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Mia

Light from the window
Falls upon my page. Outside,
The clouds move; I don't.

Stillness reigns over
These empty days. I bide time
Waiting for what comes...

Ruefenacht
THE QUARANTIMES
QUARANTINE: IT'S A MINDSET

FEATURING...

"IMAGINE" - JOHN LENNON
Because we all love a serenade from wealthy celebrities during a world-wide pandemic.

"HARD TIMES" - PARAMORE
Unless you're in denial... These are in fact, hard times.

"IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT (AND I FEEL FINE)" - R.E.M.
While the world may not have ended and we did not feel fine, this song sure does take the edge off.

SCAN TO ACCESS THE PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY!
the world is a closed window away.
the light is just out of reach
and my flower petal heart wilts with each passing day
as i stretch towards a sky i cannot touch.
i resign myself to stare at a sheet of glass
with only the company of my reflection
because i know i cannot leave,
cannot venture outside these six panes of safety.

i pass the daytime by watching the wind outside
as it kisses the heads of the roses
while i dream of a tomorrow that feels weeks away.
all i want is to hold the sun in my palms,
to feel the caress of the grass beneath my feet,
to catch raindrops like candy in my mouth.
when night finally falls
and the world beyond the window goes dark,
i long for the companionship of stars,
knowing that for now all i have
are open curtains and stale air.

still, i hold on tight to faith.
someday this window will open to a new world
and it will not matter whether skies are clear
or rain is flooding the soil;
i will go outside no matter the weather
to greet the blossoming lavender
as i breathe in the sweetness of spring.
i will pick a bouquet of dandelions from the garden
and admire the clouds drifting lazily above me.
only when the sunset fades out,
no longer illuminating the sky,
will i come back inside and curl up in bed
to sleep with each one of my windows wide open.
At first, it was an autumn morning like any other. I got up, entered South Dining Hall, and prepared for a fulfilling breakfast of corn flakes paired with clusters of oats. Add some milk and a banana, and you are instantly immersed in joy. That is the power of Oat Blenders.

On this day, there were almost no Oat Blenders in the container at the cereal rack. I still was able to fill my bowl, so I wasn't particularly worried. This happened from time to time with cereals. They were probably just waiting on a shipment because of the consistently high demand.

But by the next day, things took a turn. The Oat Blenders were gone. One, two, three more days went by. No refills. McMahon and Buckley followed suit. Then, at the turn of the next week, my greatest horrors were realized. The Oat blenders container disappeared, removed like a kulak in Soviet Russia. No evidence, no trace. Just gone.

After the traditional weeks of mourning, I decided to take action. I pinned a question to the South and McMahon comment boards, asking if and when we were getting Oat Blenders back. I was surprised to see that my questions went unanswered, despite the slips around them being answered in full. I wrote more. Still, no one replied. So, I wrote more. Eventually, as the semester wound down, I noticed that my questions were being taken down from the board. Without fail, Oat Blenders queries would disappear within a day. All evidence was being destroyed.

Until now, I had given staff and administration the benefit of the doubt. But it was now obvious that we were being manipulated. Nobody was willing to consider my questions. In fact, they refused to acknowledge the existence of Oat Blenders at all. Intent on destroying the memory of this divine meal, they silenced the people. With any luck, there would soon be no one left on campus to recall the euphoric buzz of scarfing down a few bowls before every class.

In a fit of emotional agony, I emailed multiple dining hall administrators – people who had been previously known to exchange candid information about supplies and menus with students. Predictably, these emails went completely ignored. I was being stonewalled. With no recourse left, all hope seemed lost. If there was any doubt left, the Covid-19 shutdown of Spring 2020 acted as a convenient way to finalize the execution of Oat Blenders. After 6 months at home, surely no one would continue to protest their demise. The dining hall machine had won.

The million-dollar question remained – why? What had we done to deserve this? What had Oat Blenders done to deserve a cruel death? Of course, Oat Blenders were always a dissident cereal. They had no right combining both flakes and clusters in such perfect combination. They had no right to be so flavorful despite containing fewer sweeteners than any of the “health cereals” kept in stock. They were too good. UConn knew that. They took them away because they could. They wanted to show their dominance over our emotional health with a cruel twist of the knife. They wanted to prove that they could end a celebrated and revered institution with the snap of their fingers, and there’s nothing we could do about it. If they can control how you eat, they can control your entire being.

Then suddenly, in a true Christmas miracle, Oat Blenders appeared again at McMahon Dining Hall in mid-September. After almost a year, they were back. They had risen from the dead. It was a joyous moment for many thousands of people – a true second coming. But at what cost?

I, like everyone, have been tempted to simply accept Oat Blenders’ return and be grateful. It’s been unimaginably difficult to resist eating the usual 7-9 bowls per day we always enjoyed. But we can’t. We can’t let UConn get away with the immense misery they caused on their power trip. They spent a year gaslighting us, making us question whether our precious memories of munching on Oat Blenders were real or delusions. This systematic erasure no doubt caused a great many students to lose their sanity in an already difficult time. It was a truly unacceptable abuse of power.

For this reason, we must continue to take action, however difficult it may be. I vow to eat no more than the 3 necessary portions of Oat Blenders per day from now on (no, I won’t boycott them - I’m not a masochist). I beg you to follow my lead. We must keep fighting for answers and show we will not be held hostage by UConn Dining Services again. Otherwise, this torment will be back. And when that time comes, I won’t be here to fight for you.
the wind falls in shades of yellow
in the eaves and gutter-runs.
I tie on pieces of my body with drain hair,
I eat shoe dust at tea.
Little movie, take a seat. I watch myself
Only, I watch alone.
Look at her silly slump. Only two more days
Until she can no longer recognize herself in
the window-bowl.
You are making whipped coffee. You started whipping your coffee on Monday at 7:56am. You have been whipping for what feels like hours. You check the clock. It is now 6:55am on Tuesday. Your coffee is still not whipped.

You made banana bread yesterday. And the day before. And the day before. You can't remember the last time a day went by where you didn't make banana bread. You can't even see the kitchen counter anymore, there is only banana bread.

There must have been a time where making art didn't feel like a chore, right? Right?

You go to the grocery store for eggs but there are no eggs. When you ask an employee, he seems confused. Where are the eggs? You need more eggs for today's batch of banana bread.

You left the house without a mask once and got all the way to the produce section of the grocery store before you realized. You felt so embarrassed that you sleep in your mask now. You're starting to forget what your own mouth looks like.
FALL FRENCH TOAST

WHAT YOU NEED!
- A MICROWAVE
- A MUG
- 1 TBSP BUTTER
- 1 EGG
- 3 TBSP MILK
- A SPRINKLE OF CINNAMON AND/OR PUMPKIN SPICE SEASONING
- A DASH OF VANILLA
- 1 SLICE OF BREAD

PRO TIP: DINING HALLS ARE VERY NICELY STOCKED WITH ALMOST ALL THE INGREDIENTS (AND MUGS!!)

WHAT TO DO!
- Pop your butter into your mug and melt it in the microwave
- Mix in your egg, milk, cinnamon, vanilla, and any other spices
- Cube your bread and put it in the mug, making sure its well coated
- Cook for 1 to 1.5 minutes
- Top and enjoy!
Thank you for reading the HArCo 2020 Zine

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