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HIS 20
Primary Source Assignment
Professor Culkin

When the Covid-19 pandemic caused New York City to go into lockdown the second week of March, it never once crossed my mind how large of an impact this shutdown would have in my personal life. In the picture below I show a poem I wrote during the sixth month of quarantine:

Like a bird smashes into a car's windshield
So does my brush surpass the paper that I carry on high
Shocking! Seriously a show
First, I launch
and then I jump really high
to burst into a Saturday rain
on the windshield of a car
The only thing is
I'm not flying
and I fall

My days felt like they were going on a loop. Everyday felt like a continuation of the day before and my mind was tired of it. In my poem I expressed that I felt like a bird that crashes on the windshield of a car, signaling the repetitiveness of my life in my small NYC apartment. I think that this time was one of the most difficult times for my mental health and I tried desperately to find a way of coping. Essentially, this poem represents the mental state I found myself in trying to find different ways to deal with the fact that life had paused abruptly and that nothing was certain anymore.

One of the ways that I found myself doing a lot during this time was sleeping. I began to get worried when one day I woke up at 4pm and felt as if I had woken up at 9am. I knew my sleep schedule was a disaster, but I think that this represents how monotone life felt.

On another hand, I think that the lockdown served as an opportunity to reorganize my priorities and discover new likes and dislikes. Since I had recently changed my major from Biology to English, this time helped me realize how much I enjoy writing and learning about other writers and their work. I never thought I would enjoy my major as much as I am enjoying it, especially since I can dedicate more time on it thanks to the spare time staying at home gives me.

I think that this poem will benefit future historians in their study of the effects the COVID-19 lockdown on people's mental health. Specifically, historians will be able to be exposed to the anxiety the world felt knowing that there was little we could do to reverse the effects the lockdown was having in our mental stability. Basically, historians will be able to analyze how much the pandemic affected us beyond the physical aspect but the detrimental effects it held against our mental health.

All in all, COVID-19 surely fits the line by Charles Dickens, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times".