

My Pandemic Life

Sometimes I was happy, sometimes not.
Sometimes restless, sometimes content.
Lonely but I learned to enjoy my company.
I liked the freedom of no plans,
even though I kept myself so busy
it was as if I had plans.

Mostly I tried not to think about being alone.

Days became weeks. I kept days straight with
garbage out on Wednesday,
cans in Thursday,
Friday “Brooks and Shields” on PBS “News Hour”,
Sunday “Meet the Press.”
Rinse. Repeat.

I made rules. Get up by 8. Coffee, eat breakfast, dress.
Do hair. Keep moving. Keep the kitchen clean.
I felt free to break them too, except for
keeping the kitchen clean. I always did that.

I stayed out of public spaces.
Delivery and pick-up filled my needs.
I tipped generously.

News obsessed, I detested Trump, sure he wanted
people to die, especially people of color.
I prayed for Joe. “Keep him safe. Keep him well.
Save us from greed and selfishness. Save our nation.”

I consumed Netflix and Prime like popcorn.
After 5 PM, I told myself, “enough trying to be productive.
Relax. You made it another day.”

One day I read a whole book from beginning to end.
I finished projects. I fixed. I sorted
everything I owned. I wrote poems. I napped
when nights were sleepless.

I made lists: big projects, little projects,
what would make me happy.
I checked them off one by one.
I cooked delicious food.

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Before I went to sleep, I sat on the edge of my bed.
Feelings from the isolation and loneliness poured
into my heart, and in those few moments,
I felt the pain, then pushed it away again
so that the following day I could get up
and do it all over again.

The days were remarkable because it was/is
a remarkable time. I stayed home,
kept a small circle, wore a mask away from home
and car. Now, vaccinated twice,
immunity developed, the past year is a blank
having molded itself into one piece,
like a bar of chocolate melted in the sun.
I made it through, never getting sick,
maintaining some level of sanity.
I live to tell how this pandemic year
made me happier, more grateful,
more in love with being alive.