

Spring 2021

## Pandemic Diaries

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**Pandemic Pandemonium - Spring 2021**  
**Student Winner based on Assignment**

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Semester taught assignment: Fall 2020

Course Title: Eng 240, Poetry Writing Workshop: The Prose Poem and Short Forms

Assignment Title: Pandemic Diaries

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**Pandemic Diaries**

(adapted from [Lynda Barry, \*New York Times\*](#))

Through a series of teacher-led, generative, timed, in-class writing prompts, students will be guided toward the creation of a short narrative that reflects on losses and insights they've experienced during the pandemic by (1) considering the time before "now," (2) the time when disruption was experienced most intensely, and (3) what is experienced differently in the indefinite and ever-morphing "new now."

In a series of 3 separate timed-writing settings, students will consider each of the categories above writing out answers by hand to these prompts delivered orally by the instructor in real time:

1. Reflect on the time-frame specified from above (2 minutes)
2. List every incident associated with this period as a list of scenes (2 minutes)
3. Choose one scene they feel most connected to
4. List everything they can recall about this incident focusing on specific sensory detail, remembered chronology, emotional state, people involved, etc. (8 minutes)
5. Finally, write out the scene in first person present tense starting with the location, ie: "I am climbing the stairs to the upstairs gallery..." (8 minutes)

Students will further develop any scene generated into a finished piece—whether prose poem, flash fiction, or lyric essay—through further development, workshop, and revision applying short form strategies discussed in class. Such creations reflect student Resilience through reflecting on and shaping the narrative toward some insight or discovery.