this mean for the future of dating and hooking up in IV? At the time of writing this, we have no idea how much longer this pandemic will be impacting our daily lives, with no end date of the COVID-19 restrictions and no indication of the long-term impacts. Though the state of your love life is not the first problem considered among the million other devastating impacts of the pandemic, it’s definitely on everyone’s mind. Humans need connections and interactions for their psychological well-being, and for the people of IV, the dramatic change in our social lives has been difficult. When will dating return to normal? When will we finally be able to hang out with our Tinder matches and quarantine crushes without feeling guilty and putting others at risk? When can we get laid again? No clue, but at least we’re all in it together. **W**

***all names in this article are fictional, but the stories are real.**



TIK-TOK

THE WINDOW TO THE GEN Z SOUL

WORDS // LINDA CHONG ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // JASMIN TAYPAN

THEY SAY THAT the eyes are the windows to the soul, and I say TikTok is the window to the Gen Z soul. I'm sure it all started when you witnessed the powerful magic of the "Renegade" that cast a spell on all girls of ages 15 to 22, compelling them to follow a combination of thrusts and twists. TikTok, they called it. The kids had been chanting its name, and you told yourself it was the devil. You vowed to never be caught in its grasp, as you pitifully watched your peers slowly get summoned by the app. "Is it really that fun?" you asked yourself, and you ironically downloaded it

with a promise to transcend your peers and be unwavering. Several months have passed, and you are not the same person as you used to be. You scroll for hours without noticing, you've found certain memes that now disrupt your cognitive routine, and lately you've even thought about contributing to the content. That is the power of TikTok, and this is the story of how we were all called to its darkness.

But all jokes aside, TikTok has exercised quite a large amount of influence in the young-adult life, providing content that inspires and alleviates mental exhaustion.



It's not just about the shits and gigs anymore, it's about speaking up and bringing out issues that should be talked about.

There's so much creativity and expression in TikTok, it's hard to deny the talents of our generation. Makeup and art have merged into an admirable alloy on the app, creating a new outlet for teens to express themselves. POVs cater to the chaotic cringey mind of the OG Wattpad audience while dance trends unite people in ways that feel like virtual collaboration. Life hacks introduce ways to thrive in a capitalistic world, revealing new discount codes or websites that make students feel less financially burdened. Who would've thought even lip-syncing to TV shows would gain popularity? Anything is possible here.

Clearly this app seeps Gen Z energy, which is exactly why it's thriving. It shows that we are creative, innovative, daring youngsters that are burdened by real issues of society. Users expose racism and the discrimination that still targets minorities. Women rant about patriarchal dominance and the queer community claims their rightful place as equal. It's not just about the shits and gigs anymore, it's about speaking up and bringing out issues that should be talked about. Teens are no longer denying their mental health struggles or body image insecurities, and as an audience we're acknowledging and alleviating the pain together.

Of course this neighborhood app is not a perfect world of support and love. Social media is not complete without people that hate, and people that call out the haters. There are countless videos of boys thirst-trapping and reminding us of female objectification. People make trends that aren't considerate of various social groups. But the thing is: the TikTok audience calls them out for it. The scrutiny of our generation goes beyond appearances and words, and I'd say the majority of us empathize with the sociological history of each culture, race, and gender. TikTok feels balanced and uniting in this way, and there's no better time to abuse the app than during our youth. **W**



TIK-STOP

TIKTOK BEING PROBLEMATIC

WORDS // JORDAN FINLEY

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // JASMIN TAYPAN

EVERY DAY the number of users on TikTok increases as people look for ways to both stay connected and combat boredom during quarantine. In terms of content, it has become a surrogate for Vine where people post comedy, celebrity encounters, parody, and follow trends in an attempt to go viral. With the ability to scroll endlessly on the coveted For You Page to find new dances, quarantine recipes, and thirsty edits of Timotheé Chalamet, TikTok seems at first to be the catalyst for creation of our generation.

The main flaw in the culture of needing to have “hype” and “clout” on the app is that TikTok has a very biased algorithm. It prioritizes the content on your For You Page—this content in turn is the content that goes viral. Trends started by big creators appear first, and once you like one of them, the algorithm recommends all of them. While this may seem harmless and merely annoying, a lot of the trends taking turns in the spotlight are very problematic and put users of the app at risk unbeknownst to them.

In early April, a makeup challenge began trending where people would upload posed “mugshots” they had taken. The makeup usually imitated heavy bruising, bloody noses and lips, framing flirty smiles accentuated by bling effects. With no trigger warning for use of fake blood and violence, users were exposed to endless videos that many felt were insensitive for glorifications of domestic violence and abuse. Some videos were even captioned: “What would I get arrested for?” and engaged



The main flaw in the culture of needing to have “hype” and “clout” on the app is that TikTok has a very biased algorithm.

with the community in the comments to imagine their crime. Additionally, since most of the creators uploading to the challenge were white, the trend also dismissed the racial bias and injustice not only in the prison system but [also in] the encounters with law enforcement that precede incarceration, where a mugshot would be taken. Facing backlash, some creators deleted their content, but the mugshot challenge has over 671 million views to date.

Other trends have come under fire for themes of sensitive subjects, such as the “where’s my Juul” trend, where makeup artists transform glam makeup looks into horror-clown makeup looks with flashing lights, grotesque latex effects, blood, and a screaming soundtrack about a girl looking for her Juul, which people think is making fun of nicotine addiction as well as being an uncalled-for jump scare. A short-lived dance trend has brought a TikTok star Nessa Barrett under fire, as she filmed herself twerking to a reading of the Qur’an and claimed she thought it was a “cute song.” And lastly, a cute new dance that started as a way to show off the stages of getting dressed in ceremonial attire for different cultures was quickly overrun by shirtless white boys who thrust their pelvises to the beat and get millions of likes for some reason.

Another rising trend is white creators using audios with the N word and getting praised for not saying or pretending to say it and then listing reasons why their followers shouldn’t. While this seems harmless at first glance, there is a difference between

speaking for minorities and speaking over them. About three weeks ago, I posted a TikTok commenting on how the app will delete my content that uses the N word for “violating community guidelines,” despite the fact that I am Black. Yet Tik-Tok will let white creators’ same content go viral, in turn paying them for their success. My video was not only immediately removed but I was also banned from the app for a month. While I could still watch and like others’ videos, I was unable to upload my own videos or comment on posts.

My ban was lifted early and I am now back on the app, but my ban was unappealable, meaning the next time my content is removed for violating guidelines I will automatically be banned for a longer time period. All for saying I should be able to say a word that belongs to my community and they should penalize the white creators who use the history of Black oppression for clout.

TikTok may seem like a fun way to pass the time and get creative, but for marginalized communities and those who have experienced trauma it serves as a way for popular creators to profit socially and financially off of triggers. **W**



THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

The Magic Kingdom is
now your living room!

WORDS // JORDAN FINLEY

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // CONNIE YOON

LOVE OF DISNEY connected me to my three older brothers. They are 11, 10, and 7 years apart from me, respectively. Growing up, as they were heading to college and walking me home from elementary school after they got out of high school classes, I was fortunate to always have a strong connection to them despite the age differences between us. Recently you could have found us going to midnight premieres of Star Wars movies, playing Kingdom Hearts, and trolling Disney Parks forums.

Disney allowed us to grow up as friends instead of just siblings. Our big family vacation we took when I was eleven years old was to Disney World and on a Disney Cruise for two weeks, and we'll still call each other to tell inside jokes from the trip. Disney parks and movies have always brought us together, and there's a magic within our family that's undeniable. I've grown up a self-proclaimed "DisNerd," and have been saving up and counting down the days until the parks re-open.

For the first time in my life and in the company's history, The Happiest Place On Earth is at home. Due to COVID-19, Disney Parks closed down domestically for only the fifth time since they opened, and it is the very first time all of the parks have been closed globally. While it is impossible to predict when the parks will actually reopen, Disneyland and Disney World are currently booking dates June 1,

2020 and beyond. People who had spring break and birthday trips to the Mouse are saddened to be stuck indoors instead of eating a turkey leg the size of their head, but there are a variety of ways people are engaging with the company's media and magic while in quarantine. Disney is not always a cost-friendly option for people, particularly low-income college students, so now is a good time to engage with their content in a way that is both entertaining and affordable.



Everyone and their mother suddenly turned into master DIY chefs since being at home. Seeing this, one way to bring Disney magic into your home is the release of favorite park recipes being posted on the official Disney Parks Blog, including the pineapple Dole Whip found in Adventureland, the grilled cheese

sold on Pixar Pier, New Orleans Square's Mickey-shaped beignets, and the churros from carts throughout the park. The recipes are accessible either through the Disney Parks Blog, or the pop-ups on the Disneyland App titled "Now You're Cooking With Disney Parks."

People are also creating their own versions of rides in their living rooms and backyards and posting them to Facebook and TikTok to keep magic alive in their homes. Owners of Jeep Wranglers have recreated Indiana Jones in their backyards and people with staircases have recreated indoor Pirates Of The Caribbean and Splash Mountain.

The most low commitment and low budget way to relive Disney magic is with a Disney+ subscription, but it does have more representation for some backgrounds than others. For example, Walt Disney adapted Rudyard Kipling's (the author of *The White Man's Burden*) novel *The Jungle Book* into a not-so-subtly-racist animated film and had a history of antisemitism that left him with

a complicated legacy. *Peter Pan* is also a notoriously racist film towards indigenous peoples. There are no Disney Princess movies with a Latinx princess, and the one Black Disney princess spends more time as an animal than a human. If you can overlook that, a Disney movie marathon is a great way to spend your free time with the family.

While I can't wait for the Disney Parks to reopen, I have to appreciate what the closure means for people worldwide. Despite multiple bankruptcies when being founded, Disney is now a billion dollar company that does not make its prices accessible for everyone, charging upwards of \$200 for Disneyland admission alone. For the first time ever, if you have access to the internet you can have equal access to the park as an annual passholder does. In light of this I believe that the parks are back to being the closest to Walt's original intent they've ever been as it forces the company and its guests to revert back to founding ideas of imagination, innovation, and connection. w



GIMME SHELTER

Student Housing Strategies in a Pandemic

WORDS // LOLA LEUTERIO ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // NICK SONG

IN THE LIVING room of a small, noisy, two-bedroom apartment, there is a bunk bed with a sheet hanging over the lower bunk. A piece of paper is taped to the frame, reading “DO NOT DISTURB.” Behind the sheet, Airol Ubas is studying molecular cellular developmental biology at Yale. Only, she isn’t at Yale—she is in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco, and she isn’t studying at the moment, because her unstable Wi-Fi is disconnecting and her siblings seem to be in a fight on the other side of the sheet. Ubas is in the middle of a quiz. Instead of yelling at her siblings to be quiet, she takes a deep breath and closes her laptop, knowing her conflict management skills are needed.

Ubas shares this apartment with her mother, sister, brother, cousin, aunt, uncle, and grandparents; she is used to a healthy dose of drama on a daily basis.

“Sometimes, in such small spaces with a lot of people, a lot of conflicts can happen—little fights here and there,” Ubas said. She never planned to take Yale classes from her home, but the outbreak of COVID-19 in mid-March forced her to fly back to the West Coast.

“When I went to Yale I was, for a lack of a better word, spoiled with having a quiet place, a desk, and privacy,” she said. “Those were things that were new to me. So when I got back here...I was not so used to the instability, you know—the unstable

Wi-Fi for homework, and the interruptions during Zoom lectures.” Ubas’ case may sound extreme, but situations like hers are common in the unprecedented era of coronavirus.

“There are more people that are housing insecure than you think at UCSB,” junior Rachel Smith said. “It looks like a lot of different things, but it is very relevant in [Isla Vista.]” Expecting students to complete their schoolwork from home has magnified struggles brought on by housing insecurity. While the decision was necessary, it has had far-reaching implications for college students across America, not excluding our student-dominated city of Isla Vista.

On Tuesday, March 11, at 2:59 p.m. Chancellor Henry Yang sent out a mass email to all UCSB students with the subject title “COVID-19 Response Update”. The third paragraph was written in bold: “Our campus will be transitioning to remote instruction for the remainder of Winter quarter and the start of the Spring quarter through at least the end of April.”

Apart from the whispers around campus and a not-quite-placeable feeling of unease in Isla Vista preceding the announcement, Yang’s email was unexpected, and many students were left in shock. Coronavirus had flooded media outlets for the past several weeks, but it seemed like more of a distant threat than

Rachel Smith



Airol Ubas



a real cause for alarm. Until that moment, Isla Vista had been entirely unaffected, detached from the encroaching worldwide crisis. Suddenly, the life of every student in America was on the verge of a huge shift—and the gravity of this shift was in no way equally distributed. For some, social experiences would suffer and boredom would set in fast, while for others, schoolwork itself would become a taxing struggle against unpredictable living environments.

Smith had just moved into a friend's laundry room when she received Yang's email. The room is small and crowded: she and her chihuahua, Penni, live there amidst a twin bed, the laundry machines, and a small plastic dresser. Due to the chaos of living with multiple other students, Smith does most of her homework in the room, on her bed. While it may seem less than ideal, Smith is grateful.

"To me," she said, "this feels great. I'm in a house, I have a real bed." Up until the outbreak, Smith had been living in her van, showering when she had a spare 50 minutes to get to the Recreational Center and back, eating Minute Rice, and doing homework in the dark after her lamp ran its routine 45 minutes before burning out.

"I lived out of a van for nine months and everyone just thought it was 'so cool.' Like yeah, maybe for traveling it's cool, but living day to day, being so busy, and

not knowing where you can get your next shower..." Smith trailed off. She began describing her housing struggle that began in her second year at SBCC, after moving out of Tropicana Gardens her freshman year. She and her roommates had been living in a house on Trigo Road, and around January they began searching for a house for the coming school year.

"One thing that hindered our search was trouble with our landlord/property manager," Smith said. "There were mushrooms that had started growing out of the ceiling near the showerhead in the bathroom. We called them and asked them to help but they didn't really send anyone out there. Then a bubble of water happened and water—rotten, disgusting water—started spraying out of our ceiling," she said. When the property manager finally arranged for someone to come and fix the bathroom, they left an uncovered 10x10 inch hole in the ceiling. "There was rotten drywall, rat feces, gross stuff would fall out of this hole onto us while we were showering. And they just didn't wanna help us, didn't wanna help us...and it got worse and worse. Eventually a rat fell out of the hole."

It was after this incident that Smith and one of her roommates decided on a housing alternative for the following year. The prospect of van life was appealing in

two ways: no rent payments, and no rats. Unfortunately, the reality of living in a van didn't exactly meet the two's expectations. Two months after Smith and her roommate moved into a van co-op in June, they decided it was negatively affecting their friendship.

"It was a very stressful situation and it was like camping, because we didn't have our van renovated at that point." Smith moved off the co-op at the same time that she began living in the van alone. During the summer months, it was manageable; she wasn't yet enrolled in classes, so she only needed to focus on work and renovating the van. Despite the relatively limited amount of responsibilities Smith faced at the time, she still felt like she was on the outskirts of life in Isla Vista.

"It gave me a great deal of imposter syndrome at the time. I was living in a van and going to this really nice institution—I felt like I didn't belong there," she recalled.

When daylight savings hit, Smith's discontentment intensified. Without the extra hours of daylight and with no efficient lamp, she was forced to go to sleep early after attempting to complete her homework through a hotspot connection in the dark. Her social life suffered.

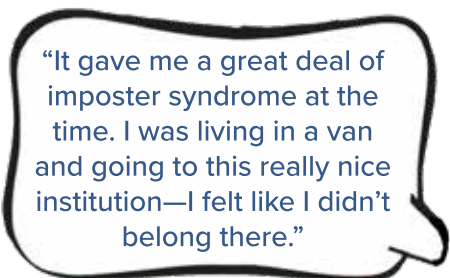
"[In Isla Vista,] there is a lot of privilege. People get to have all of their social time, so even before this, just with work and school, I felt like I wasn't able to spend as much time socializing as other people did." Smith continued talking, but it became hard to hear her over the sound of a dog yapping in the background. "That's Penni,"

she said, quieting her down. Penni, Smith's chihuahua, offered her companionship throughout her months of vanlife; yet she posed additional problems to Smith's living situation. "Winter quarter came and I was working full time, going to school full time, and I couldn't spend any extra time away from Penni, she obviously needed someone around."

Come March, Smith had reached her limit. "I don't want to make it sound like a sob story, but like, if you compare it to what normal college life is like, I don't know. It was a lot harder," she said.

According to a national survey from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 60% of college students face housing insecurity within a two-year period. With numbers so high, one would think highly esteemed colleges—like UC's, or Yale—would have abundant resources for struggling students.

At UCSB, there is help available. Outreach manager for IV Tenants Union, Trenten Francis, discussed the ways in which his organization has responded to housing insecurity amidst the pandemic. "During this crisis, we have adapted to offer online consultation through several platforms which allows tenants to get virtually face to face with a lawyer to address individual concerns," Francis said. "Tenants have faced a wide range of challenges but a lot of our legal support has been directed towards mediation between tenants and landlords, in terms of payment of rent and interpretation of the newly updated law for both parties."



"It gave me a great deal of imposter syndrome at the time. I was living in a van and going to this really nice institution—I felt like I didn't belong there."

As each of my sources corroborated, the pandemic is not affecting all students equally. “The consequences of housing insecurity extend into every aspect of life and place an unfair burden on students who are forced to sacrifice their education,” Trenten added.

Ubas shared a similar sentiment when discussing the resources, or lack thereof, Yale has provided to its students as of late. “There is a huge amount of inequality at Yale already. [Some] people grew up with more resources than others, and sometimes they just kind of have a step up because of their backgrounds. With the coronavirus, it seems like that all kind of intensified because it is no longer equal access to resources.”

Both Smith and Ubas agreed that professors themselves had offered the most direct support throughout their independent struggles with housing security. “When I felt my situation was really affecting how I would do in school, I would email my professors and let them know. Every time they were just personally supportive and they would send me links to resources and stuff like that,” Smith said.

However, while Smith and Ubas alike appreciated the understanding coming from their professors and the small attempts to make things easier, Smith found that many of the resources she had been offered were out of reach.

“It seemed like every support system out there, my situation wasn’t bad enough to qualify. Like, I spent hours trying to sign up for EBT and got denied. Because I had

“It seemed like every support system out there, my situation wasn’t bad enough to qualify.”

a job and was working full time, they didn’t think my situation was bad enough to receive help.”

There are many levels to housing insecurity. While living in a van, a laundry room, or a two bedroom apartment may not seem like much especially when compared to students facing true homelessness, a delve below the surface reveals countless hardships. These students face a disquieting in-between: not insecure enough to qualify for many resources, yet not secure enough to have an equal shot at their education. The COVID-19 crisis, as Ubas said, emphasizes these inequalities and multiplies the hardships.

Remember that Smith expressed gratitude for her little laundry room. Ubas never sounded defeated as she discussed her story, underscoring her lack of resentment towards her family and her situation. These two students, and so many others, are used to working against the odds for their education. The pandemic has shed light on these experiences, and we should try to learn from them. After all, when the current crisis passes, these students will still be fighting for their education—as they always have. **W**



WORLDS APART IN APARTMENT WORLDS

HOW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COPE WITH REMOTE LEARNING

WORDS // EILEEN BETTINGER

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ANNA MONZON

WHEN YOUR LIFE straddles opposite sides of the globe, isolation feels inescapable. For UCSB's international students, life during the pandemic is confined to a one-person room in Santa Catalina and the occasional solo run through Isla Vista. Connection with family and friends, now more valuable than ever, must be sought through a screen a few times a week. Alternatively, while returning to one's home country might foster closeness with family, drastic time differences cultivate a detached educational experience. Navigating a foreign academic system now through an unfamiliar remote format is a uniquely uncomfortable challenge. For Zoey Jia and Himawari Ono, adaptation is key.

In Santa Catalina, Zoey Jia has a room to herself. Like many other students living on-campus, she was required to relocate from her previous dorm when most of campus closed in March. While she vs in

place, Jia reads *The Nervous Condition* and plays the guitar. "At first, I did feel lonely because a lot of my friends went home to China or to the Bay Area, but now I've gotten used to being alone and I don't mind it so much," she said. Jia, a first-year pre-Global Studies major, is originally from Hangzhou, which is next to Shanghai. There, she attended an international high school and realized her curiosity for different educational approaches. "In China, a decent amount of value is placed on scores," said Jia. "This kind of policy is well suited for some students but I don't think it's good for me—I wanted to try other things," such a realization influenced her to study abroad at UCSB.

When the transition to remote instruction was announced, Jia chose to remain in Santa Barbara to avoid learning with a 15-hour time difference. However, many of her friends began searching for plane tickets home as soon as schools like UC



San Diego and UC Berkeley announced decisions to go remote. “Some of my friends even ended up purchasing five to six plane tickets because so many flights were canceled,” she recalled. Jia observed that, while there was a lot of anxiety at the end of winter quarter, students who stayed at school have gotten used to navigating the pandemic in Santa Barbara; some have even registered for summer sessions.

Jia hopes to return to Hangzhou in the summer. For now, she Facetimes with her parents three to four times a week. While choosing between live lectures and proximity to her family is far from ideal, Jia feels that this level of communication is working so far. She’s happy to hear that since COVID-19 cases have slowed in China, both her parents have been able to return to work. In the meantime, California remains on lockdown, yet Jia makes sure to step outside every day while practicing social distancing. As she jogs through Isla Vista, she is delighted to see that the college town isn’t as empty as she once thought. She sees some students barbecuing in their front yards while others walk their dogs. Aside from the masks everyone wears, such moments remind Jia of a more normal time. They also remind her that there are better days to come.

While students like Jia have been able to adjust to a modified landscape, others had no choice but to return home. Himawari Ono was living in Isla Vista with five other students from France, Bulgaria,

and Mexico when she was forced to return to Japan. She explains that she was planning on staying in Santa Barbara for the remainder of the year before the Japanese government mandated the return of all exchange students at the end of March. “I cried every day for a week,” she said. Ono, a third-year Global Studies major, had only been at UCSB for two quarters and was looking forward to being in a spring musical.

Despite the strict order to return home, other aspects of life in Tokyo remain fairly unregulated. Ono recalls no social distancing at the Japanese airport; she remembers passengers standing close together in line as they waited for their temperatures to be taken. “Initially the Japanese government did not urge



people to take the situation seriously,” said Ono. “They were supposed to have the Olympics this year so they tried to downplay the scope of things at first.”

While the government has since asked shops and restaurants to close, Ono reports no legal consequences for those who choose to stay open. Her mom is still required to attend her office for work so the household chores are split between Ono and her 19-year-old sister. They take turns with the laundry and the dishes, allowing each other time to tend to a full course load of remote instruction. This is where Ono faces most of her challenges.

With a 16-hour time difference, Ono often can't attend live lectures and must

watch recordings when she can. “It’s really difficult for me to feel connected and I tend to fall behind,” she explained. “Some professors understand my situation and they try to accommodate, but other professors don’t as much and I get graded negatively.” Although she tries emailing her teachers, the nature of email is a delayed response, so urgent questions go unanswered for several days. She also misses out on the verbal participation which helps her develop her English.

In fact, communicating with native English speakers is what inspired Ono to study abroad in the first place. “Every day I think about what things would be like if I stayed in IV or if the pandemic

hadn't happened. I imagine a kind of parallel universe." As she experiences these emotional setbacks, Ono looks to the Education Abroad Program Office for solace. During the pandemic, the office has proctored online workshops where exchange students can practice their English with EAP advisors. The online sessions also serve as a space for students to discuss the struggles they face in their home countries. For Ono, these have become vital resources. When not conversing with EAP advisors, she practices her English by watching "Friends" on Netflix.

Adapting to life back in Tokyo has been a trying, yet transformative process.

As time passes, Ono's distress has been mitigated by the familiarity of her hometown. "I have begun to feel more comfortable here. Now I can think about things from a logical perspective," she said. Practicing yoga has helped her to maintain physical and mental health and the extra hours at home have inspired Ono to value this time with herself. "I view this as an opportunity to prepare for a better life, study, and have time with family," she concluded. "It's a difficult time for a lot of people but individually, we all have ways we can focus on ourselves. Now I'm excited for the future when I can come back to the U.S and apply the new skills I've obtained during this time." **W**



QUARANTINE LIFE IN JAPAN

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // HIMAWARI ONO



Morning



Lectures



Sunrise



Lunch



Udon



Tempura



?

Night



Outfit



Video Call

Senko





INTRODUCING THE



ALBINO RACCOON



ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // THERESA PHAN + PHOEBE JIN
WORDS // MICHELLE POLITISKI

If you've been reading *WORD* for a while, you may have noticed that somewhere in each issue, there is an article called The Albino Raccoon. It's a running free-for-all column where one of our lucky writers gets to vent whatever grievances they have about some aspect of life in IV. The article is always illustrated by the unofficial-official mascot of *WORD*—a raccoon, but make him albino. Why? Who knows. But here he is, illustrated in every style you can think of. [W](#)

TRIPLE THREAT: BALANCING SCHOOL, WORK, AND PLAY

WORDS // MADISON KIRKPATRICK
PHOTOGRAPHY // LUKAS OLESINSKI
DESIGN // ANNA MONZON

THE REALITY FOR many college students is that many students are either as involved as possible, like most of my friends, or choose not to have any other commitments besides school, like some people I know. The choice of whether or not to be involved can stem from your personal need or desire to do multiple things. It depends on your ability to focus in school, your need to work, and other factors that are different for so many students.

As ironic as it sounds, going to school online can present more of a challenge to students deciding how much they should get involved. Some professors assume students have more time on their hands and thus have made adjustments to curriculum that reflect this belief. Now, I'm not specifically calling any certain professors out, and I'm not saying that

every professor does this. It's just that some professors haven't made a change. They're trying, they really are—but sometimes it's not enough. This causes students to make decisions that weren't as necessary beforehand, like whether or not they want to work or take another class. It was easy before to balance commitments, but now it's like we have to make unfair decisions.

This quarter, I'm taking 21 units because I flunked a major class (I know, shame). It's been hard. It's more difficult now than I experienced in fall quarter, but maybe because I'm taking more classes than usual. My professors are overall really nice, but when you have questions about the material and can't contact professors, or you have four papers and two quizzes due in one week, the load really starts to take its toll. A lot of my friends and classmates have experienced the same issues, so it's nice to know that we are in the same boat. I'm also the Campus Beat Reporter for The Bottom Line, something I joined last year when I was new to college and wanted to get involved with journalism. It's not the easiest job to have, but luckily, my editor is lenient and is cool with me or others taking a week off here and there to focus on school. I'm not the only one in this situation, so I feel reassured and supported. It helps that my editor is a student who has been equally impacted by this pandemic.

I'm part of a few other organizations, but those aren't too time-consuming, and I'm not working thanks to COVID. No, really, thank you. I probably would have died. Well, not literally, but it would have



Working is different than having to deal with the pandemic from a student perspective.

been a struggle. I'm definitely not the type of student who can just breeze through college without working. However, I'm fortunate to not have to work during a pandemic, unlike essential employees who are expected to risk their lives. Since I'm back home, I don't ask for a lot of money to begin with—there's nowhere to go right now. I've been trying to save since I do still have to pay rent for my apartment, but it's mandatory for me to pay and not something I could have gotten out of. I also get unemployment. I did get lucky that I don't have to work, but it is undeniably a weird situation—something that I'm not used to.

The other day, my dad got upset with me when I didn't answer the door for him. Little did he know, I was on a Zoom call and didn't hear the doorbell. You might be wondering how this relates to my story. I'm getting there. I was on the phone with him yesterday and I could tell he was a bit upset still, but I wasn't expecting his next comment.

"We know you're busy and shit, but you can still make time for your family." Thank God I wasn't on a Zoom call with him because he would've seen my face go tomato red. It must be so nice to assume this is all a vacation. My dad still works, but working is different than having to deal with the pandemic from a student perspective. He only has to deal with work, exercise, and cooking. I am sure that this is a lot for him to handle, but I won't know until I get to his position. From what I've heard from friends, this seems to happen to them as well. This is especially a difficult time for students and parents should realize that.

I'm usually the type of student who likes to be involved in everything. I crave forming new connections and learning new things. When I can't do something, I supplement with something else. When my dad shut down my plans to join a sorority, I joined a co-ed community service fraternity. When I didn't get into the professional writing minor, I threw



It feels like COVID-19 took that choice away from me. I want it back.

myself into even more writing and joined The Bottom Line. Obviously, being overly involved has its drawbacks, like loss of free time and the risk of burnout. Last quarter I almost burned out; it was scary and it took me quitting my job to get the break I didn't give myself. It makes me sad that some people never get this break, but it's a reality that some students will have no other choice but to balance, even during this difficult time. Being burnt out can also result in anxiety, fear, lack of sleep, and even feeling overwhelmed about everything you have to do. Students know this fear. As crazy as it sounds, though, I love it. Everything I've done in college has been rewarding and taught me a lot about myself; I've made great friends that couldn't be replaced. Overall, what I, as well as other students, decide to do in college is our choice. At least it should be. We all have things we want to do. I personally would like to be able to take 16 units, be involved in my fraternity, write a lot, and work, but I can't right now. I won't be able to again in undergrad, unless on the off chance things let up and we go back to school. It feels like COVID-19 took that choice away from me. I want it back. **W**



A

RAIN

CHECK

A SPRING WALK through campus is quiet. Bike paths, once flooded with students, possess an unfamiliar stillness while the often bustling UCen now assumes an abandoned quality. When Chancellor Yang announced a remote spring quarter in March, many students moved back home and prepared for a compromised education. Not long after, a statewide stay-at-home order mandated the closure of all but essential services on campus, and many student employees lost their jobs. For Gabriel Reyes, this meant losing a lifeline of income.

Reyes is a third-year Political Science major and Native American Studies minor. In addition to tackling two areas of study, he maintains two on-campus jobs to pay for rent, food, and half of his tuition. As a barista at the UCen Starbucks, Reyes

has come to know many of the staff as first-generation students, who, much like himself, also heavily rely on income from campus employment. When store operation fell into question amid campus closures, a frantic scramble for information ensued.

Reyes feels that better communication from the top down could have mitigated the panicked texts between employees. “We rely on this paycheck to sustain our livelihood,” he said. “It affected a lot of people mentally.” Poor communication also struck when the UC Board of Regents attempted to allocate money for administrative leave.

The intention was to assist campus employees by providing additional money determined by the average number of hours worked in a bi-weekly period.



FOR

STUDENT

JOBS...

WORDS // EILEEN BETTINGER
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // KAT SHEN

However, this financial assistance was only based on scheduled work hours. So, students like Reyes who picked up extra hours in their spare time were allocated a disproportionately small amount of money. “I would get my hours up to at least 15 a week, but I was only compensated for the 10 hours I was scheduled for,” he said. “This disparity wasn’t initially made clear.”

Unfortunately, job suspension from Starbucks was the first of several challenges Reyes faced during the weeks heading into spring break. He also works as the Cultural Arts and Lectures Coordinator on the Associated Students Program Board. The board, which puts on free live events including lectures, films, and concerts, quickly found that it too could no longer operate under social

distancing measures, placing Reyes and many other students in a state of total unemployment. This all unfolded finals week, during which Reyes had three 8-10 page essays to grind out and a final exam.

“This was before things started becoming optional and deadlines were extended,” Reyes explained. “So I was trying to figure out my life in the middle of the most chaotic week of the quarter.” He also disclosed that he is immunocompromised, which undoubtedly compounded his anxiety as the pandemic worsened. Although some of his deadlines were later pushed back, he was forced to file for incompletion in an Anthropology course, despite informing the professor of his financial self-reliance and compromised immune system.

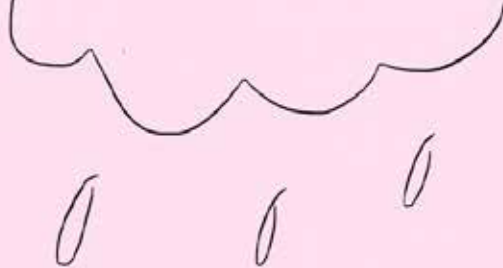


While the pandemic has undoubtedly left many students with major financial setbacks, Reyes feels as though his loss of employment took more of an emotional toll than anything. “I was so emotionally invested in both my jobs, especially Program Board. The events that I put on are kind of like my babies,” he said. “We were planning to kind of end the year with a bang in terms of what we had in mind for spring events like Extravaganza, so it was extremely difficult to receive an email telling us to halt our progress and cancel everything.” Reyes still lives in Isla Vista and says that he’s had to re-assess how he spends his money. This means re-prioritizing what he truly needs and what he can sacrifice. He adds that the resources in IV like the AS Food Bank and the available funds from the Isla Vista Tenants Union are incredibly helpful alternatives during this time.

The AS Program Board has recently looked into remote operation, doing its best to engage students with artists and comedians through Zoom. Reyes still attends virtual meetings every week and the organization continues to maintain a presence on social media. Because the student lock-in fees that fund the board are collected at the beginning of the year, there is still a budget for the remainder of the quarter. Now the board is working to decide how that money should be used—considering that it will no longer be going toward live events. The board is also re-assessing how to possibly pay remote employees. Previously, board members would get paid based on the number of events hosted, but now, hosting such events is no longer an option.

“It’s the ambiguity that makes everything that much worse because we don’t know how long this is going to

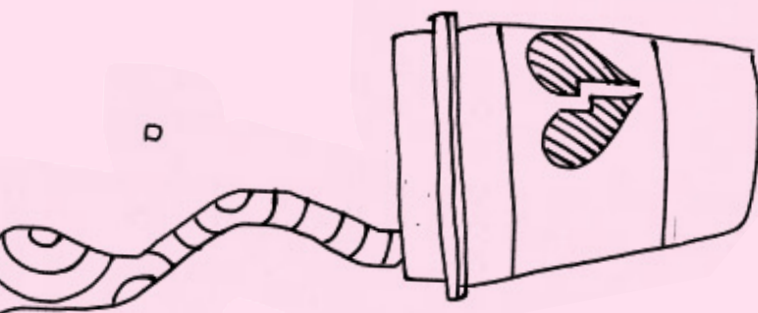




happen,” Reyes explained. “We don’t know the next time we’ll be able to have a live event. I heard the music industry and related fields are going to remain affected until 2021.”

Despite the possibility of remote work, Reyes clarifies that working for the AS Program Board is more than just a job. The collective effort behind hosting school events has allowed the Program Board to evolve into a connected community. “Whether we’re together in office hours or waking up at 6 a.m. for a show and going to bed at 2 a.m. the next day,” he reminisced, “we’re all such like-minded people in the sense that we want to bring entertainment to the student body.” The events hosted by the board serve as safe spaces to those who seek alternatives to the party scene in IV—with a diverse selection of artists matching the wide-ranging interests of a diverse student population.

For Reyes, the AS Program Board fuels his interest in the music world while allowing him to apply his knowledge of different cultures. Unfortunately, remote operation can’t recreate these social and educational spaces. “I can dwell on it and be sad about it, but the shared experience I have with not only my friends, but also with the general school community reminds me that—this is way bigger than just us—and that while it has affected us, we need to find ways to compromise with the university.” Reyes regularly connects with friends through Starbucks and AS Program Board group chats which help to restore the constant sense of involvement he once felt. This contact is particularly comforting in regards to the Associated Students Program Board, a consuming yet invigorating enterprise. “You can put in hours of work but you can’t clock out of Program Board.” **W**



IF SHAKESPEARE COULD DO IT, WHY CAN'T I?

*A Productivity Lament
from Quarantine*

ALBINO RACCOON

WORDS // JANET WANG
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // EMILY SCHWAB

“JUST A REMINDER that when Shakespeare was quarantined because of the plague, he wrote *King Lear*,” @rosannecash tweeted on March 13, 2020. Well, good for Shakespeare and all 253,000 people that liked the tweet and marvel at his achievement.

As for me, I’m happy to share what I’ve been up to during quarantine. After hastily packing fragments of my Isla Vista home into my Honda Civic and leaving my beachside haven to return home, I started feeling really inspired. For one, I could barely get myself out of my room during the first week, so I distracted my lack of will with sappy television dramas. I binged through three seasons of “*This Is Us*” in four days and managed to cry only every other episode while shuffling between late-night snacks.

So yeah, I’m doing comparably well to Shakespeare—take that!

To say the least, I haven’t been operating at my normal productivity this quarantine, and I know many people can relate. But what’s up with this weird slump?

According to neuroscientist Dean Burnett, being stressed about the lockdown and pandemic triggers a fight-or-flight response that impedes our normal physical and mental functions. In other words, our bodies are constantly feeling threatened, and the physiological response from that can lead to a range of emotions from feeling anxious to scatterbrained.

Beyond the physiological response, coronavirus and its byproduct, quarantine, have put a sudden halt in our usual routines. As college students, our lives are anchored to hour-by-hour schedules that expect us in class, at work, studying,



or socializing. Being able to stop by The Arbor for a Yerba Mate on the way to the library or sitting on the UCen lawn in between classes seem like simple luxuries of the past. Essentially, we're used to having control of doing what we want, where we want, whenever we want—and social distancing just doesn't agree with that. We're left to grapple with making sense of sustaining normalcy while being confined in our homes.

Some may call it looking for a silver lining, but I call it justifying a toxic work culture and a never-ending cycle of productivity.

Maybe our discomfort in the disruption also stems from the demand for productivity in our work culture. Take @rosannecash's tweet, for example. Though encouragement to some, this reminder instructs us to continue pushing, producing, and to capitalize on this break from our normal obligations.

Some may call it looking for a silver lining, but I call it justifying a toxic work culture and a never-ending cycle of productivity. I'm not saying that laying around and ignoring any obligations is the way to go, but I am confident that not everyone will experience sudden creative, productive epiphanies—and that's okay.

We're so rooted in productivity that even when a disease rampages through the population, and we're forced to watch our every move and stay inside, our society finds a way to perpetuate this mentality indoors. One aspect of our work culture, I'd argue, never encourages us to truly rest and reflect. What I mean is this: how many times do we really check-in with our mental health, or emotions, and our needs in our normal routines? Quarantine forces us into an unfamiliar state where we have more time than ever to sit and contemplate

with our state of being, feeding our souls what it needs—meditating, connecting with nostalgic video games, or catching up with old friends.

When this is all over, I hope we think about quarantine this way: imagine eating a Warhead candy. Extreme sour. The kind that makes your face pucker up in disgust until you start to resemble the poor dude on the wrapper who has gone cross-eyed from the taste. But after a period of suffering and realizing how much you want to get to the sweetness, you're already on your way to the good part.

What is the sweetness we're looking for in quarantine, you ask? That depends. If this season has inspired you to produce works of literary genius like Shakespeare—more power to you. If you've spent your time baking to cope with the dumpster fire state of our world, pour energy into what makes you feel good. I hope you've been kind to yourself.

Hopefully, when the chemically-soured coating finally gives way to a sweet burst of flavor, you might just realize that the mix and balance of the two wouldn't have been the same without either part of the experience. **W**



AROUND TOWN



Be the Producer!

Did you know you and your friends can produce your own show in Isla Vista? If you'd like to produce something in Isla Vista, please talk to Anna Jensen, the director of Isla Vista Arts, who will happily help.

Email Anna Jensen at akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu.

AS Board for IV Arts

Interested in improving the arts and culture in Isla Vista? Join the AS Board for IV Arts! We meet each quarter to bring culture to Isla Vista for UCSB students.

Email IV Arts Director, Anna Jensen at akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu

Shakespeare in the Park

In June, IV Arts presents Shakespeare with a modern twist. Settle into a blanket and bring a picnic to take in some free theater in the beautiful outdoor space of Isla Vista. If you'd rather participate in a show than watch, Shakespeare in the Park is a class offered in the Spring Quarter. You can enroll in the course even if you are not a Theater major! Check the class schedule in Spring.

Magic Lantern Films

During quarantine, Magic Lantern is hosting Netflix watch-parties and it offers live talks with filmmakers online. Look for the offerings on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MagicLanternFilmsIV When quarantining ends, Magic Lantern will return as your neighborhood discounted movie house, screening the best of current cinema. ML looks forward to bringing you special evenings for cult films, keeping you up all night with a Harry Potter, or a Lord of the Rings marathon--not to mention October favorite, Rocky Horror Picture Show!

Magic Lantern Films: shows on Friday and Monday nights at 7 & 10pm in IV Theater. Only \$4.

IMPROVABILITY

Until they can assemble together in the theater, IMPROVability brings improvisational comedy to Zoom! Join them every Friday night. Go to their Instagram page [@improvability](https://www.instagram.com/improvability) and get the link in their bio.

When it's safe to meet, you can start your weekends with a laugh. Find UCSB's award-winning improvisational comedy team and be a part of their fast-paced show. Voted Best Late-Night Entertainment at UCSB! Fridays, 8pm in Embarcadero Hall. Only \$3.

www.facebook.com/ucsbimprovability/

INVERSE

POETRY EDITOR // LOLA LEUTERIO
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ALLISON TRAN

miracle // Sierra Vakili

i think that miracles,
much like love or clay pots,
come in all shapes and sizes

salvation takes the form
of 140mg of caffeine
the antidote found within
a metallic mass-produced can

its uniformity
its complete and total lack of individuality
its same unimpressive dance upon the tongue
and its ability to gift curvature to my cheeks
and unveil my dimples like a bride

mixed with cheap beer,
spilling into a yard that isn't mine
or standing like a monument
at the edge of a publicly-owned desk
or sitting at the bottom of my backpack
in case I come across someone
who needs it more than I do
or on the refrigerated shelf
of my hometown Sprouts
a reminder
a memory
a metallic, mass-produced can

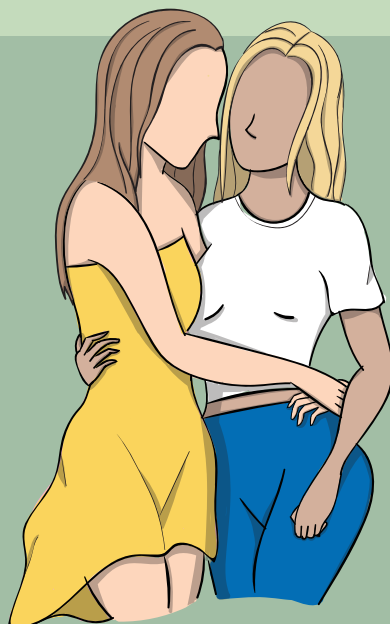
the way you love the old man in front of you in
line at the grocery store
love for a stranger
is love nonetheless
or the way an innocent clay pot the size
of a pinky finger does not accomplish the tasks
that a pot is supposed to accomplish
a pot that holds nothing but air
is a pot nonetheless
2 for \$4 Guayaki Yerba Mate was a miracle
a miracle nonetheless



To Love Someone

// Sophia Campion

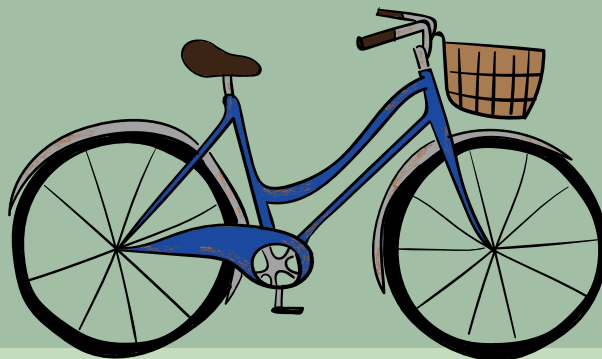
When her arms replaced
the absence of shape that was
My two hips, Filling those empty crescents
with words movement laughter
She sang to me A Sunday kind of love
Swept my fingers across that indent
where branches of skin had been missed.



Dutch Gift Wrapping

// Sophia Campion

Remember the old bag lagging off the tip of a once-window, skin wrinkled from too many years or maybe from too much attention—
At first it was an ugly lamb inside, the one she gave me when I wasn't 'sposed to come back, who's arms and legs were different shapes but they were mine. Stickers next, snatched off clammy fingers from a pink lady apple we stole inside the Utrecht market, codes we punched into some website to try and win a wooden mixer. Goodbye letters, from too many people that had barely said hello. I loved them all, to the tune of every Placebo song I screamed crossing the Oudegracht on that blue bike which was never mine, freckled with rust that spread from too many years and too much attention. I tried to go back there and did, but the too much rain was gone, and the nights were bright sun outside the no-curtain glass.
And the old lagging bag was shriveling back in Oakland, because I was worried it might form a tear on the plane.



IV AND FRIENDS

A 'SUPPORT THE SCENE'
playlist

by ANNA BASA AND HANNAH FM

+ DESIGN by EMILY SCHWAB



YOU KNOW
WHAT TO
DO

COSTCO GIRLS / STRANGE CASE

ARNOLD / DUDEO PEREZ

SKATIN' / AUTOPIPE

HEMINGWAY LEMONADE / CARELESS CUB

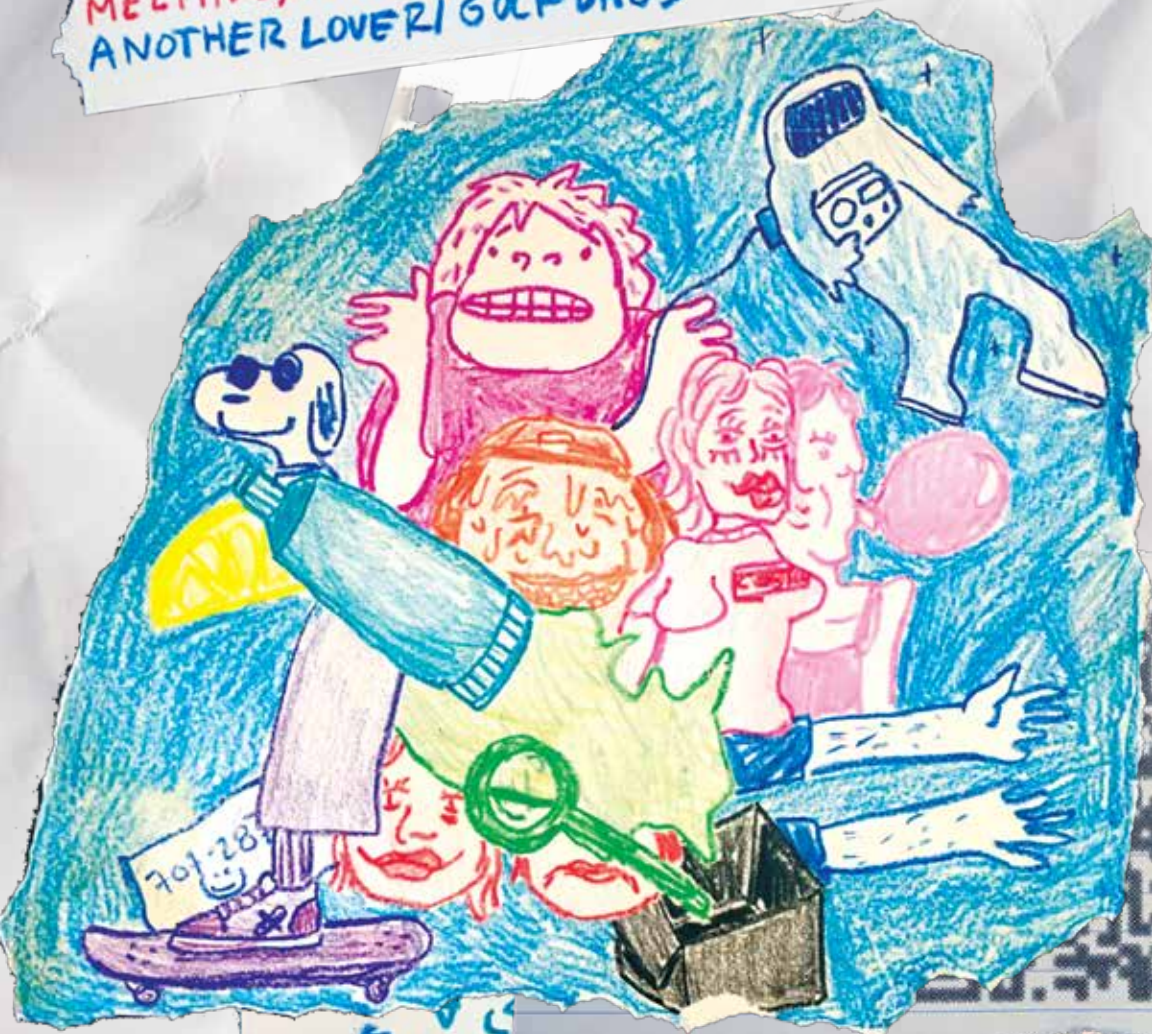
COMPOUND FRACTURE (5.14) / CLOSE OUT

ARE YOU COOL, JOE COOL? / JACOB PABALAN

BREAK / ODD ARMY

GUMMED UP / MARTINI DRIVE

BLACK BOX/EXTREMOPHILES
TOOTHPASTE/OAT MEAL
WHAT KEEPS ME UP/JAKOB AKIRA
RELAX UPON RE-ENTRY/HOT BROTHERS
MELTING, PT. 1 / PANCHE AND THE WIZARDS
ANOTHER LOVER/ GOLF DADS



LA AND KIRWA

WHAT

A

time

2 BE

alive

in

IV



A photo essay highlighting an Isla Vista under quarantine.



PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // NICK SONG



THE ART OF EMBROIDERING AND OTHER QUARANTINE ACTIVITIES

IT'S PRETTY REASONABLE to assume that this social distancing thing has led to many unforeseen mental breakdowns and/or a slow, and probably pretty comfortable, descent into complete laziness. I am sadly guilty of the latter. Because of this, I decided that I needed to pick up a couple hobbies that can keep me amused while watching endless amounts of Netflix. So, as I sat in the corner of my couch contemplating how I would scratch away at the days to come, embroidery and patching popped into my head. It's perfect: crafty, creative and easily entertaining. And the best part is that yes, I came up with this idea during our endless days in shelter-in-place, but these are perfect little crafting outlets to pick up at any time.

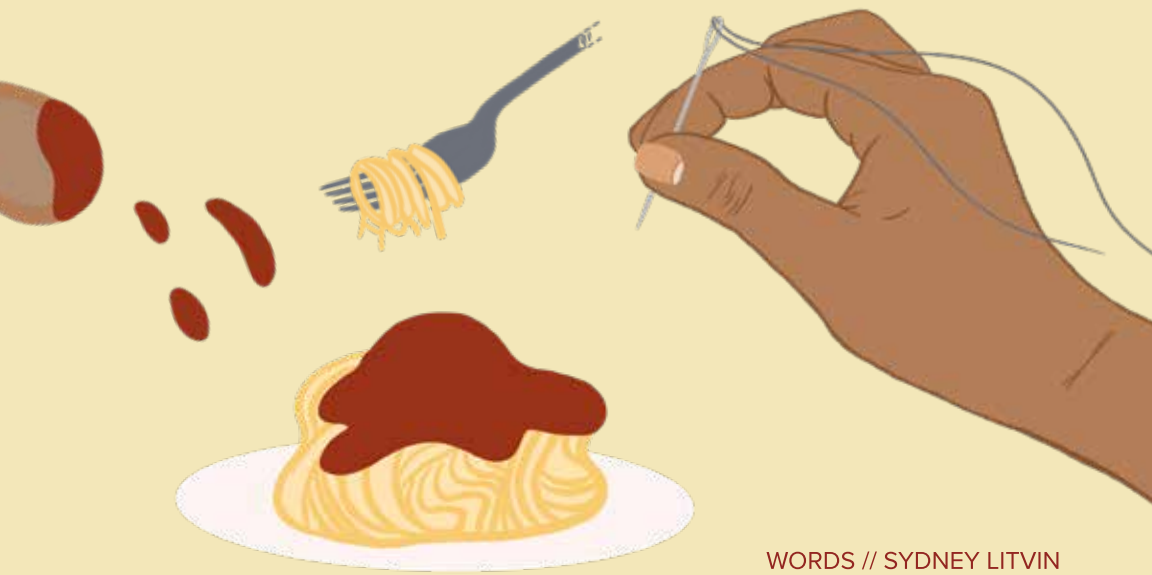
This got me thinking—quarantine is a great time to learn useful skills otherwise deemed too time consuming or of little importance. Usually, an endless amount of homework and activities with friends seem to take over our lives, but we now have the time to learn how to fix the rip in our jeans or grow our own food. So why not do it? I talked to a couple UCSB students

who I admire for choosing to spend their everlasting distanced days becoming experts in some pretty cool hobbies.

For many, leaving home for college means sacrificing mouth-watering home cooked meals. We spend so much time juggling class, work and social activities that we push aside the importance of nutritious and delicious food. But, alas, there is hope. Quarantine may mean more work and less play, but at least we now have time to cook or learn to cook those meals we always dream of, but can't have. Elie Singer, an avid cook and student here at UCSB, has spent most of his endless hours stuck at home in Berkeley checking off every meal in his family's many cookbooks.

He told me that he likes to “create something unique every time around. It is about creativity, taking risks and exploring every possible taste. Much like attending a party with both friends and strangers, one simultaneously captures the comfort of familiarity and the excitement of unexplored territory.”

Ines Schwartz, a sophomore here at UCSB is spending her quarantine in



WORDS // SYDNEY LITVIN
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // RACHEL SMITH

her parents' home in Marin County. As the Co-operations Coordinator of the Department of Public Worms here at UCSB, Ines spends her days in Isla Vista perfecting the art of growing food, so she decided to take the skill home.

She said, "Starting a little garden at home has been a lovely way to stay mentally and physically occupied during the quarantine. I've loved watching my little seedlings grow every day and work on making a space where they can be happy and healthy plants."

Her childhood home has a plot of dirt in the backyard, so Ines decided to buy seeds from the local garden store and start a plot. She used recycled materials in her house to plant the seedlings and nurtured her babies as they sprouted in her bathroom (it had the most light). She also recommended that if you are feeling underprepared but really want to become a plant mom, you should check out @epicgardening on Instagram.

My friend Mark Ash created his own clothing line and uses patching and embroidery to add detail to otherwise simple designs.

He said, "Adding different designs to my clothes has allowed me to feel more like myself in my clothing and gives me a sense of pride in the clothes I wear." Embroidery/sewing allows for creativity and peculiarity that cannot be bought and that it is much more cost effective and environmentally friendly than fast fashion, or even thrifting. Also, in a world like Isla Vista where many people are active and on the move at all times, it is easy to rip or ruin clothing and patching acts as a cool fix. IV can act as a small bubble and although we are all unique and passionate about different things, we tend to fall into a specific "brand" and this hobby allows people to stretch that brand by splashing some personality into a wardrobe. Some cool patching ideas could be adding detail like beads and fabric to cuffs, patching ripped pockets with mismatched fabrics, embroidering cool colored string into seams and embroidering flowers/animals. This hobby is all about showing off your personality, so let those creative juices flow and show us how it turns out! **W**

RECIPES

WORDS // MADISON KIRKPATRICK

ILLUSTRATION // HALEY WALKER

DESIGN // EMILY SCHWAB



Eggs Benedict Sandwich ***via Noe Padilla***

- **1 Egg - sunnyside up**
- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil**
- **1 Tablespoon of Butter**
- **English Muffin**
- **Toast**
- **1 Handful of Spinach**
- **1 Cloves of Garlic - Minced**
- **Slice of Cheddar Cheese**
- **Salt and Pepper to Taste**

1. In a medium size skillet over medium heat, melt your butter and add a handful of spinach and garlic. Stir until the spinach has reduced in size and garlic has slightly browned, add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside for later.
2. Toast your English muffin to a light brown crust, and add a small layer of butter. Add a slice of cheddar cheese and broil until it melts. Finally, add the spinach/garlic to the bottom half of the muffin and set aside.
3. In a small size skillet over medium heat, add oil and once hot, add your egg. Cover the pan with either a lid or tin foil, lower the temperature to a low-medium, and cook until the whites are set on top. Remove the egg and place it on top of the English muffin, add the top half of the muffin and serve.

Homemade Spaghetti Sauce ***via Adrian Camposeco***

Pasta is a quick, easy and relatively cheap meal that anyone can enjoy. However, what's pasta without sauce or seasoning? Check out this simple recipe for homemade pasta sauce.

- **One can of diced tomatoes**
- **Diced onions**
- **Garlic**
- **Salt**
- **Italian seasoning**
- **Carrot - for sweetness**

1. Add one can of diced tomatoes to sautéed, finely diced onion and garlic.
2. You can add a carrot for desired added sweetness.
3. Simmer for at least 30 mins.
Add salt and Italian seasoning to taste.
4. Enjoy!



Oven-Baked Salmon with Baked Potatoes via Madison Kirkpatrick

When you are in quarantine, the last thing you want to do is make a meal. It's so easy to eat something quick or get take out. Well, delete your DoorDash app and check out this easy recipe that will leave your belly (and your heart) full!

SALMON INGREDIENTS:

- **Salmon fillet**
- **Lemon**
- **Dill**
- **Salt**
- **Pepper**

POTATO INGREDIENTS:

- **1-2 Baked potatoes**
- **Olive oil**
- **Salt**
- **Pepper**
- **Cheese and butter (if desired)**

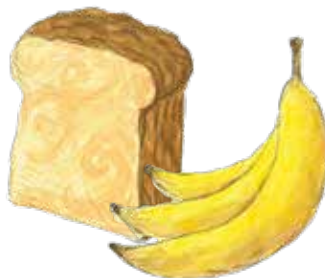
1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Poke potatoes with a fork and rub with olive oil; season with salt and pepper.
2. Place potatoes on an oven rack or baking sheet and roast until soft and the skin is crisp, around 60-75 minutes.
3. When the potatoes have about 20 minutes left, place your salmon skin side down on a non-stick baking sheet. Bake your foods together until your salmon is cooked through, about 15-20 minutes (I always do somewhere in the middle).
4. Remove from the oven when done. Of course you know this but just gotta say it!
5. Cut open each potato; season with salt and pepper and top with cheese, butter, or whatever else you desire! Season your salmon with salt, pepper, lemon and dill!
6. Pour yourself something nice to drink. Enjoy and send me pictures!



Cinnamon Swirl Banana Bread via Maile Buckman

- **3 Ripe bananas**
- **2 Eggs**
- **1 Teaspoon vanilla**
- **3/4 Cups sugar**
- **3/4 Cup butter (melted)**
- **1 tsp Baking soda**
- **1 1/2 Cup flour**
- **Dash of salt**

1. Mix sugar, eggs, butter, bananas, egg and vanilla. Sprinkle in salt and baking soda.
2. Mix in flour. Mix the remaining sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl.
3. Pour 1/2 the batter into a 9x5 pan, sprinkle 1/2 the cinnamon mix on top, repeat. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 mins.
4. Let sit and enjoy!



E N J O Y !

TWO YEARS TOO FEW:

Transfer Students Handle Abrupt Change

WORDS // MADISON KIRKPATRICK

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ALLISON TRAN

FOUR QUARTERS. Four quarters is all I got at UCSB. I deferred my fall quarter because of personal issues which are luckily resolved now, but I feel like I never recovered. It was hard to start in the winter, but I felt reassured knowing that I eased in pretty well. I don't count summer as a quarter since I just took one class for my major and it was pretty enjoyable. Now, after I was expecting to have five quarters here, everything is online and UCSB is closed. I had an internship offer that was rescinded, I got laid off from a job I loved, and I didn't get to do research in the lab that I was looking forward to. Now I have to take 20 units instead of getting research credit. Overall, it's a bummer that things are cut short, and I feel like I missed something important.

It's hard to express how I feel about the situation. Obviously, this is nobody's fault. Well, I do shame people who aren't following the rules. It's their fault for now. The situation is just disappointing, and that's kind of the main emotion I feel right now. I wanted to get more involved, to contribute more to my fraternity, and write more for

The Bottom Line (TBL). Both of those orgs are important to me and now they have a different meaning.

My friend, Andy Chau, is a fourth-year transfer Asian American studies major and Technology Management Certificate recipient; he, like myself, is a member of Alpha Phi Omega (APO). We are two of seven transfer seniors in the fraternity. After two summer sessions and the fall quarter, he will graduate from UCSB. It took him some time to recognize how impactful this situation has become.

Andy said, "At first, I was pretty shocked because I was getting pretty frustrated with the administrative and faculty response towards COVID-19. I think I was excited but anxious at the same time. There was a lot of uncertainty towards future plans like graduation, rent payments, and knowing if I was even going to reside off campus. It took me two weeks to fully process how impactful this pandemic has become."

Andy also mentioned the toll that this pandemic has taken on transfers. "I assume most of us will graduate on time which means that the class of 2020 will endure this together. The only difference would be how experienced transfer students are when it comes to navigating the system. I'm sure that for newly transferred students, their adjustment period has been abrupt, so I think the pressure is immense on them. As for second-year transfer students, it's subjective. Hopefully, there are enough resources to aid us in need."

I also asked Andy about his experience in APO. "I felt like my journey in APO had just begun. I was definitely looking forward to strengthening friendships and





contributing more to the community. For nearly five years, I lost interest in volunteering but APO rekindled that passion along with embedding memorable events from rushing, pledging, and crossing.” Andy honestly stated that a lot of his expectations weren’t filled. “I don’t think I had a fair and fulfilling experience because I wanted to leave behind a legacy. I had high considerations of picking up and helping out with rush and pledge events. I wanted to share my knowledge and offer any mentoring to future members. Now, it seems like those aspirations are fleeting. I know that there are virtual ways of volunteering but I sure miss the in-person interactions. I miss the excitement of general meetings and discovering new information that would improve our club.” He ended his interview with some hope for the future. “I miss the chance of learning more about APO and how I can apply it to myself. There’s a lot and it’s like a void that will take a while to fill. I love APO with my heart and soul, so I hope that there will be a moment where we can all reunite for the last dance.”

Jonathan Chavez is a fourth-year Communication major and Education minor, the former Director of Community Relations of UCSB’s Communication Association and the current marketing director of The Bottom Line. He is attending graduate school at USC in the fall in the Communication and Public Relations department. When news first broke that school was moving online, he was disappointed. “It took me a long time to start making friends. I started getting close to people, and right when that

happened, school got moved. I didn’t know it would be the last time I saw people.” Jonathan also expressed fear about online graduate school.

“I am extremely worried. The program is extremely hands-on and hard to do online. Thinking about an online semester is upsetting. As of now, they still plan to do in-person, but will adapt if necessary. I’m happy that they’re flexible.”

Over the weeks, Jonathan’s mindset about the situation has changed for the better. “I started looking at this positively. My landlord let my roommates and I end our leases, so I’m saving \$2,000 that can go towards loans or treating myself. I’ve also learned a big lesson. I was more selfish about what was going on around the world. I separated myself, but now I can’t separate myself. Anything can happen anywhere, and it’s made me more sympathetic to other countries.”

Jonathan noted some differences in reactions for transfers and fourth years. “Seniors have had more time here to get close to people, and now they don’t get to finish forming those relationships. If I was a senior, I’d be devastated. It sucks I got separated from people, but I was barely starting to get close.”

In order to gain more experience, Jonathan is using LinkedIn Learning. “I’ve made it a goal to do more tutorials. It gives me more of an opportunity, but it’s only because I lost my job. I did want to get a hands-on internship at the entertainment company, but it’s been disrupted now. I’ll have to settle for an average job. I wanted to have that experience. I won’t start the workforce until 2022.”

Finally, Jonathan admitted that he did take school for granted. “I was starting

“I didn’t know it would be the last time I saw people.”

to get fed up with people before I joined TBL, but seeing people so talented, dedicated and motivated inspired me. I always complained that I wanted to leave UCSB and that school was shitty, but now I realize I don't want that. I wish I hadn't taken it for granted, but I'm thankful for my experience. I'm gonna take this time to do the most that I can. Also, people need to learn how to follow directions. Shut up and stay home!"

The last person I talked to is Noe Padilla, fourth-year culinary art student-turned Philosophy major and Journalism Certificate recipient. He is the news editor for TBL. Noe was horrified when he learned that school was going online. "At community college, I had a full semester online. During that time, my average GPA went from 3.8 to 2.5. When I found out it was going online here, I was terrified. Philosophy is hard enough in person; in person, you're forced to focus, and online, you get distracted."

Because online school jeopardized his GPA once, Noe fears that he may not be able to go to grad school. "Industries also won't be hiring because we're basically in a recession. I applied for work in San Diego and they asked me to wait a year since they can't afford to have me on the payroll." Though he does feel prepared for work, he is most fearful about finding it. "I have to work and find a place to live. I left home and haven't been home for four years. I can't go back now. I might have to compromise to find a job."

As a TBL editor, Noe is tasked to find stories for his news team. "With everything being online, it's hard to find stories to cover. This week, I gave my best reporters all of the stories and had nothing for the staff writers. You could talk to people in classes, and you can't do that now." We ended the interview by discussing his feelings about senior year being cut short. "The whole situation is awful, the only new emotion I feel is unfairness. I lost out on a lot of stuff. Anyone who is a senior is losing

out on all of the same stuff. Transfers really only got one and a half years instead of two instead of four. I had gotten close to people at TBL, but now I can't do that. I feel like I've lost the opportunity to make friends that I've had this quarter to solidify. I might not have that opportunity again."

Between my interviews and my personal experience, I found that we shared a common theme of sadness about senior year and fear for the future. Being a transfer student, I can't help but separate myself from seniors. We get less time than them to assimilate and make friends, and friendships are an important aspect of college. Jonathan mentioned that once he was making friends the pandemic changed everything and he couldn't form those friendships anymore. However, I want to show support to my fellow fourth years. They have spent four years here and have had more time to acclimate to the area, so I can only imagine the difficulty this places on them. No matter your standing (transfer or four year), this epidemic is difficult for us all. It's important that we are caring of each other and recognize that this is not harder for any one person. We might seem like we are in a different boat, but we are one in the same and can hopefully get through this together. **W**



"I started looking at this positively."

MOO AND MOORE:



THE MILKS AS PERSONALITIES

WORDS // LINDA CHONG

ILLUSTRATION // HANNAH FORD-MONROE

DESIGN // HALEY WALKER

YOU DON'T TRULY KNOW someone until you know what milk they like. Are you really best friends if you can't order her coffee for her? Can you call yourselves soulmates if you have to call them on your grocery run for what type of milk to buy? I guess some of you might wonder how knowing the milk preference of a person is relevant to their personality, or maybe you're confused because you didn't even know there were milk substitutes. Oh, you poor thing. To break things down, we no longer live in the olden times where milk only came from cows. The milk gods have expanded their collection, and their recent launches have been nothing but successes. Although the original design is what we all remember as whole milk, soy milk has been available since the 1980s;

sales, however, were not even close to the tried and true. Almond milk has hit the market and popularized greatly since the start of the 2000s. Coconut milk was an Asian secret for decades, later gaining its reputation when Starbucks began to incorporate it into their stores in 2015. It has only been two years now since the latest launch of oat milk has hit the coffee shops and grocery stores, and it has received nothing but love and adoration. Not to mention, the hipsters love adding quirky specifics like cashew milk to their drink. Milks appeal to the same kinds of people; they are the new and improved horoscope. Here are the probable routines and cognitions of each type of milk—I mean person.

COW MILK

As you turn off your eighth alarm, you start your day chugging a glass of milk with your breakfast. Hey, a man needs his calcium. Slipping into your black converse, you push aside your flip-flops and run into the streets with your board. At lunch you order meat supreme, wondering why they even put vegan options at a hamburger joint.

SOY MILK

2020 is nothing compared to 1920! You kids don't know how lucky you are, you think to yourself. It's been a long day at work, and all you want to do is sit on your patio with today's news. There are so many things to contemplate: what is a boomer, and why do kids call me that? For a breath of fresh air, you step into your most prized possession—a 1957 Corvette, and drive into the nearest grocery store for the fourth time this week. Hey, it's not your fault you forget at least two items whenever you go! Coming back home, you ask to watch your favorite Scarlett Johansson movie, "Ghost in the Shell," as you go to sleep without brushing your teeth.

ALMOND MILK

You wake up at 8 a.m. to the sound of your ocean-waves simulator and your sorority sisters giggling. Starbucks is literally waiting for you, what are you doing? You pull on your furry sherpa while giving each succulent a spritz of water, and check if the BFFFF anklet is secured tightly above your white Vans before heading out. You order the same iced latte, obviously with almond milk because it makes the drink taste ten times better, only to go home and possibly make the same drink again—this time with your favorite *vanilla* almond milk. Your to-do list consists of yoga, meditation, then your favorite thing to do in the world: make TikToks with friends!

OAT MILK

Oh no, they ran out of oat milk. You tell them to cancel your coffee order, and trudge out in your Doc Martens. “How could they run out,” you ask yourself, “it’s never like that in LA...” Now where are you going to go for your daily dose? For now, you settle for some avocado toast, then carry on with your plans to go thrifting and do some work at a cafe. On your way, your old friend stops you and asks when you’re available. Somehow you avoid the question and manage to talk about how you love oat milk and vintage clothing instead—because there’s no way your schedule can squeeze her in.

CASHEW MILK

After passing out the last flyer to join the environmentalist club, you head over to get a gluten free bagel. Although you don’t even like bagels, you do this to support local businesses and help the underdogs that drown next to this society’s consumeristic big-brand stores. You tell the worker you’re vegan, because everyone needs to know your efforts, and you pick up a sticker that says, “Stop the Patriarchy!” You’re glad that people are starting to recognize the suffocating system of oppression, and you fix your bandana before picking up your bagel.

COCONUT MILK

This person does not exist.



THE SIGNS AS QUARANTINE ACTIVITIES

WORDS // HAILEY GROSS + MICHELLE POLITISKI
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // RACHEL SMITH

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS fellow quarantined creatures. How ya holding up? Have we caught you at a good time? 'Tis the moment we've all been waiting for—we get to take a lil' break in the action and read about us. Or you could just skip to yourself. Now, sit back with your beverage of choice and take a gander at what we think you've been up to these past few months, based on your placement in the Zodiac.

ARIES (March 21 - April 19)

Time to take a ram by the horns—or, rather, the hair. No, not like that, don't get too excited now! Shoutout to all the Aries who are spontaneously dyeing their hair or giving themselves bangs! We see you, we know you, we worry for you. You are our dearly entertaining friends and spontaneous guinea pigs. Never dull that spark of yours. Just make sure you throw some toner on that bleached mullet.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)

Return to the earth, bull! You've probably been going on lots of hikes and exploring the less polluted world around you. Damn, nature sure is beautiful when we're not fucking it up, huh? Just please remember to keep your distance if you choose to venture to the great outdoors and, you know what, throw some shoes on while you're at it. No one needs to see your toes.



GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)

Whimsical Geminis, how you holdin' up? Between the two of you, twins, you're unlikely to ever run out of projects to complete, rooms to clean, and old flings to hit up—the world truly is your oyster, ain't it? While you're bouncing between the various playlists you've finally made for all your moods, and dusting off everything from your cat to the dating app profiles, don't forget to take a chill pill and check in with yourself—or selves. See those roses over there? Stop and smell 'em when you get a moment.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)

Sweet, sweet Cancer, you really don't have to respond to that toxic ex of yours. We know any attention feels nice right now, but are we sure they're not just texting you because they know all you're doing is scrolling through your phone all day? Remember the reasons you broke things off in the first place and go back to listening to "Leave Me Lonely" on repeat. Ariana is a Cancer and she knows what she's about.

LEO (July 23 - August 22)

Darling Leo, we know all about a lion and its claws—when you aren't online shopping for what you imagine you'd wear to all the events that "could have been," you're probably figuring out a way to give yourself a successful at-home manicure—best of luck! Just please, for the love of God, let those puppies dry before you start digging into your wardrobe for that daily photoshoot in the backyard.

VIRGO (August 23 - September 21)

Tenacious Virgo, we know you're used to routine and taking control of how your life is going. With times being uncertain, you're probably coping with a few of your favorite hobbies: smoking plenty of that good good, filling up coloring books, and spending ungodly amounts of time playing Animal Crossing interspersed with bouts of aggressively cleaning the house. Just remember, dear Virgo, everything in moderation.

don't text ur ex





LIBRA (September 22 - October 23)

Ethereal Libras, now's the time you get dressed up with nowhere to go! Scrolling through TikTok until 3 a.m. has probably inspired your quarantine fashion and you're ready to make that leap into changing up your aesthetic. You're spending time zhuzhing up your room with things that spark joy, or lounging around your house in your new vintage overalls and heaps of hippie jewelry for absolutely no reason. Hey, you do you.

SCORPIO (October 24 - November 21)

Our sensual, seductive Scorpio—your abundant alone time has really helped you get in touch with yourself (ha). We know you've been putting that full-length mirror and natural lighting in your room to good use, and making some real ~art~. Can you give us some tips on taking the perfect nude, please?

SAGGI (November 22 - December 21)

Listen up, Sag. We all love TikTok. Some of us spend our time scrolling through it, but others spend their time making our entertainment. Thank you, generous archer, for learning all those dances and making all that dalgonia coffee we're too lazy to make ourselves. Keep documenting it on TikTok and we'll keep cheering you on from the sidelines of our beds.

AQUARIUS (January 20 - February 18)

Oh Aquarius, though you're a water bearer, Lord knows your means for keeping things wet are incredibly stifled these days. Thank God you're a giver—you've taken to the keyboard to share that kinky mind with the world—and we love being your outlet! Who knew you'd be such a talented erotica writer. Keep refining those skills...seriously we beg you.

CAPPI (December 22 - January 19)

All the workaholic Capricorns, you're always essential in our book. Perhaps now you've had to channel your ambition and restless nature into the confines of your home—but that won't silence the admirable competitive drive of yours. Your DIY garden is surely the hottest on the block! But those aren't the only seeds you're planting, are they? Who knew the strictly-business Cappies would be the new spokespeople for self-care yoga—and goat almighty is that a good look for you! But hey, while you're enjoying your well-deserved zen time, don't forget to water the entire nursery of succulents you bought on impulse (they do get watered, right?)

PISCES (February 19 - March 20)

Ah lil fishies, who left you alone with the rom-coms? In times like these, your beautifully empathetic souls and huge hearts could either be your secret weapon or set of blinders keeping you from seeing the larger picture. Speaking of pictures, if you're simping, don't run from your emotions—embrace 'em baby! Put those precious tears to use and make your next creative masterpiece a resourceful watercolor. We're still in a drought, you know. [W](#)



SIERRA HOTEL: THE

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED in Saudi Arabia, I didn't know what to expect. I was fresh out of the Air Force and starting my new job as a private military contractor. Because of my training in aircraft fabrication, I had been hired by the Royal Saudi Air Force to help support their F-15 program. I had heard rumors from other contractors about how barbaric Saudi Arabia could be, but I was advised to focus on doing my job and collect an easy paycheck, and that's what I intended to do.

My life slipped into a steady routine. Each day I'd leave my private villa on the compound, work my eight-hour shift on the air base and return to my villa. The compound had all the amenities I could possibly need — a grocery store, a pool, a gym, and even a small restaurant — so there was no reason for me to venture beyond it.

One day, my supervisor Willie, who been in the country for decades, and I decided to go to the mall. On the way, as we drove through a crowded intersection, I saw him: he was a small kid, dirty, and dressed in ragged clothing. He looked like a lost puppy. I knew he couldn't be Saudi Arabian, because he was wearing an Afghan-style hat. He walked up to the car and knocked on the passenger window.

He was begging for money. Willie told me not to give him any, but he didn't say why. I decided to give the kid a fist full of riyals anyway, so I rolled down my window. As I handed him the money, he looked up, thanked me, and quickly ran back to the corner. Willie grunted, visibly upset.

After I rolled up my window, Willie remarked, "Michael, I hope you're happy. You just contributed to human trafficking." I didn't know what to think. Soon after, I saw a van pull up and watched the kid give the Saudi driver all the money he had. Willie told me that human trafficking was common here, and that boys were usually tasked with begging for money for their handler. Begging was the best-case scenario, he said. When I heard this, I didn't know what to think, but I didn't want to hear the alternatives. I already knew about Afghan "tea boys," the sex slaves of older men, and how common they were in Saudi Arabia. At first, I didn't believe Willie, but it all made sense. Why would an Afghan kid be in this location, on the far side of Saudi Arabia? Willie told me that this was the reality of the country and that most contractors couldn't handle working in the Middle East. I reminded myself that I was only supposed to care about getting the job done and making easy money,

KID



WORDS // MICHAEL RAMIREZ
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // THERESA PHAN

but my stomach still twisted into a knot; I was upset.

On the drive back to the compound, I was unable to process all the new information this event had given me. I had heard stories about rape victims being lashed when they left their houses without a male escort, people having their hands chopped off, and the debt slavery of third world workers. But until now, I couldn't connect faces to these stories. I felt a whirlpool of emotions; I couldn't sort out right from wrong, but I knew I wasn't acting like a contractor. Contractors were supposed to be indifferent to a lot of things.

When my contract ended, I was given the option to stay another year, but I didn't take it. Willie told me I was an idiot give up the villa, my tax- free income, and my easy job. He had valid points, but I felt I had to leave. I knew that to be able to stay in the job, I would have to kill a small part of myself, like Willie had done. I didn't want to end up like him.

I left Saudi Arabia and took a lavish holiday in Thailand. I ate at the best restaurant, stayed at expensive hotels, and spent a good amount of time drinking. However, I couldn't escape my feelings of guilt and shame, or my anxiety. I had

managed to leave the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A lot of people didn't have that luxury. I still wonder what became of the kid with the Afghan hat. Did his family know about his life? Did they care? In a different world, I would have been able to that Afghan kid, but in Saudi Arabia I was a bystander. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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ABOUT THE SIERRA HOTEL:

"Sierra Hotel" presents writings from participants in UCSB's creative writing workshop for veterans and military dependents. The workshop, which began in 2012, provides the opportunity for this unique group of UCSB students as they study the craft of creative non-fiction. To read more work by UCSB student veterans and military dependents, visit Instant Separation, A Digital Journal of Military Experience from the University of California: www.instantseparation.org.



HOME: AN AGING RETROSPECTIVE ON DUAL IDENTITY AND A LETTER TO MYSELF

WORDS // ANNA BASA ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // RACHEL DENG

LATELY IT FEELS LIKE if I blink my eyes for even one moment, the color of the pavement beneath me could change without notice. I don't think it's a weird prospect to be disaffected by the environments around me, sketchy and unsteady in times like these. The sidewalks are slipping, and crack by newfound crack, this place becomes foreign. I keep trying to relive old reveries through the memorabilia of my past: I catch myself rereading yearbooks, taking old walks, visiting old cafes, scanning old love letters, searching for pictures of what all of this used to be. If I could hold the fleeting

figures in my hand to keep a lasting memory of everything around me, I would. And one day, I hope it's possible to put a word to this feeling but for now I'll call it home.

A copula is missing between the person you left at home and the person you have become in the world. There are many pieces of the past that feel almost too distant in your memory because your new scenery no longer consists of the same yesterday's old routines. But for some reason, when you revisit home, your existence is stuck in the overlap of both spheres.

Time away from home cannot change the reality that you are still your parent's child. The parts of you that have grown are not tangible and cannot be held to scrutiny or measured by physical means. Your morals, dreams, and desires have evolved, but your parents cannot see that, hard as they may try. You will always be the baby in the carriage, the one that they nursed, the one they rocked to sleep. But, *come on mom, can't you see that getting my nose pierced, chopping my hair, and aligning more and more with progressive politics* shows that I am a grown-up?

Welcome to your 20s: a living purgatory. You're not a kid anymore, so stop crying about minor inconveniences—you're about to go into the real world. But hold on, you're not actually an adult, so stop speaking flippantly about political institutions like you actually understand what's going on. Pay your bills, get a job, keep your grades up—**be happy**. *Smile more*, keep your head up kid! You've got it good. Your life in college is nothing like the real world, where things are *actually difficult*. All you have to do is maintain your education and prepare for your career. Be punctual, stay engaged with the material, turn in all your assignments. That couldn't possibly take up that much time. You only have to rinse and repeat this process for each one of your classes, every day, and excel in all of them.

Put time aside to study. Reserve more time to find an internship to build your resume. You need to stand out; the value of your degree is going down as entry-level jobs demand experience in the field before you even get into it. But you're young, and you have all the time in the world. Easy peasy.

Do you have a job yet? Don't complain about minimum wage, take what you can get. This generation couldn't understand the first thing about *hard work*. Tuition, textbooks, online homework, groceries, food, rent, and utilities? Twelve dollars an hour on top of tending to your studies like a full-time job—say less!

College is so fun! You hang out all day and live at school. Life is lax remembering to eat between breakdowns and perpetually being at a deficit for sleep. You get to eat what you want and you don't have a bedtime anymore!

So when you're back home, why walk down memory lane? Just to hold onto anything that feels like a tinge of teenage liberation? Because it was a time when commitments and obligations carried less weight? Are you having a hard time or are you overreacting about privileged afflictions? With future cognizance and retrospective clarity, it is hard not to grasp for the straws of yesterday. You try to rehost old parties to relive moments with familiar friends, but it doesn't feel the same. What is home anymore?

Do not fill your present with recreations of the bold-fonted glory of your high-school years. Do not compare the person you are becoming to the unimpeachable past version of yourself. Do not conflate new insecurities with past ineptitude. *Do not fear change*. Learn to thrive in the uncertainty and impermanence of your youth. Try not to linger on the "*should be*" and "*has been*". You are not losing time. We falter in our existential struggles when we stop seeing that the desire to be loved, the fear to pursue your passions, and the struggle to choose between wrong and right are trials that age with us. Ground yourself in your present reality and *find home from within*. **W**



WORDS // HAILEY GROSS
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // HAILEY WALKER

//mem 1

PICTURE THIS: You are wedged in a space amidst the clouds. Your life is in the hands of two men who are hopefully not playing solitaire behind closed doors. The seat of the woman in front of you is reclined so far back, all you can think about is the acts you would commit—the objects you would take to her throat should she have the balls-lack of consideration to get a bit cozier.

Who knew they used to design those seats to go so far back, anyhow? It's as though they were saying, here—*get as comfortable as you'd like—as comfortable as you could get in business class—but we won't take it upon ourselves to distance you from your neighbor. It's on YOU to decide if you'll sacrifice someone else's comfort for your own. Thank you for flying Swiss Air, would you like some pretzels?*

To keep my blood from coming to a rolling boil that likely would produce enough pressure to shoot my eyeballs straight out of my head, I considered, *hey, maybe she doesn't have a bed at home.* Maybe this time in the coach section of this Boeing aircraft will be the most horizontal her sleep has ever gotten. In which case, I'm happy to be part of it. Or, maybe I wasn't then, but I sure am now.

Who knew that'd be the last time I'd ever been driven mad by a stranger being *too* close to me? I think that's why I like to replay this memory more than others—the irony's a bit too painful to keep from laughing about. What an interesting thing humans do—laugh about past pain.

Together, we flew back in that crowded, incubated space—simultaneously running from and home to the virus that changed life as we knew it, however well we knew it. I never saw that woman again. I hope she made it to a safe shelter, and a bed. I hope wherever she is, she's doing alright. And, God bless her for being the last person to want to be so goddamn close to me. Until Jax that is. I wonder if she ever remembers me too.

//mem 2

I remember my first time being stopped by a suited man. What excitement. Hustling through the airport to catch the first flight home, I hoped my nervous sweats wouldn't call my health into question. I can't help but think to myself—Was this the experience I'd been craving when I left home years ago to “see the world”? Did I like what I saw? Did it meet expectations—should I have even *had* expectations? Is this what authenticity feels like? The discomfort, stress, panic, scrambling, disappointment, and sheer coincidence that challenges you to the point of considering who you are and why you are where you are?

//mem 3

I woke up to a journal today. They must have slid it through the door at some point in the night to not disturb me. It seems to be slightly used already, but I'm sure I could go through some of it during my allocated reading window. Ever since they found that the virus could live on paper for an indefinite amount of time, it was apparently unanimous that all the books should be burned—no chances taken. It's slim pickins now and I guess I take what I can get—especially with the possible side effect of memory loss—who knows when our last moment will be our last memory. Unless you're Mick Jagger or the rest of the Stones, time is not on your side.

As for me, I'm doing alright—a lot more sane than others seem to be. Maybe because I know I have something to look forward to—something worth quarantining for. Maybe because I kinda just stopped keeping track of the days.

So, why am I here? I think I've asked myself that every day. And everyone else seems to have their own ideas getting them through the days, keeping them from getting lost in their thoughts. Though not everyone seems to be able to stay afloat very well. The man in the room next to me has been spiraling a little bit today. Clearly the entertainment of choice he requested was a screen—I've heard the same TikTok

song play on repeat for the past three hours. Maybe he's preparing to meet an influencer as well. Obviously one that he needs to impress with his rhythm and form. Or he's infected and in the phase of delusions. Whatever gets him through the time. Good thing he's practicing.

Truthfully, I never thought I'd be the type to cleanse to enter The City—maybe I'm not. But these days, that's what it takes to try to survive as your own person, without a robot Artie. The term is obviously still gonna take some getting used to. After the virus wiped through most of our workforce, they emerged, almost to our rescue—to save our economy. And livelihood. The “R word” is *no longer appropriate*, they say, The Artificially-Intelligent saved us, and earned a new, friendly name to honor that—thus, “Arties”.

After their extensive tests, scientists of course found that everyone who survived the first wave faced a much higher likelihood of death during the second—excluding, of course, the wealthy and the Influencers. The “Clean”—who are kept safe within the confines of the The City's walls. Sounds about right.

Now, it seems to be the second time for Arties to shine. They gave us Exposed people the option to combine forces. Many view it as a high honor—to upload our consciousness, our memories, while we still have them, to the body of an Artie—to be both us and artificial all at once. To continue to be us *and* to be useful. Essential. Whatever that means. To be hidden from the virus. To be immortal. At least, that's how it's advertised. Sounds pretty damn good on paper.

What is left out of conversation is the fact that this is the ultimate state vulnerability—to have your memories dissected one by one, with *you* along as a sort of passenger riding shotgun, while your subconscious guides them through. Until they have gotten to know you; until they've learned all that they must, to be as authentic as you. To become you, til one of you is indistinguishable from the other.

//mem 4

Now, we are faced with very few options—a choice, but it really isn't a choice at all, is it? To either Upload or face the virus on our own and take our chance with death. But, there is a third option, a road less traveled by, if you will, which I've been so fortunate to wander into—to be recognized by an influencer—to earn the opportunity to meet, and possibly join their team if we can be at all useful and prove we have what it takes.

I am among the select group of this round of drafts—the individuals chosen to help create content for the stars. Mine is Jax. Was Jax.

It seems her team had read up on my past work and thought I could be a valuable addition to creating content. Also helps that the Clean have a particular affinity for charity work. Scholarships.

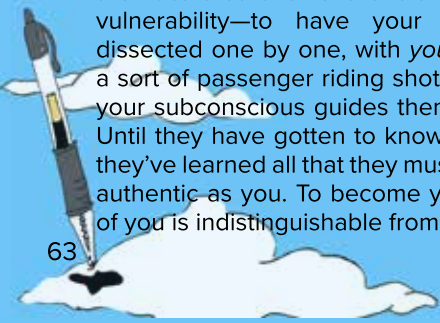
They *just love* to see how far their influence extends. And, lucky for them, the Arties love all things entertainment—one thing they still can't create themselves—memories they do not want to take just yet.

And for that we must first quarantine so that they can be sure we're not actively infected—so they know we're strong enough to move on to the next step.

I know once I am finally able to meet Jax, she'll see me. And she will care. We will connect and we will make videos for the masses based on the words I create and we will try to reach others that I know are not affected. Those who can still retain. Who still remember. To warn them before they sign their lives away. Like I am.

I will tell her about the flower I had in the corner of my cell before the two of us met, and how at first I tried to keep track of the days based on the health of its petals.

I'll tell her my outrage when they wouldn't water it for me but gave me a journal which I hoped would do enough good for the both of us. Did it do what I hoped it might? Did it keep memories alive and intact?



We sit and breathe deep breaths. We laugh together at the fact that they said I'd gone manic—unreliable.

What bullshit, Jax laughs, you're as sane as I am.

We cleverly liken the Arties to helicopter parents—their desire to control our lives and solve our problems accepted as an ultimate form of love. Their yearning to get to know us, vowing to have our best interests in mind, trading our free will for their version of love and protection.

I will tell her about the jokes I'd been thinking up. I tell her my fear of losing my memories before I am ready, of giving them up for uploading and never knowing the last time they will be only my own, untouched by formal processing through lines of code.

I swore I'd never do it—be a sell out. I sat there with her, voluntarily poured my soul out and believed myself when I said I would never get more vulnerable with anyone than I was in that moment. And now we're here. And who knows how much time I have left, until my memory of us is nothing more than a detached timestamp.

I will tell Jax, when they take me away for doing exactly what we set out to do—whatever happens to us, don't believe everything you see, or hear. Do your own digging and find your own truth. Remember who you are. Remember you are in control of your own life. Until you're not.

//mem 5

Do I know anything for certain?

I know I once read that time is not on my side.

I know that there comes a point where you just have to sit. Alone.

Depending on no one else, except yourself. Your own two feet, connected to your own two legs and pelvis and frame and backbone.

Your own brain and the thoughts that occupy it—trouble it or tickle its fancy.

When all else boils down, that is what you are left with—you. Little old, broken, healing, confused, strong-headed, you.

Alone and in your most raw, vulnerable, forms.

Everyone must come face to face with themselves at some point. It is then and only then that you can truly experience, get to know, and grow to love yourself and the possibilities for your life.

It was often said in the old life that you can fall in love with anyone if you spend enough time with them. Or see them in their most vulnerable, “human” states.

The same can be said for when you spend enough time with yourself. Your new self.

You are forced to become your most prioritized love interest.

Get to know you.

Fall in love with you.

Be your own requited love.

Never let you go. 

// UPLOAD COMPLETE



ISLA VISTA GIVES YOU CREDIT

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // PHOEBE JIN

WORD MAGAZINE

INT 185ST
THE CREATION OF THIS MAGAZINE
Fall, Winter, & Spring Quarters

Contact Anna Jensen at:
akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu

This issue of **WORD: Isla Vista Arts & Culture Magazine** is brought to you by the student artists and writers in INT 185ST and its partner OSL campus organization. We welcome new writers, designers, photographers and artists from all majors.

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WORD STAFF

Advisors:

Anna Jensen
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Brittany Ragan

Not pictured: Jordan Finley



Michelle Politiski



Chelsie Alexander



Rachel Deng



Improvability congratulates our tee shirt design winner
Magine Slonaker for this image that captures the spirit of our troupe.
In the fall quarter, Improvability will return either on campus or on
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