



Project 2020

Alex Freiburger

Prologue

This book is a story about the sights, sounds, and experiences I have had while living through the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all living through an unprecedented period of time, and, through my poetry, I hope my readers are able to feel many emotions, but one specifically: hope. While many people may feel as if this will never end, we know it eventually will, and the only way to make it through these troubling times is to remain hopeful. Hope will continue to keep all our spirits high and turn a negative experience into a positive one. I hope you all feel a sense of hope through my writing, and can come back to this work in the future, and remember that, even when the pandemic ends, being hopeful and optimistic will continue to improve negative experiences, when all may seem lost.

- Alex Freiburger

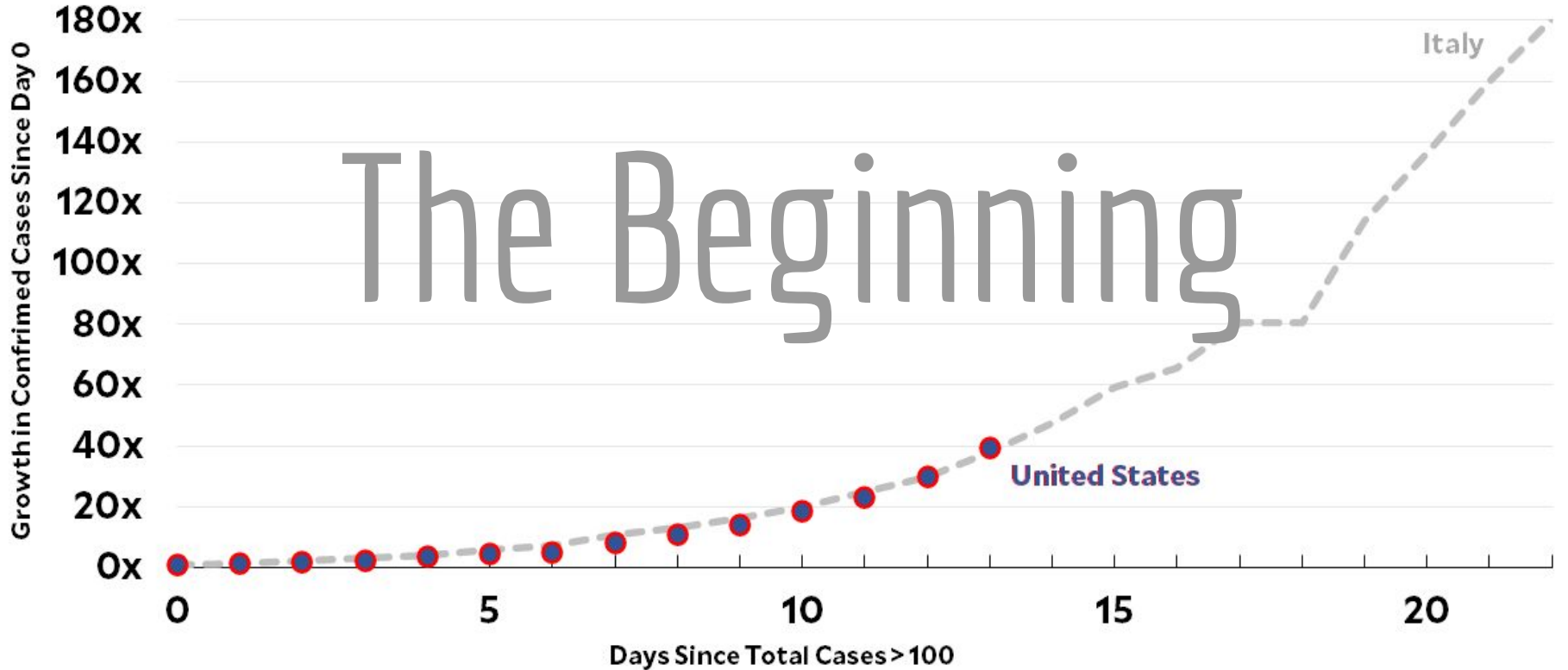
A background image of a starry night sky with numerous bright stars and some nebulae. The stars are of various colors, including white, yellow, and blue. The nebulae are faint and wispy, adding depth to the scene. The overall tone is dark and serene.

“Only in the darkness can you see the
stars”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

United States

Growth in cumulative coronavirus cases since Day 0
Day 0 = First day with total cumulative cases > 100



The Lights Turned Off

Fans cheering

Balls being dribbled, hit,
and passed

Pucks being flown through
the air

The lights on bright

Televisions everywhere

“March Madness with no
fans”

“NBA season to be
suspended”

“The sports world has
stopped”

Suddenly, the lights have
gone dark

Days pass by

Wishing for the return

One day it will come

But for now, we live in
memories

Because the lights are turned
off

Stadiums sit empty

Players at home

Final seasons have been
cancelled

A sense of no hope

Because the lights are turned
off

But one day

In the near future

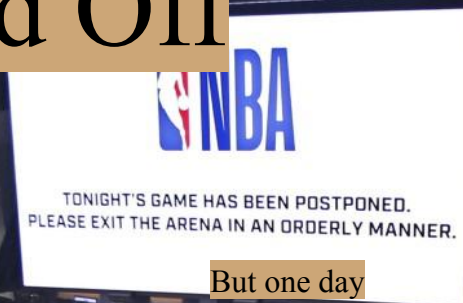
The lights will shine again

Fans will be back

Players will write their stories

Hope will be restored

Because the lights will shine again



TONIGHT'S GAME HAS BEEN POSTPONED.
PLEASE EXIT THE ARENA IN AN ORDERLY MANNER.

Headlines of Our Lives

Australia is on fire

Please donate to help the Koalas.

World War 3 is starting.

Iran launches missiles, injuring American soldiers.

The President is on the hot seat as the impeachment trial of President Trump begins.

Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna pass away

The sports world mourns the loss of an all-time great.

COVID-19 forces unheard of lockdowns worldwide.

Italy is the first country to implement a nationwide lockdown.

This is only the 5th month.



3/30/20

Inspired by “Monday Sundown 9/17/01” by Lucille Clifton

We attest that there is not a feeling
more comforting than togetherness

We attest that there is not a feeling
more disheartening than separation

Clamor and solitude
Clamor and solitude

What has been taken
is euphoria.

Passion + Determination = Uncertainty

Inspired by “Victory” by Sherman Alexie

The tournaments were supposed to be plenty
The medals were supposed to be golden
The coaches were supposed to be everywhere
And the scholarships, oh the scholarships.

Yet this wretched disease
Ended all of that.

So many chances for so many people of so many different backgrounds
driven away.

All these last chances or last efforts
to create lifelong change for a family
Gone.

But we must remember,
every cry of pain is part of it.
If we let the cries overcome us, the disease wins.
If we rise up and continue to fight
until there is no time left on the clock,
then all those wishes
Will be able to return.



Beach Day

Inspired by “Distance” by Brett Vogelsinger

It feels as though the world has stopped.

The sand sizzles below
like miners are finding gold in the 40’s under my feet.

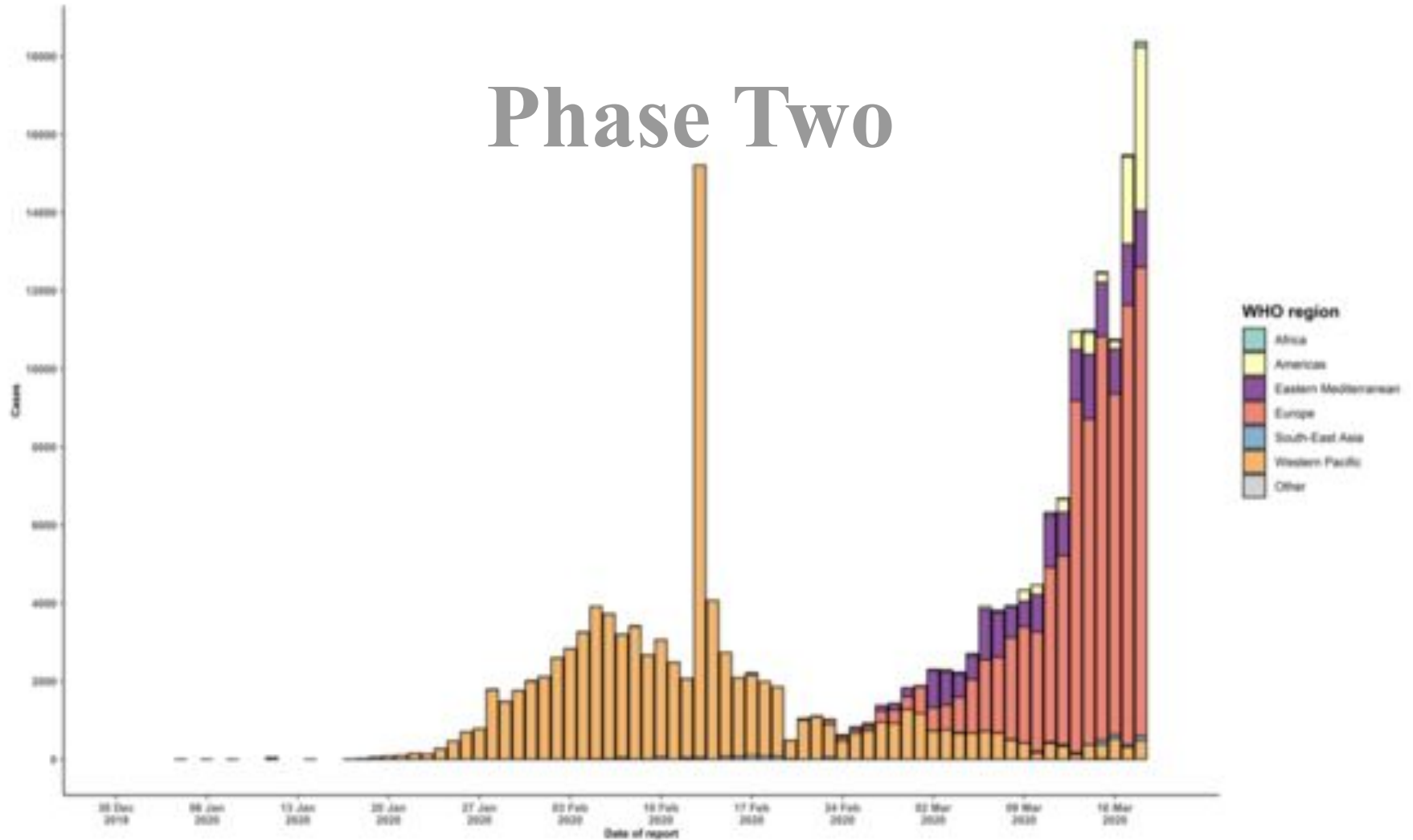
The sun beats down on my body,
like Congress beat down on Nixon after the Watergate scandal.


The water roars against the shore,
like the people of Germany did when Ronald Reagan called to “Tear down this wall.”

The peacefulness of the beach is what makes it seem imaginary,
like what will be written in the history books about 2020.

The sand, the sun, the water, the peace.
It feels as though the world has stopped.

Phase Two



A landscape photograph featuring a road with a guardrail in the foreground, a valley with sparse vegetation in the middle ground, and dark mountains in the background under a bright blue sky with large, white, fluffy clouds. A vibrant rainbow is visible in the lower-left foreground, extending upwards towards the mountains.

“Hope transforms pessimism into
optimism. Hope is invincible.”

- Daisaku Ikeda

Whispers **of the Day**

All I can hear is

the cry of lost **memories**

even though lives are gone.

New Year, Different Dream



Inspired by "Invitation" by Shel Silverstein

If you are a dreamer, this is the year for you.

If you are energetic, positive, and passionate, this is the year for you.

If you're a pessimist or a debby downer, this is not the year for you.

But there is still a place here this year.

This might not be the year that was expected,

But it will lead to the decade of opportunities.

Come in, we are in this together.

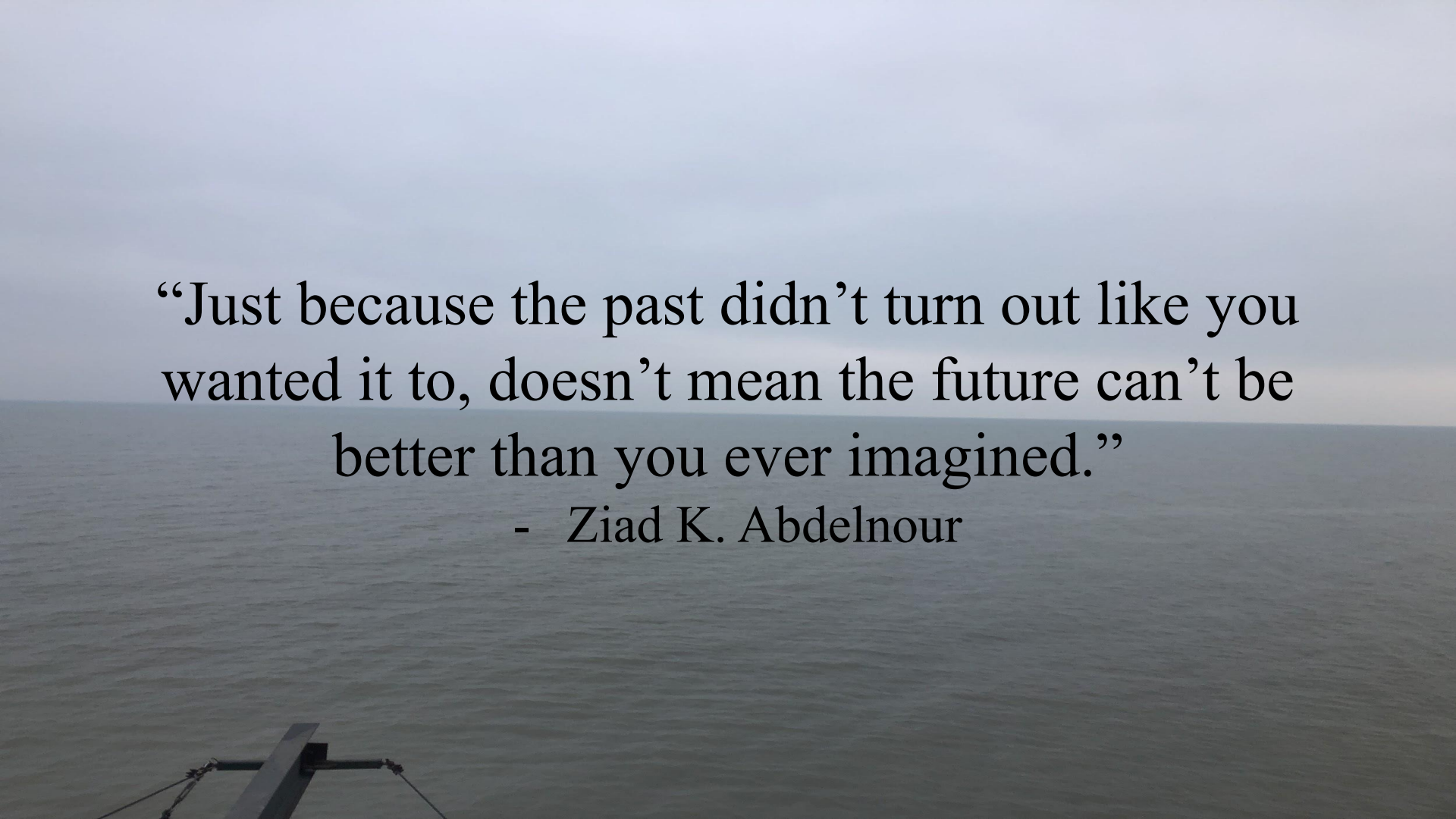


The Economy Before and as a Result of COVID-19





The Future



“Just because the past didn’t turn out like you wanted it to, doesn’t mean the future can’t be better than you ever imagined.”

- Ziad K. Abdelnour

The Return



The skyline reflects on to the crystal blue lake
The tallest tower in the Western Hemisphere amazes visitors
from all over the world
The buses offer different tours
in Japanese, English, Mandarin, Spanish, French, or German.
The harbor is infused with people from all different walks of life
who have come to visit one of the world's great cities.
The sun has begun to set on another perfect July evening.

Yet now, the sun rises and the skyline still reflects onto Lake Ontario
But the visitors are no longer.
The buses are not running.
The harbor is like a ghost town.
The only people that can be seen are locals, walking six feet apart,
wearing protective masks, and barely interacting with each other.
The sun will begin to set again.

One day, in the near future, the sun will rise.
And the harbor will be infused with tourists.
Languages from around the world will be heard.
The tours will be going again.

But for now, we must appreciate
the sun rising, the sun setting.
The people may not be there at the moment,
but the city will always be there,
and when it is time to return,
we will come together again.

Solving for Hope

20 + 20 = the craziest year in the modern generation

The year of lost graduations and celebrations,
and when time by yourself took on a whole new meaning.

19 + 45 = the year everybody is comparing this to

And why?

We are not at war with a fascist dictator
but rather an “invisible enemy”
that is still very lethal.

20 + 01 = the year millions re-evaluated everything
and wondered how quickly their livelihoods could be
stripped away.

17 + 76 = the year brave soldiers

fought for their culture
and told tyrannical leaders that their
rule would stand
no longer.

18 + 65 = the year equality was
supposed to be restored,
but was not.

20 + 20 = a rest of year and possibly
decade that may seem bleak,
but a solution can be created through
one formula:
Hope.

A New World

Inspired by “Dream Variations” by Langston Hughes

The ability for everybody to go to college without debt where education and grades are their number one concern, not whether or not they will be able to afford to return next year.

The ability for everyone to be healthy where they do not have to say goodbye to their family for the final time without a final hug or kiss.

The ability for there to be equality for all where people never have to experience going out on a run and never returning home.

The ability for there to be nobody left out on the streets where homelessness and poverty do not define our cities and urban hubs but rather are memories of the past.

That is my dream!



Life Dreams

I woke up at 7:00 am sharp

Groggy and wishing for more sleep

Needing coffee to function

Before the bell rings at 8:15.

The classes felt long and the days felt longer

Just wanting to go back to sleep

Instead of having to sing songs in Spanish at 9:00.

But now, I long for those restless mornings

I dream of those Spanish songs to be sung

I wish I could wake up at 7 on the dot

And make my way to 310 Green Bay Road.

For all the complaints

Early mornings

And late nights

I would do anything to have them again

Even though they will return soon

I know the complaints will return.

But when those sleep-deprived days come
back,

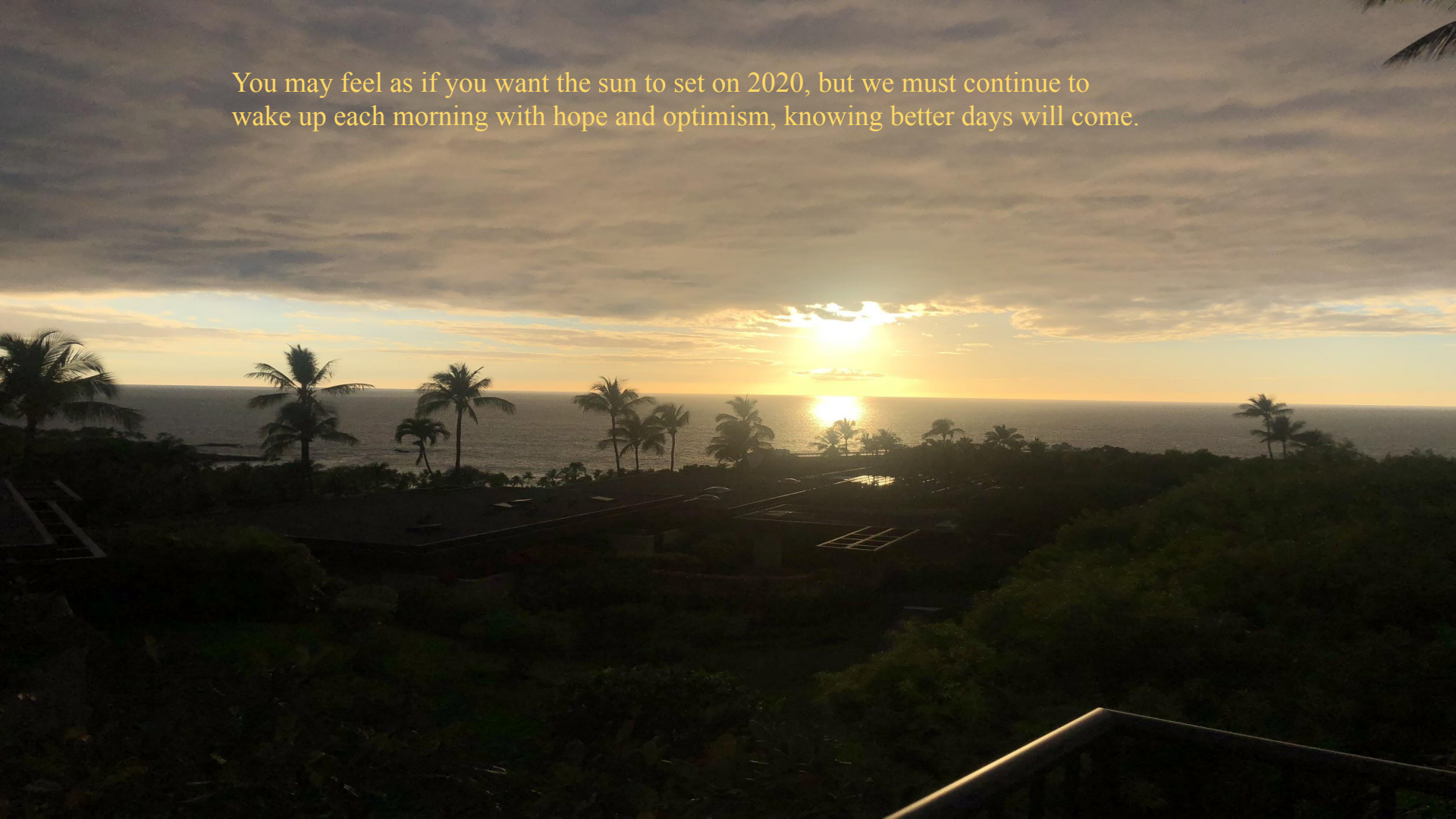
I will remember this time.

Every single day is one to value

Because today I dream

And tomorrow I remember.

You may feel as if you want the sun to set on 2020, but we must continue to wake up each morning with hope and optimism, knowing better days will come.



Works Cited - Photos

“5 Ways Communities in Europe Are Coming Together to Help Refugees.” *Ben and Jerry's*, 18 Dec. 2017, www.benjerry.co.uk/whats-new/2017/12/5-ways-communities-in-europe-are-coming-together-t.

Broadcasting, Nexstar. “Chicago to Rent More than 1,000 Hotel Rooms for COVID-19 Isolation.” *Fox 8*, 23 Mar. 2020, fox8.com/news/coronavirus/chicago-to-rent-more-than-1000-hotel-rooms-for-covid-19-isolation/.

Brown, Forrest. “Sydney, Australia: Fireworks Erupt over Sydney's Iconic Harbour Bridge and Opera House.” *CNN Travel*, 30 Dec. 2019, www.cnn.com/travel/article/new-years-eve-places/index.html.

Chappell, Bill. “The Rate of New Coronavirus Cases Spreading into New Regions from Its Epicenter in Asia Is Illustrated by a Graph from the World Health Organization.” *NPR Illinois*, NPR, 20 Mar. 2020, www.nprillinois.org/post/coronavirus-infected-100000-more-people-worldwide-less-2-weeks#stream/0.

Coaston, Jane. “Why Conspiracy Theories Have Spread so Quickly?” *Vox*, 13 Apr. 2020, www.vox.com/2020/4/13/21205833/coronavirus-pandemic-conspiracy-theories.

Drum, Kevin. “Where Is the Coronavirus Pandemic Headed?” *Mother Jones*, 17 Mar. 2020, www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2020/03/a-chart-qa-where-is-the-coronavirus-pandemic-headed/.

Lin, Shuxin. “I Hope 2020 Is the Year Everything Changes.” *The Ascent*, 29 Nov. 2019, medium.com/the-ascent/i-hope-2020-is-the-year-that-everything-changes-e6ed11367d8f.

Plaschke, Bill. “Sports World Forced to Go Dark Because of Coronavirus.” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Mar. 2020, www.latimes.com/sports/story/2020-03-11/sports-world-forced-to-go-dark-coronavirus.

Vonnegut, Sarah. “Cloud or Clouds? How and Why to Choose a Single or Multi-Cloud Approach.” *Stratoscale*, 10 Oct. 2017, www.stratoscale.com/blog/it-leadership/cloud-clouds-choose-single-multi-cloud-approach/.

Yeong, Paul. “People Wearing Masks Walk on a Street in the Kwun Tong District of Hong Kong, China.” *Transport Topics*, 27 Jan. 2020, www.ttnews.com/articles/honda-others-evacuate-workers-coronavirus-takes-its-toll-industry.

Works Cited- Poems

Alexie, Sherman. "Victory by Sherman Alexie - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, poets.org/poem/victory.

Clifton, Lucille. "Monday Sundown 9/17/01 by Lucille Clifton - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, 2001, poets.org/poem/monday-sundown-91701.

Hughes, Langston. "Dream Variations by Langston Hughes - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, poets.org/poem/dream-variations.

Silverstein, Shel. "Invitation." *HarperCollins Children's Books*, 6 Apr. 2020, www.harpercollins.com/childrens/shel-silverstein-poems/.

Vogelsinger, Brett. "Distance." *Twitter*, Twitter, 31 Mar. 2020, twitter.com/theVogelman/status/1244960627652808704.