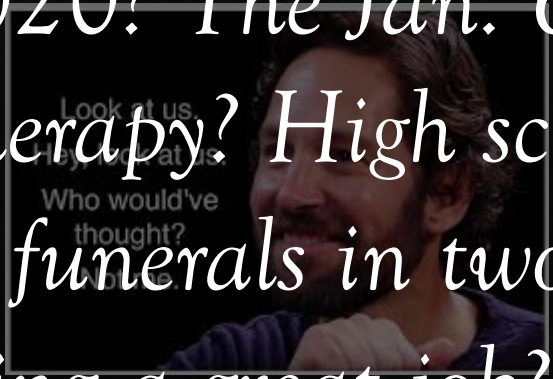
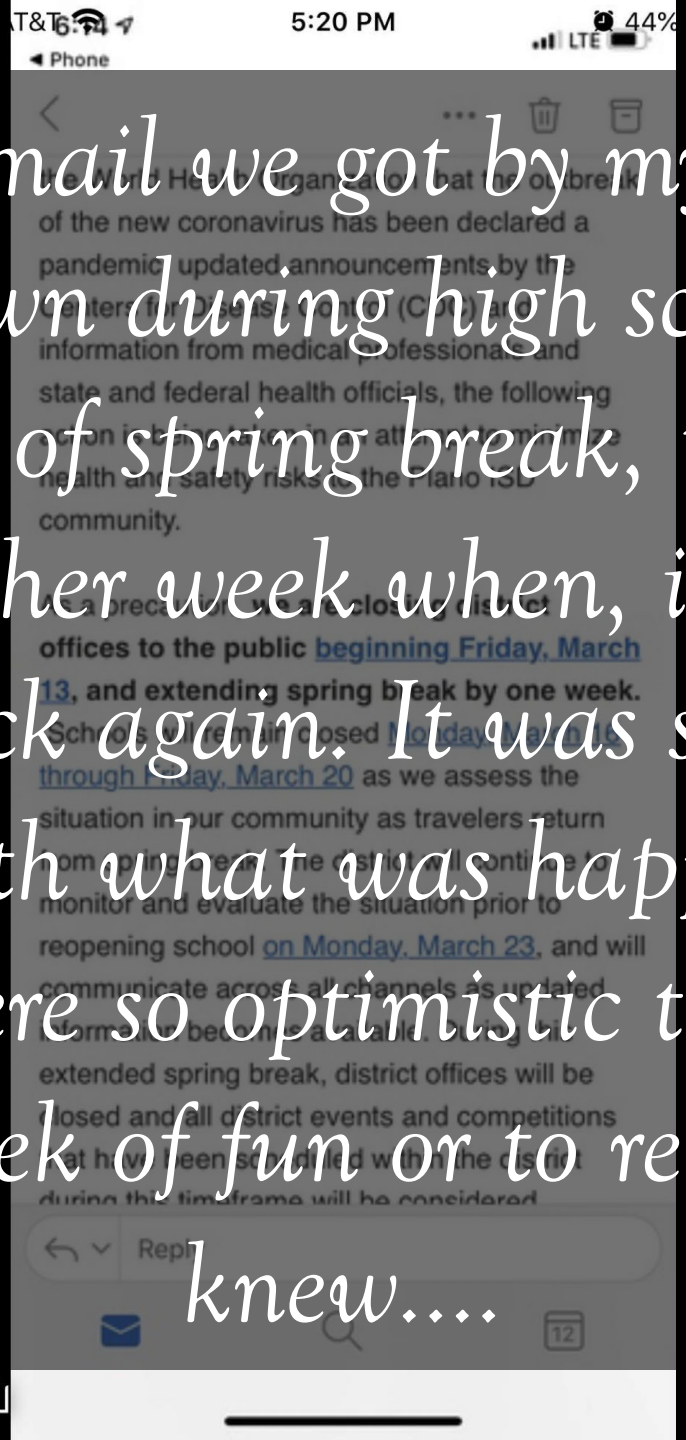
Coping on Campus: A Public History of the COVID-19 Pandemic at Texas State

March-April 2022

The Beginning

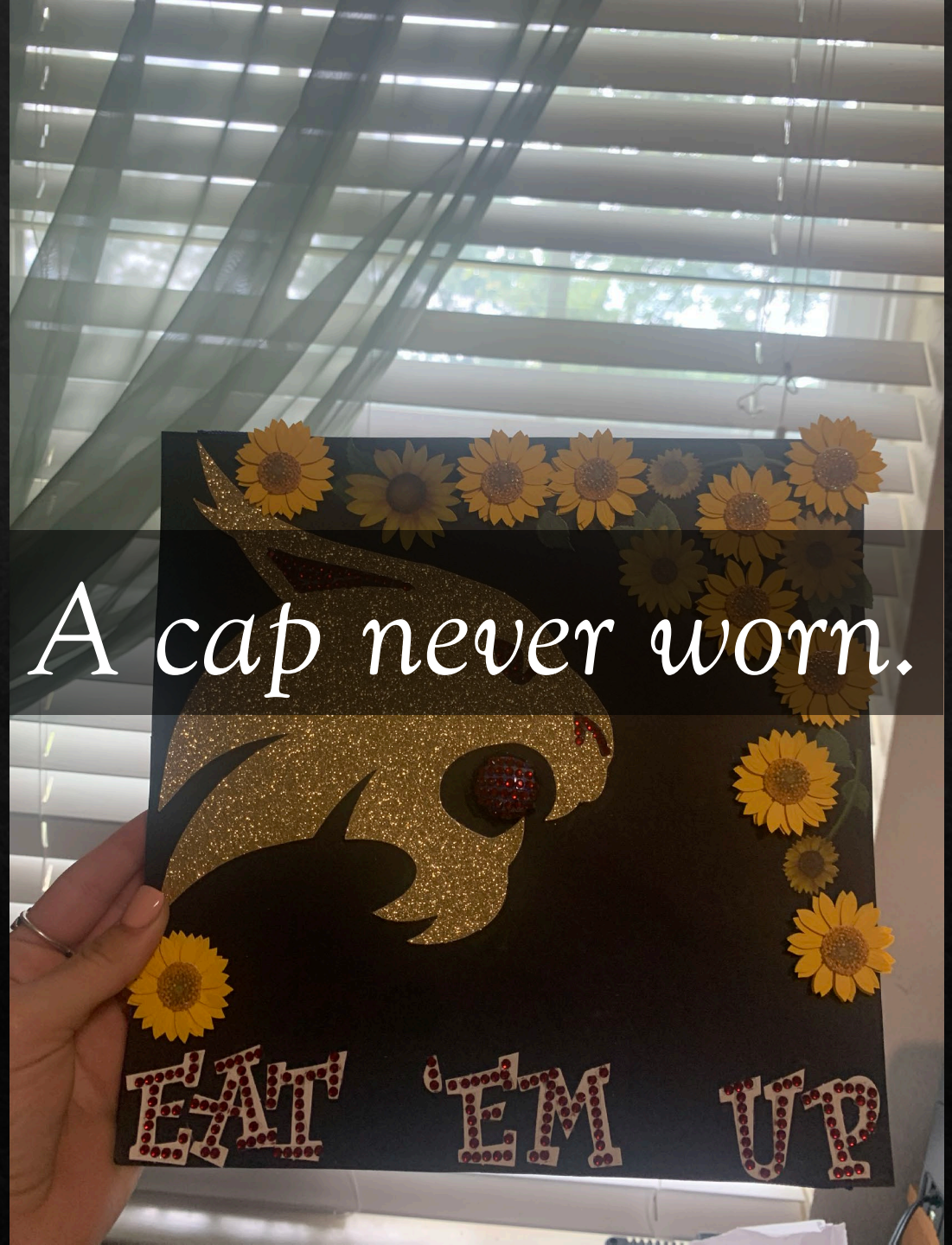
Look at us. Who would've thought? The toilet paper scare of 2020? The Jan. 6th Capitol riots? George Floyd? Therapy? High school friend dying? Attending over 5 funerals in two years? Getting a new cat? Getting a great job? Burnout from isolation? Bonding over isolation? Not me.





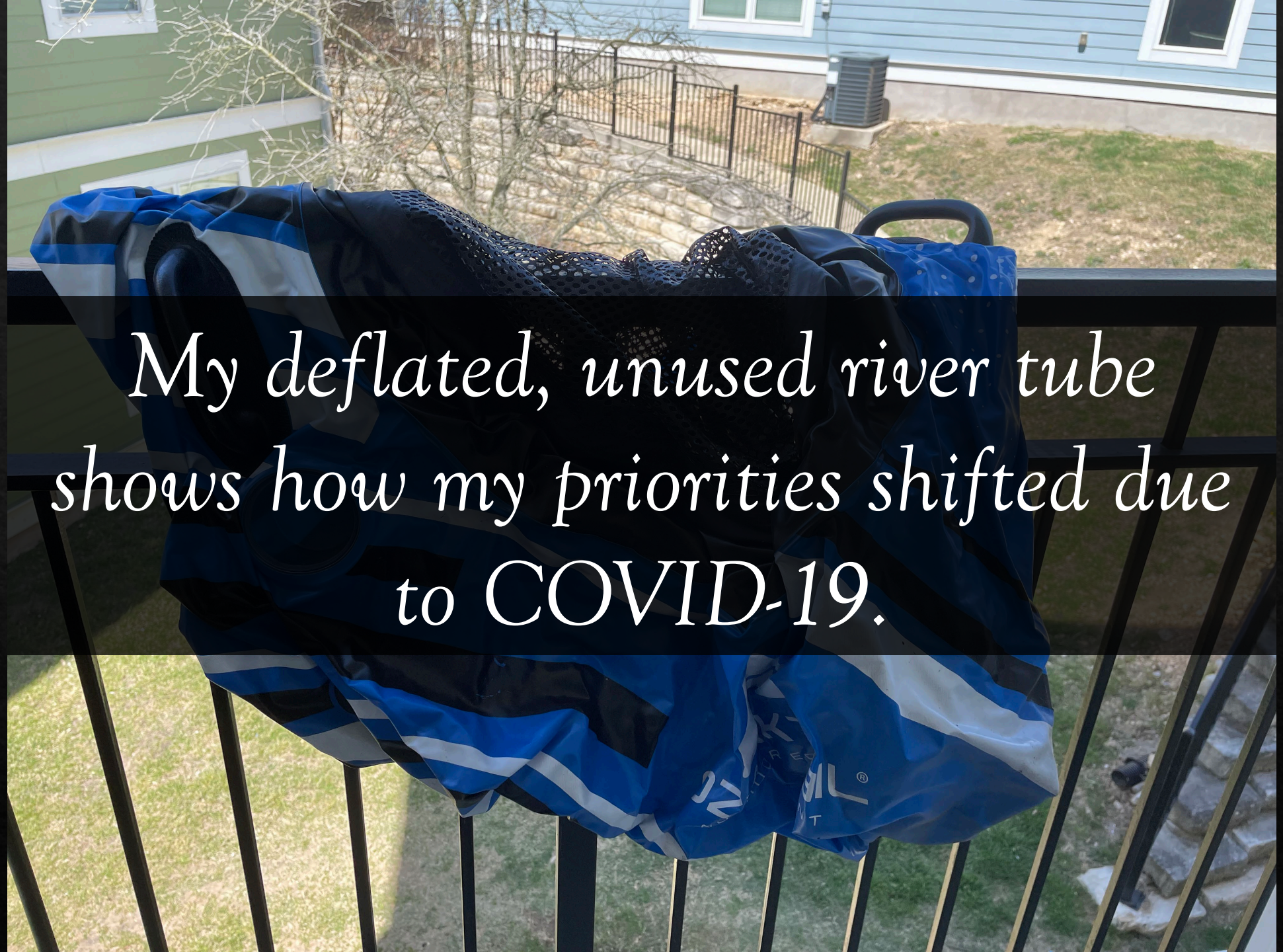
This was the email we got by my school district in my hometown during high school regarding the extension of spring break, thinking we'd just have another week when, in reality, we'd never go back again. It was scary and so unknown with what was happening in the world. We were so optimistic that we'd only get another week of fun or to relax...If only we knew....

Visiting a storage unit to pick up stuff left behind after having to suddenly move out of the dorms in Spring 2020.

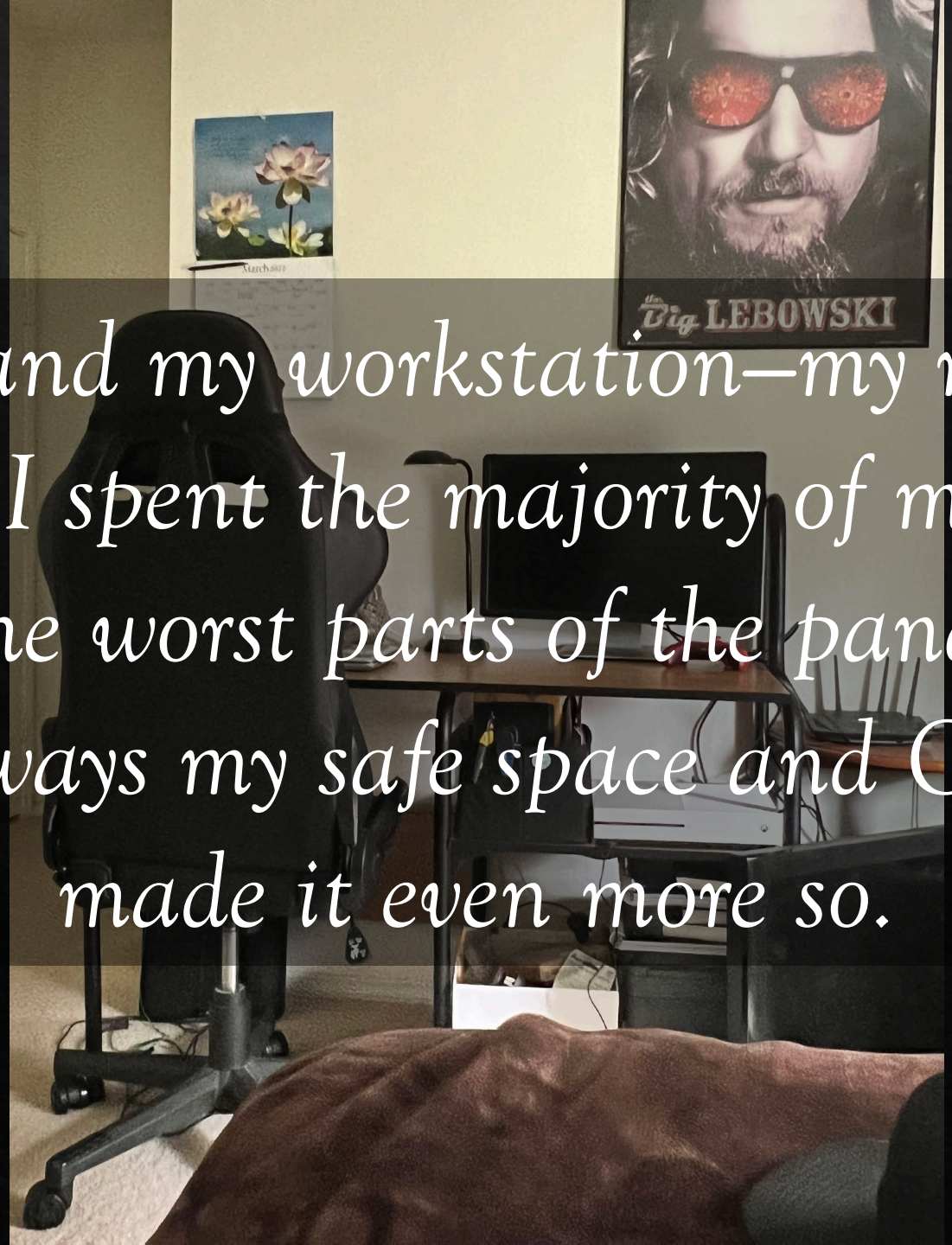


A cap never worn.

Staying Home



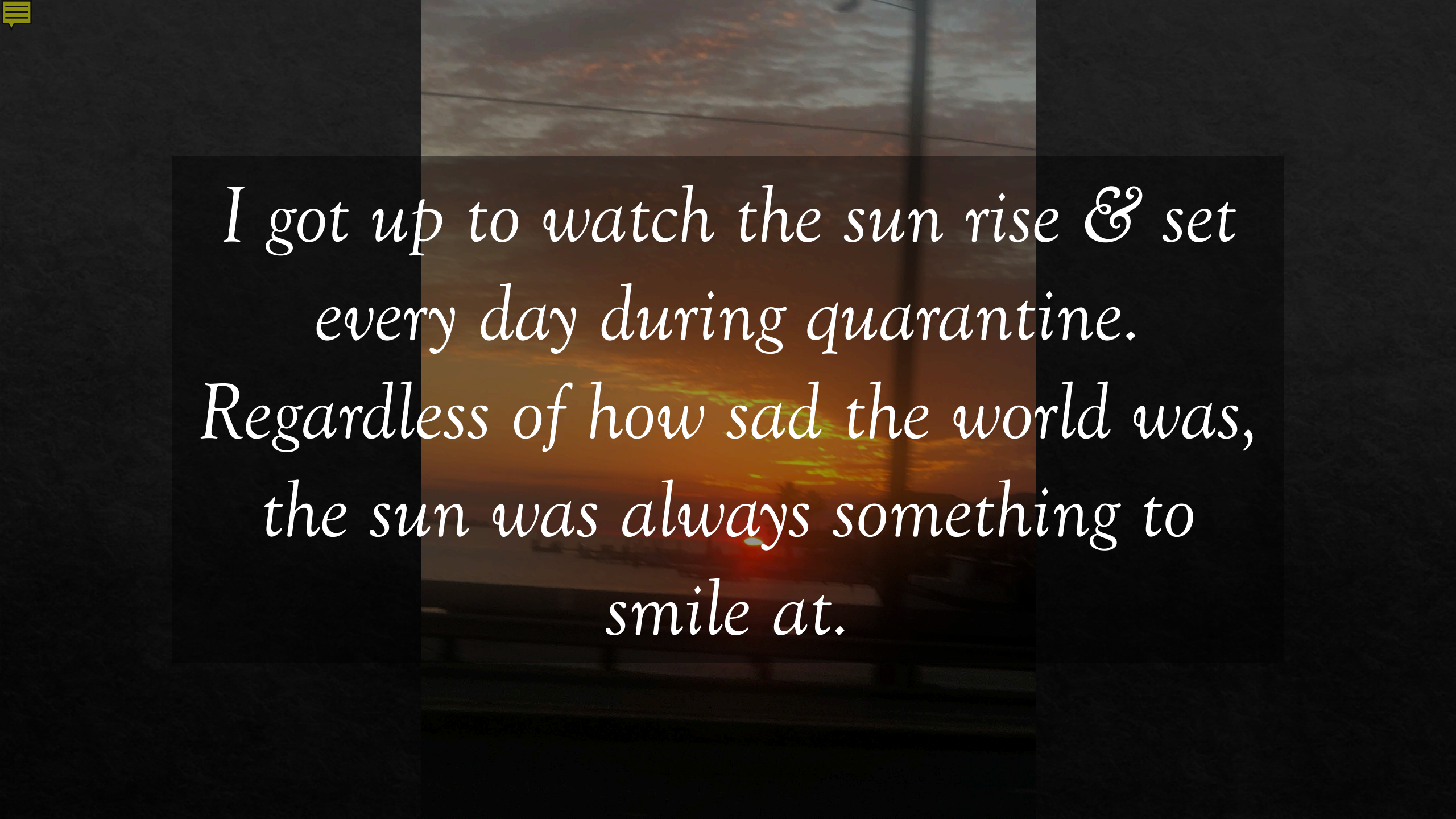
My deflated, unused river tube shows how my priorities shifted due to COVID-19.



Xbox and my workstation—my room is where I spent the majority of my time during the worst parts of the pandemic. It was always my safe space and COVID made it even more so.

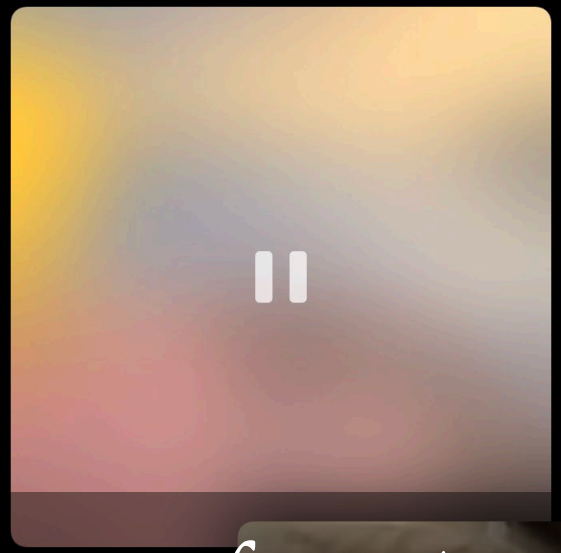
Working from home to feel safe.

Adapting (or not) to Pandemic Changes

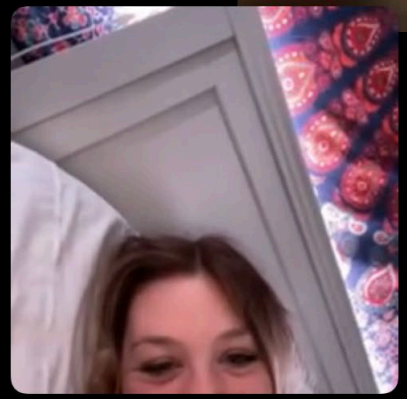

I got up to watch the sun rise & set
every day during quarantine.
Regardless of how sad the world was,
the sun was always something to
smile at.

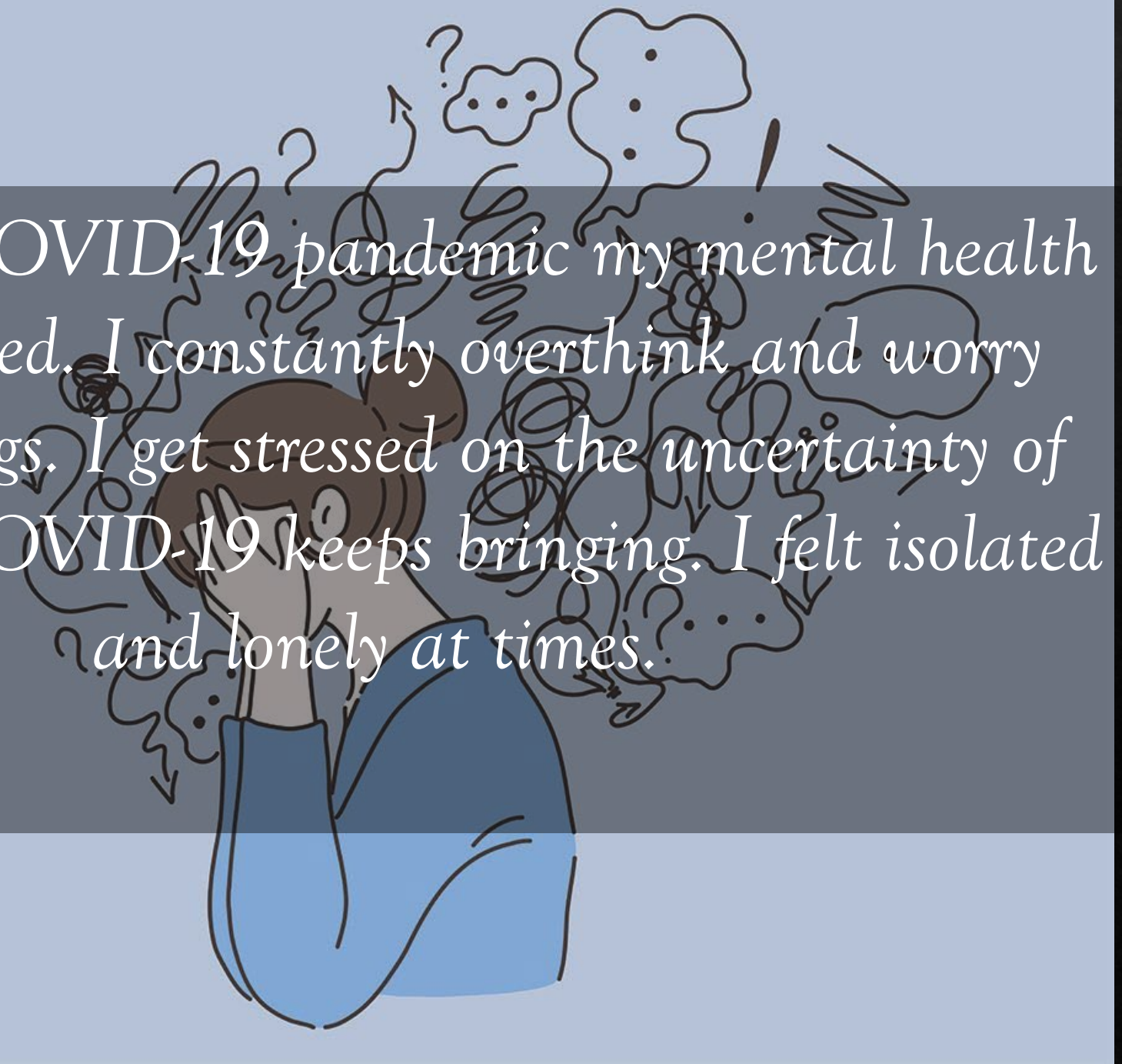
My dad and I were both recovering from Covid-19 when the freeze hit. We, like so many others, lost power and water for a period. This would have been concerning under normal circumstances, but with our weakened constitutions it was downright dangerous. Thankfully, we were fine, but many people in the same circumstances were not. For me, that event highlighted how Covid-19 has made other issues that would normally be manageable so much worse and will continue to do so.

This photo represents loneliness.



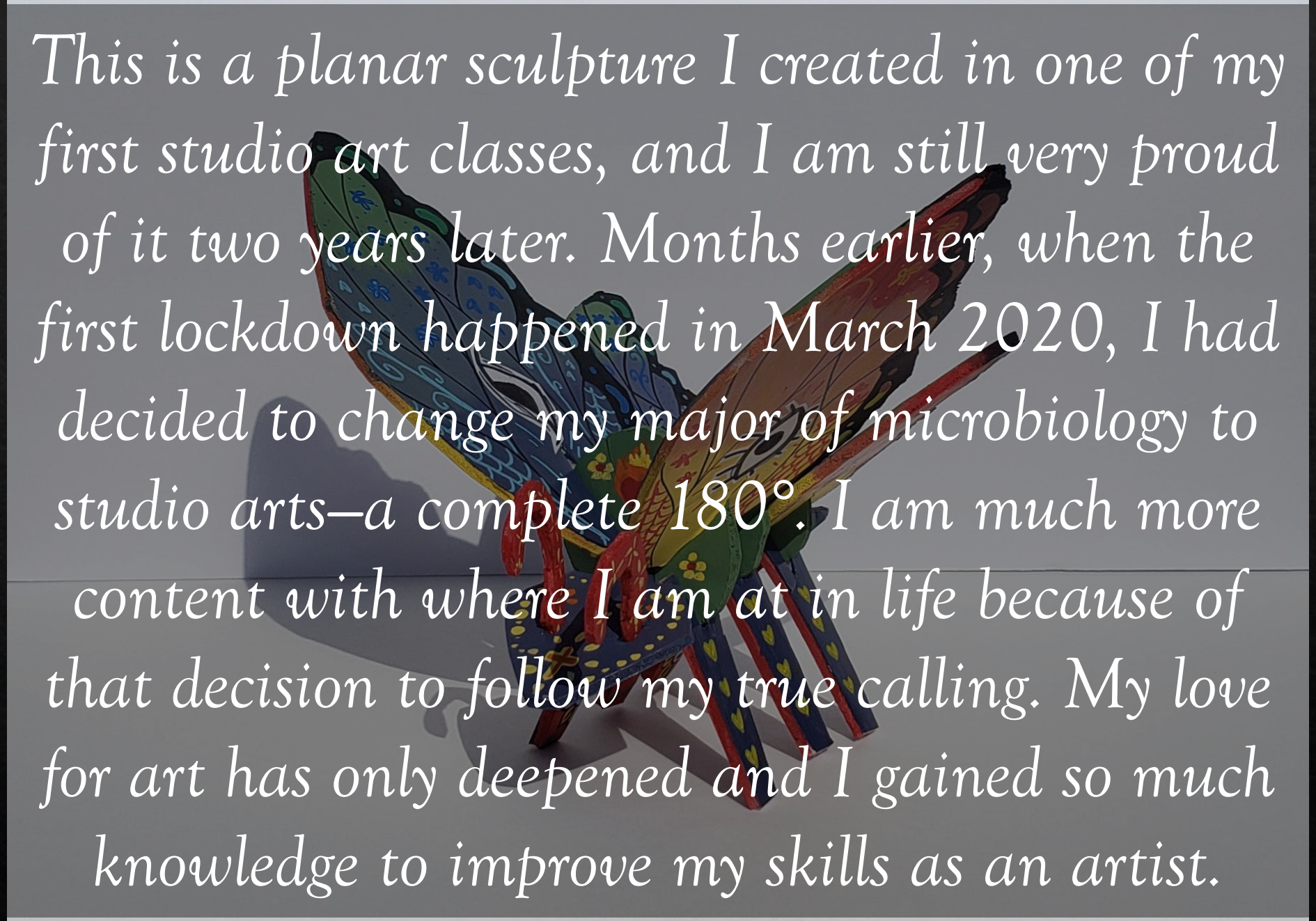
Consistently on facetime with friends because we couldn't see each other.



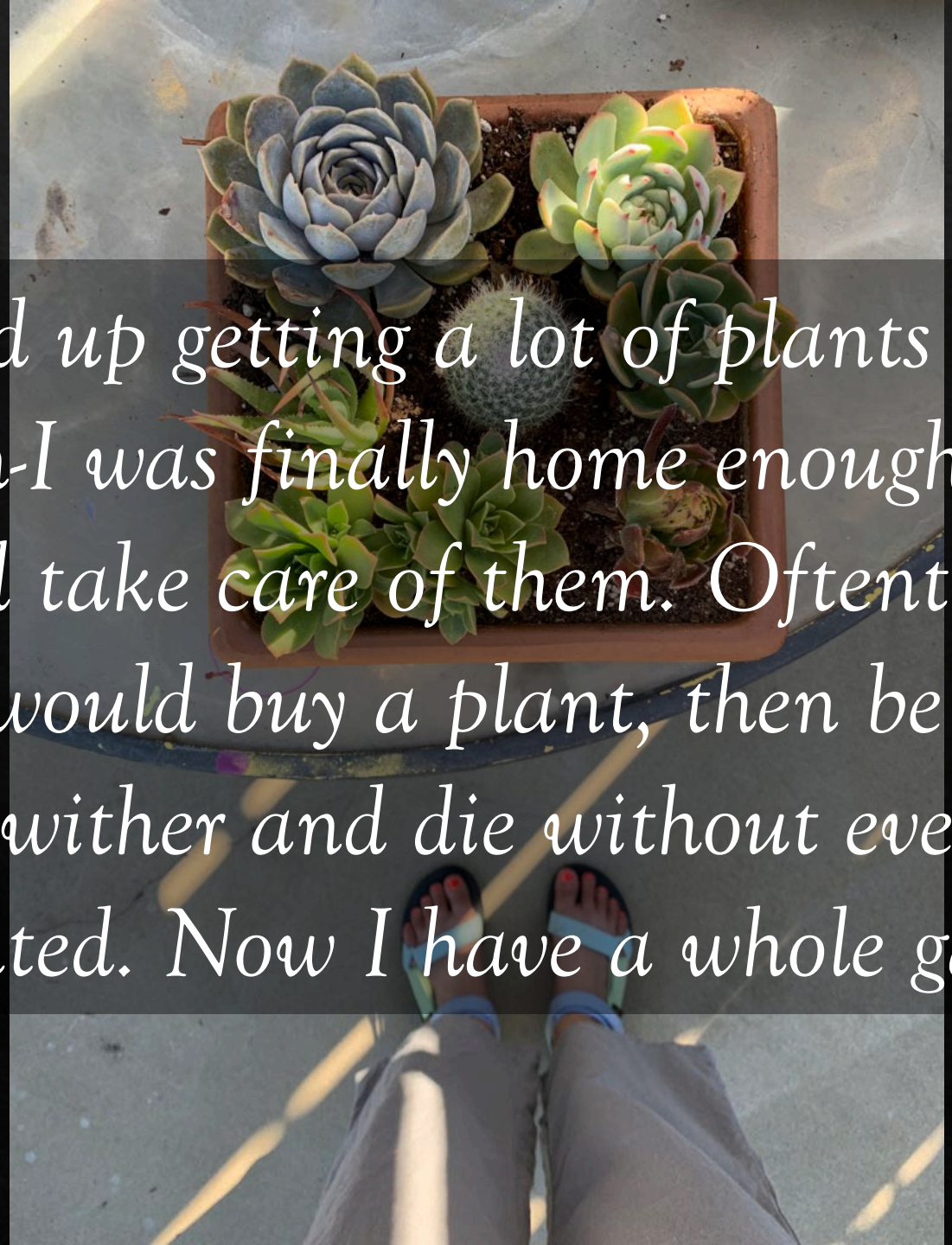


Since the COVID-19 pandemic my mental health has declined. I constantly overthink and worry about things. I get stressed on the uncertainty of situation COVID-19 keeps bringing. I felt isolated and lonely at times.

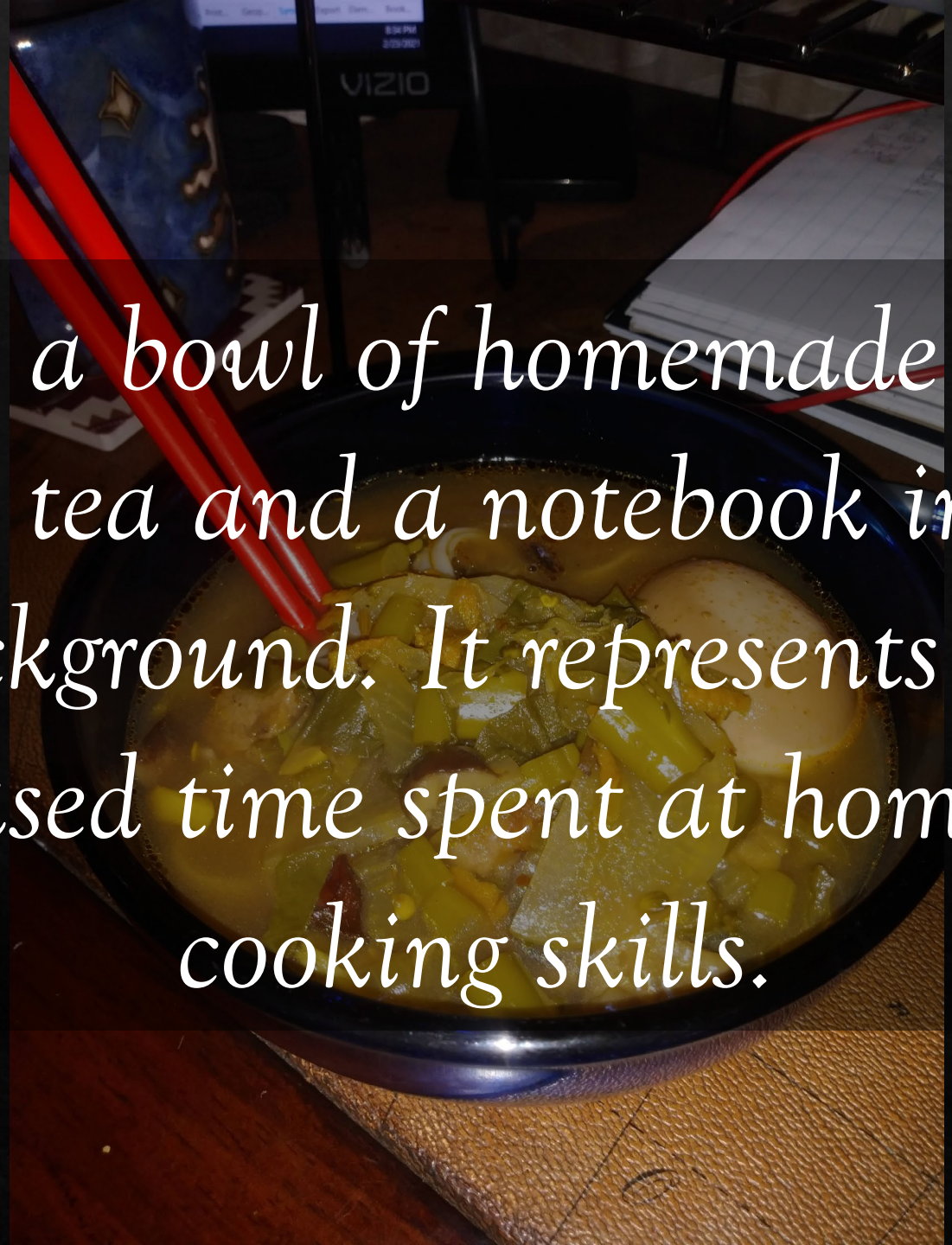
Learning New Skills, Developing New Passions



This is a planar sculpture I created in one of my first studio art classes, and I am still very proud of it two years later. Months earlier, when the first lockdown happened in March 2020, I had decided to change my major of microbiology to studio arts—a complete 180°. I am much more content with where I am at in life because of that decision to follow my true calling. My love for art has only deepened and I gained so much knowledge to improve my skills as an artist.

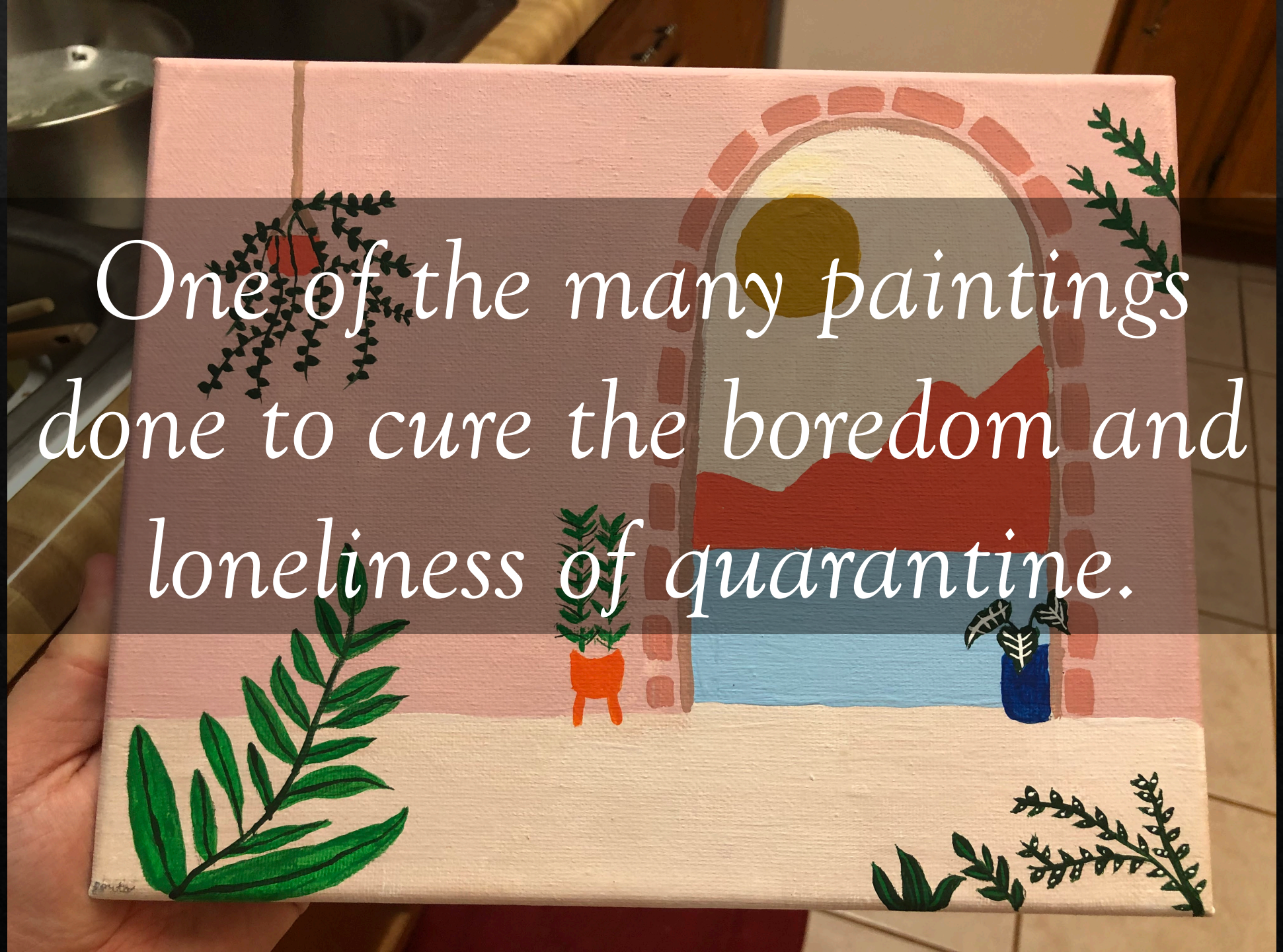


I ended up getting a lot of plants during lockdown-I was finally home enough to plant them and take care of them. Oftentimes (pre-Covid) I would buy a plant, then be so busy it would wither and die without ever being replanted. Now I have a whole garden!



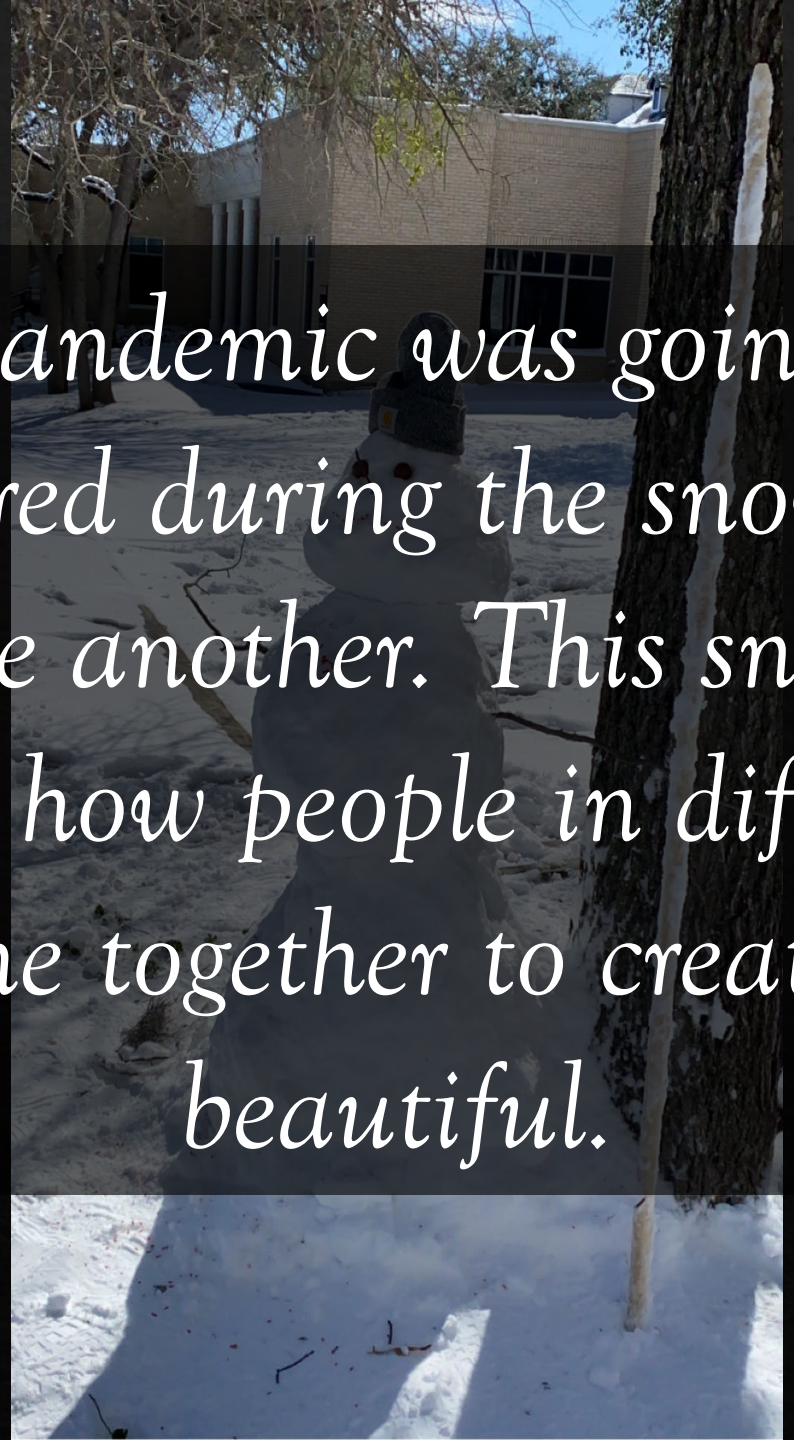
This is a bowl of homemade ramen with tea and a notebook in the background. It represents my increased time spent at home and cooking skills.

Allowing me to find my passion.

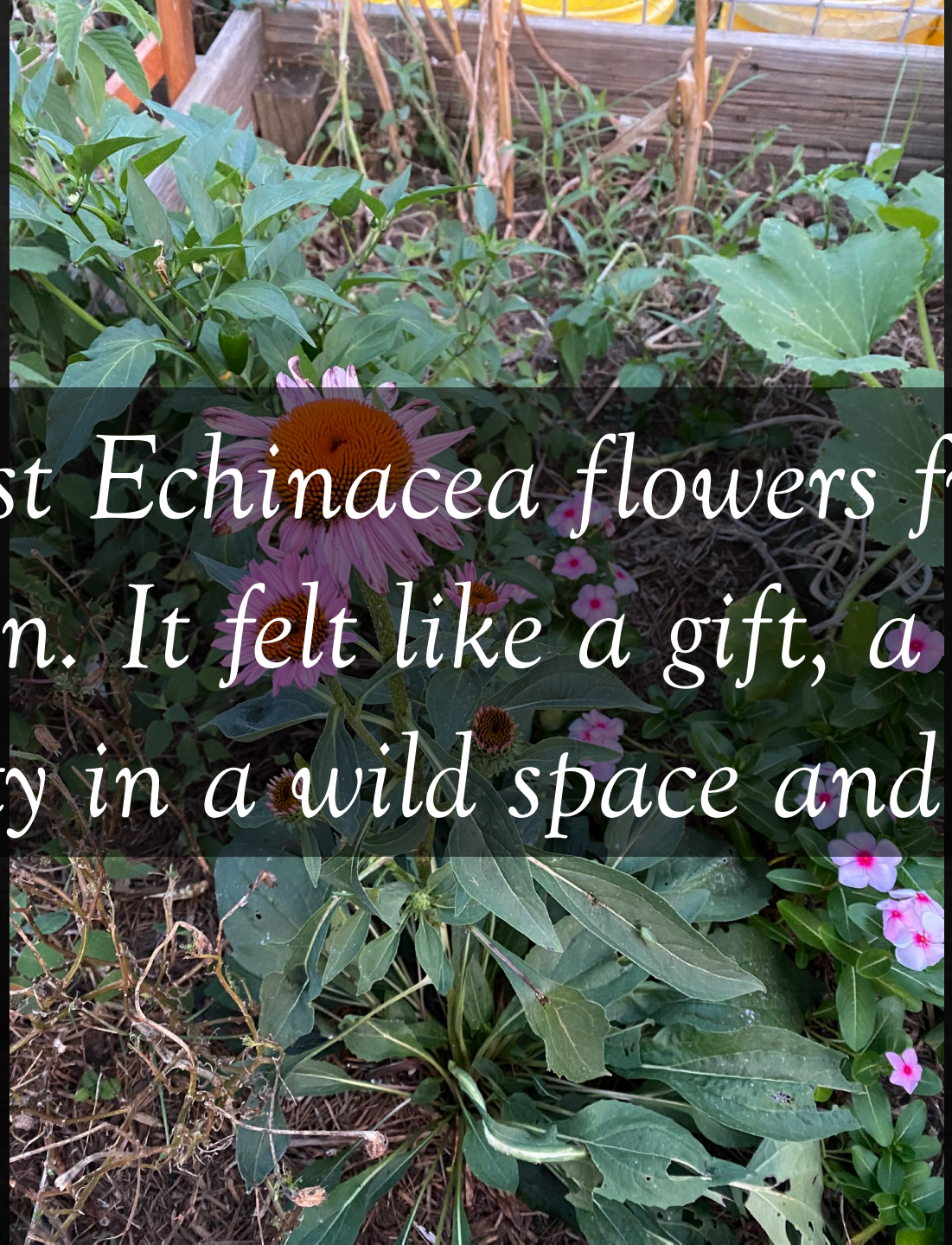


One of the many paintings done to cure the boredom and loneliness of quarantine.

I found a new affinity for Lego.



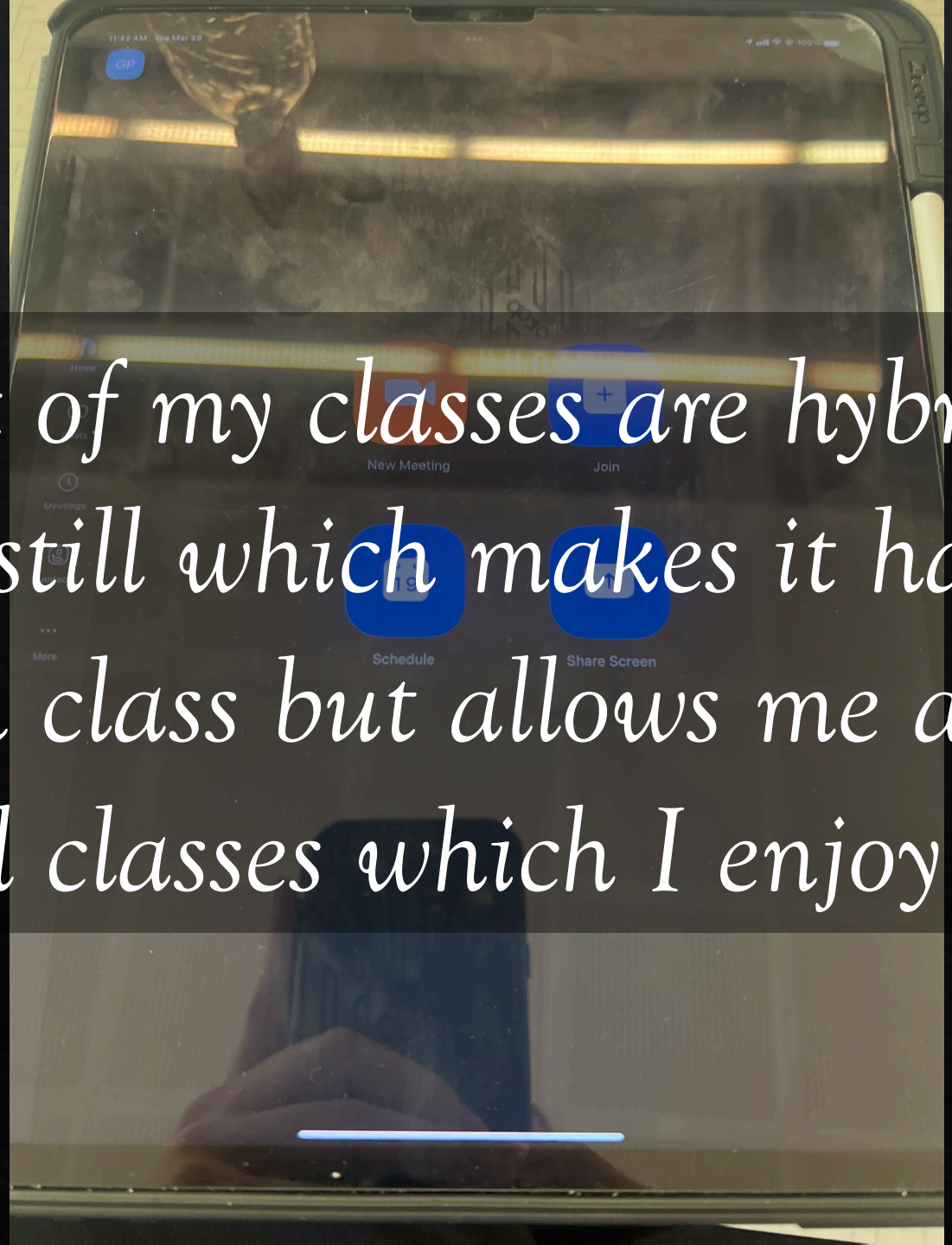
While the pandemic was going on, people still persevered during the snowstorm and helped one another. This snowman is symbolic of how people in difficult times can still come together to create something beautiful.



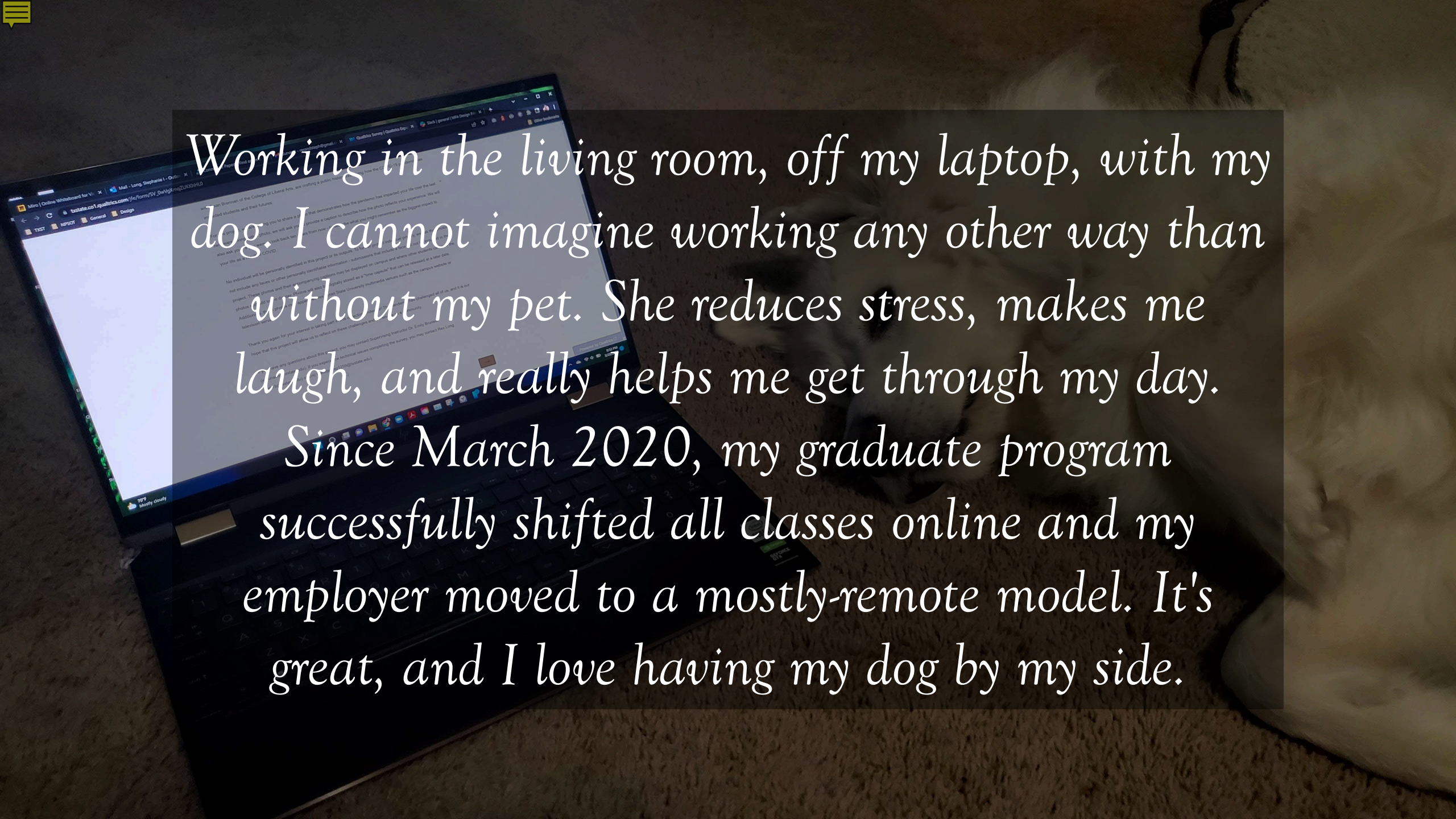
Our first Echinacea flowers from our garden. It felt like a gift, a bit of beauty in a wild space and time.

This is watercolor painting of roses I made for a friend of mine during the quarantine. I love this painting because it doesn't reference covid in any way. This became really important for the friend I made it for because she lost someone really close to her months later.

Education: Online



A lot of my classes are hybrid or online still which makes it harder to learn in class but allows me access to recorded classes which I enjoy having.



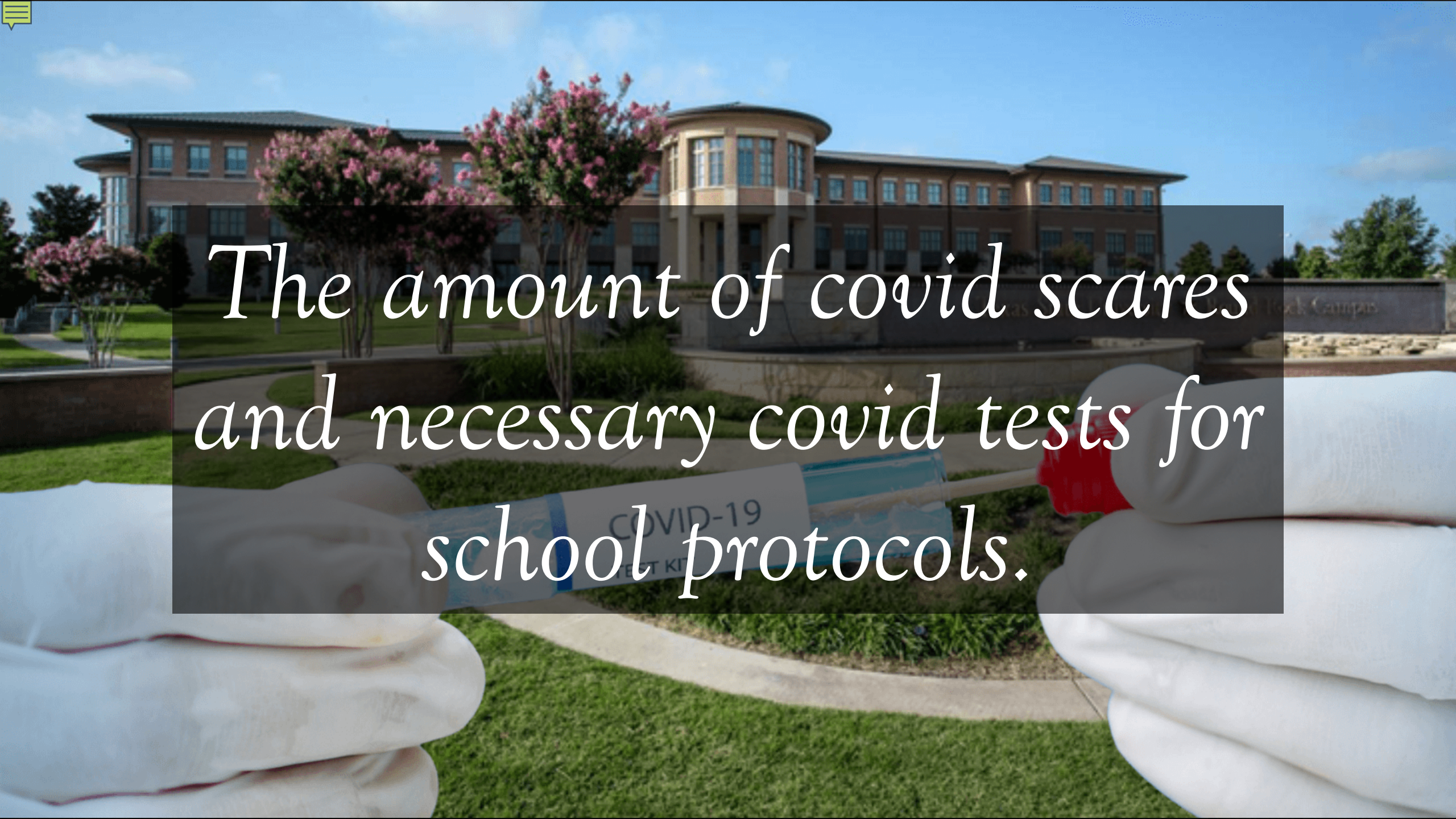
Working in the living room, off my laptop, with my dog. I cannot imagine working any other way than without my pet. She reduces stress, makes me laugh, and really helps me get through my day. Since March 2020, my graduate program successfully shifted all classes online and my employer moved to a mostly-remote model. It's great, and I love having my dog by my side.

Thoughts about Health and Safety

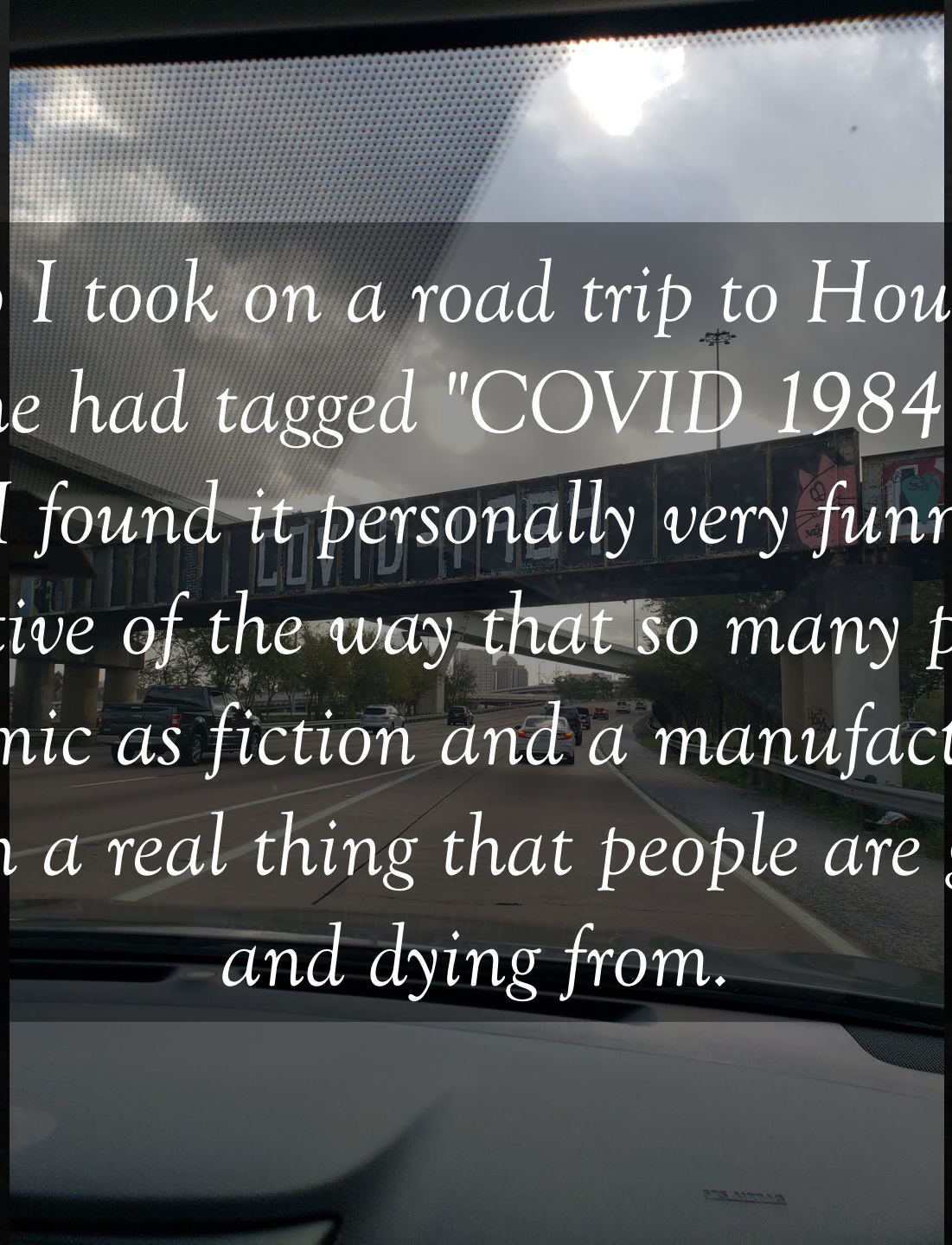
I am always aware of what I'm doing now, and I know the covid symptoms, so I know what to look out for with people.

Covid impacted me by having to wear a mask all the time.

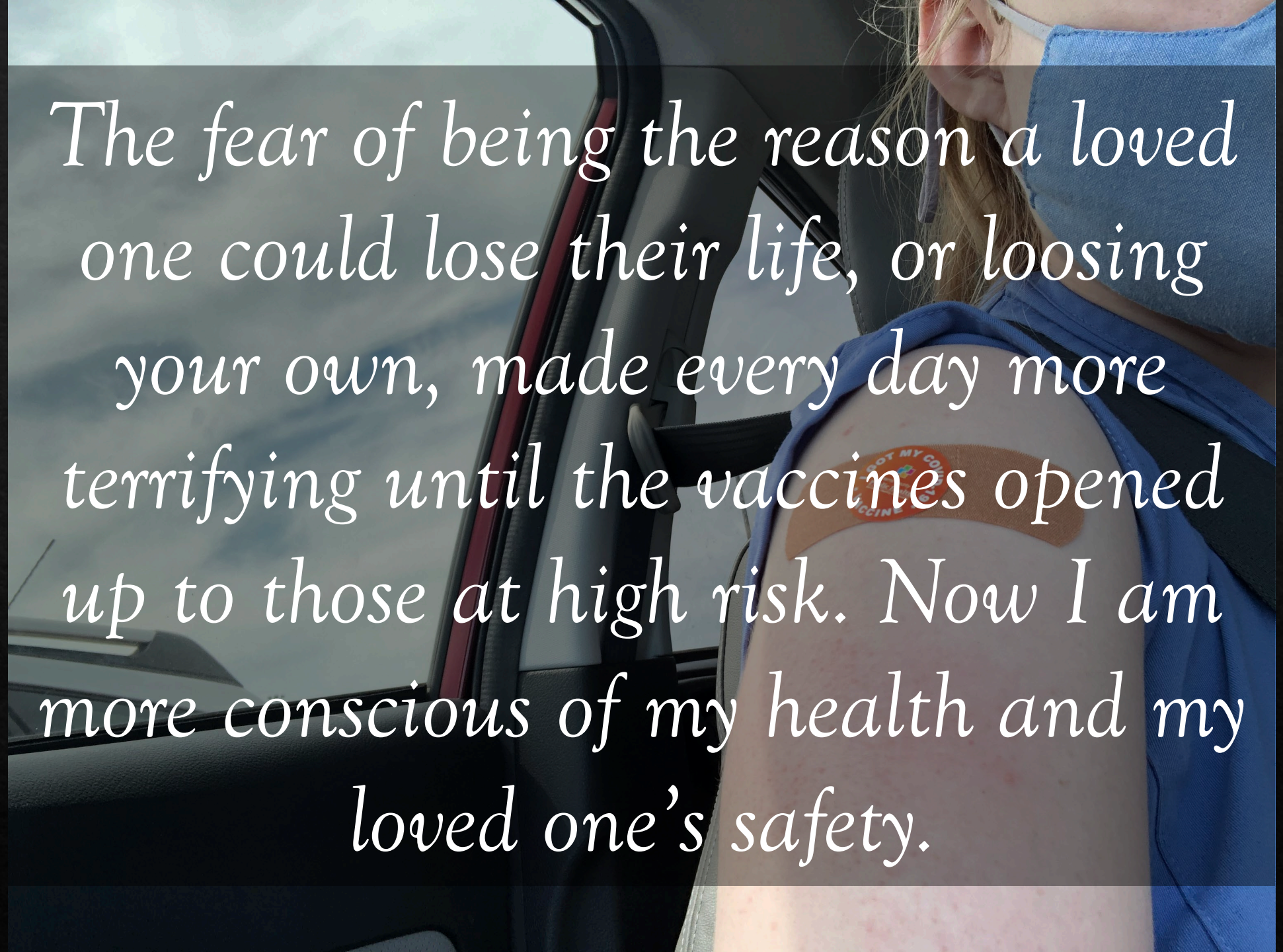
Just a happy day!



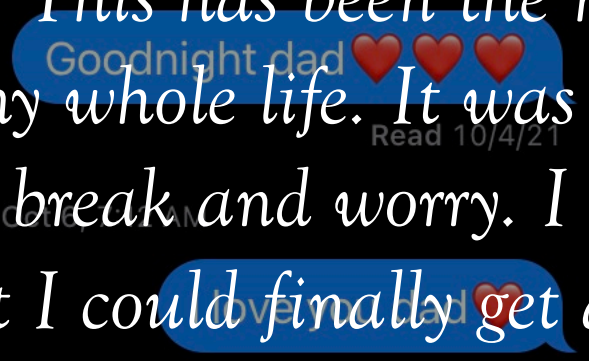
The amount of covid scares and necessary covid tests for school protocols.



This photo I took on a road trip to Houston where someone had tagged "COVID 1984" on an overpass. I found it personally very funny but also representative of the way that so many people view the pandemic as fiction and a manufactured event rather than a real thing that people are getting sick and dying from.


The fear of being the reason a loved one could lose their life, or loosing your own, made every day more terrifying until the vaccines opened up to those at high risk. Now I am more conscious of my health and my loved one's safety.

Endings

Goodbye,
my brother.

This photo is the last text messages I sent to my father in October 2021, before he passed from Covid. He was an operating room registered nurse and had been working up until he had to be hospitalized. This all occurred during my fall semester in my senior year here at Texas State. This has been the most life changing and hardest thing I've ever experienced in my whole life. It was awful trying to keep up in school when I was in constant heart break and worry. I would travel back home any time my family needed help or that I could finally get a chance to see my dad. What made this even more difficult is my dad is the reason I decided to purse the major and career that I have been working towards all these years in school. So, now in my final year he isn't here to see me finish what he inspired me to do. My life is forever changed because of the pandemic, and I didn't think it would take away so much from my life.