Dear Continuum

My piece is a letter about entering adulthood and exploring how the pandemic has affected my thoughts of the world around us as we’ve had to be in lockdown. I wrote about normalcy, consequences, and how it’s personally affected me, despite my fortunate circumstances. I discuss my confusion about what I feel like has had to be postponed because of the pandemic, and about what I should expect from the world. Overall, this was meant to be a way to try and make sense of parts of the pandemic.

Dear Continuum,

Last year sucked. This year has sucked so far. I don’t think it’s fair for me to say what I’m going to say without being clear about that. Too many people have died. Too many people have gotten sick. Too many people have to live in more stress than I can imagine because of what the pandemic has done not just to our country (though... when compared to other ones... I mean, punishing doctors for giving out vaccines? Saying it’s better to let them go bad? What’s the point of rules like that? Why care about proper protocol when time’s running out and waste vaccines while patents stop production in other countries that need it?), but to the world. In March, I personally will have been in quarantine for a year. I haven’t been inside of a school building for more than an hour in one year. Three hundred and sixty-six days (because of course the worst year in the twenty-first century so far also ended up being one extra day longer than most). Eight thousand, seven hundred and eighty-four hours. Five hundred twenty-seven thousand and forty minutes. Over thirty-one million seconds. What am I supposed to do, knowing all of these numbers, all this time, has passed me by that I’ll never be able to fully comprehend in ways aside from scattered catalogs of my experiences? I can’t help but feel lost, even though this year was also the year when I set and found the most goals that I know will define my future.

I never really considered I would make it into university, I would enter ‘adult life’, I would deal with realizing that wow, maybe what is considered the end of my childhood years and the beginning of my adult life, for the rest of my life, started off spectacularly awful. I knew it would happen, but it never really occurred to me just how soon. Living through history is weird. I can’t really say I’m a fan of it.

I’ve wondered about consequences a lot. I got, and quit, a job during the pandemic. I wonder what the consequences of that will be? I took care not to burn my bridges. I took extra hours to make it easier on the staff. Did I ever expose them to danger? Did I ever expose my mother to the danger, my father, brother, neighbors? I went onto campus a few times, even while I still worked. I wonder, was it fair for me to take a job, one I technically didn’t need to live, when so many people have lost their own? What was the consequence of that? And what about the people who just don’t seem to care? Why? Is it so hard to believe science can be right? And trust me. Wearing a mask (OVER THE NOSE.) isn’t too bad.

I wondered about normality too. Is this normal? To me, well... sort of. I am part of a generation that grew up with new political news slamming social media and television nearly every other day, just when we may have started to actually care about these things. Isn’t it weird to think only a year and a month ago, the world could have plunged into war over the assassination of a general? Well, that news got
swept under the rug pretty quickly as the new ‘bubonic plague’ that had barely been whispered about, hit the rest of the world hard. Who can blame them? Maybe bats (or pangolin?) taste better than everyone else thinks. I wonder if the distance we’ve made with each other because of the pandemic will stick with us the rest of our lives.

Reading back, the thoughts I have feel scattered. I don’t think it lends itself to being anything necessarily easy to read or analyze, but I don’t know a better way to express the largest sums of my thoughts about the pandemic. I hope everything gets better soon. I want things to feel normal again. I don’t ever want to worry about my mortality or the life of anyone else by just leaving home ever again.

Sincerely,

Me