

Dear Tacoma, The COVID lockdown, and the ineffective response of national 'leaders' broke us. I don't know anyone who isn't dealing with symptoms of Ongoing Traumatic Stress Disorder from having our lives up-ended without warning and thrown into what feels like a dystopian apocalyptic movie. People I know or see at the store display different symptoms, but no one seems immune.

And yet I feel lucky. Our mayor and governor have been way above the curve so far - I can't imagine living anyplace else.

Doing my daily 'get fresh air in my lungs' walks in my Hilltop neighborhood, I saw people out in their gardens and doing home improvement projects. I marveled at the quiet. I prayed for the ambulance drivers bringing people to the hospital a few blocks from my apartment, and for the workers in scrubs coming home from grueling shifts.

I spent my 'locked-down' 20th wedding anniversary and birthday at the waterside, grateful for the great public access Tacomans have along the parkway to healing views of the Salish sea. I prayed for the orcas, given a brief reprieve from the onslaught of shipping lanes, and felt poignant wistfulness - so many humans chafing at their temporary restrictions, but when those lift, our water-dwelling neighbors will be once again hurt by our 'liberty'.

I miss the great craft breweries in our city! I miss the great restaurants! I pray for the workers and the owners, and hope someday to feel safe re-entering a business like that - but as long as f&b workers are so poorly paid, and drawn so largely from communities unable to afford insurance, I wonder whether I ever will be able to trust that employees can stay home when they're sick.

Future generations, I hope & pray, will have used this crisis to understand that huge disparities in wealth, combined with a lack of affordable housing and lack of guaranteed health care combined to create a fatal mess - but solidarity, creativity, and compassion restored and healed us, not only as individuals but as communities, large and small.

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Peach's Message

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