

Anthony Damon

The Plague Year, From My Perspective

August 26, 2020

The semester begins.

COVID-19 is still a real threat, though many people seem to have forgotten about this threat over the summer. The winter is coming and COVID may rear its ugly head once again.

All of the writing in this compilation was done during the year 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also an election year, during a pandemic, and at a time where politics are as divided as they ever have been.

This is a big year.

This work reflects my emotions during this time, and the struggles of everyday life that arose while living through a worldwide pandemic.

September 17, 2020

In *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, there are many long and fluid sentences that flow effortlessly while painting a picture in the reader's mind of what he is speaking about.

These long sentences remind me of the long days of baseball in the summer with my dad and teammates, where time seemed to be endless...

... we would wake up early, the sun barely shining through our curtains, the smell of crisp morning air coming through the open windows...

Anthony Damon

... the smell of dirt and grass filled my nose as I opened my catcher's bag to make sure I had all of my equipment, then we rushed out of the house hoping to not be late, even though we never were...

... the smell of bacon egg and cheese would fill the car as we ate on the way to the field, stopping to pick up various teammates on the way...

... as more and more people piled into the car the smell of baseball got stronger and stronger, the pine tar and rosen smells wafted into my nose as I prepared for the games...

... we pulled into the parking lot of whatever field in New Jersey or Pennsylvania that we were playing at that day and everyone filtered out of the car one by one...

... the sun shining on my skin, warming my body after a long ride spent in the air condition, the smell of freshly cut grass fills my nose...

...these smells and summer mornings are many things to me, just as Nadia's robe serves dual purposes for her; for example the robe is a part of her identity and a safety net to keep her from

being harassed by men just as my childhood baseball tournaments are both a safety net for me and a part of my identity as well...

Anthony Damon

... I'm brought back to reality by the pop of a ball hitting the back of someone's glove, and we all rush over to the field that we've been assigned for our first game, the sound of metal cleats on concrete echoing in my ears and traveling throughout my entire body calms me...

... the scoreboard turns on with a loud click and it's time to play ball, the game seems to fly by but when we look at the clock it's only 10:30 in the morning and we still have 4 games left to play...

... the concession stand smells fill my nose but I must wait until after the second game, as that is the only time we have a break...

... the game happens and we sprint over to the concession area, hot dogs and hamburger smells in the air, cheese fries and nachos (probably not the best for a bunch of young athletes) but we devoured them anyway...

... the whistle of my head coach and my dad rings in our ears as we are called back to the field for our third game of the day, shoving fries down our throat and finishing that last gulp of gatorade we run to the next field...

... more baseball ensues until it gets dark and the lights go on with a loud bang, flooding the field with bright white light, as if we were on a movie set and we were the actors and the lights were our spotlights...

Anthony Damon

... when the final game finishes, we pack up, the clank of helmets and bats being shoved into bags fills the complex...

... we leave the field and pile into the car, leaving a full day of memories behind, but the day is not finished yet; as we near home and drop off teammates on the way I get excited for what I know is coming...

... finally it's just me and my dad and we stop to get dinner... PIZZA, as the smell fills the car during our 5 minute drive back home...

... we devour the pizza as if it is our last meal, I jump in the hot shower and the last thing I see before bed is the light of ESPN shining as my dad watches a recap of all the sports he missed watching that day because he was spending time with me...

... and now after reading Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* I realize that the long sentences and comfort that Nadia feels in her robe and with Saeed are aspects of home, and home isn't necessarily where you live but where you feel most comfortable and most at peace.

October 1, 2020

I walk towards the doors.

I look back and see them waving.

I wave back to them signaling our "final goodbyes."

Anthony Damon

I smile, while holding in the tear I feel about to roll down the side of my cheek. They're sad, very sad. They're hurting. They're proud of me and they're full of joy, but they're still going to miss me.

The trees are calling me, beckoning me to come to them, to cross over into my new life, my new journey. They seem to look a little less vibrant and welcoming than they were when I visited.

"Come here kid, it'll be okay," the trees growl while swaying back and forth in a sort of menacing manner. The, what I remember to be vibrant, SUNY Plattsburgh sign hangs above the doorway, three lights are out so the sign reads PLATTSBURGH. Much less inviting than I remember.

Will it be okay?

Will I be able to do this on my own?

Will I succumb to the pressure?

Will I fall behind?

I may do all of these things, but I still have to try because that's how life works. You move on. You grow up and leave. You make new friends. You experience new things. This is my new experience and I don't feel prepared.

I reach for my ID in my wallet, and as I grab it my old life flashes before my eyes. Images of my home, Brooklyn; the park, the sports, the restaurants, and my family are all in my mind. As I look at the ID card, my new home, Plattsburgh, seems like a downgrade compared to where I am from, where I have lived my entire life. As I near the doors I feel queasy, the sounds of inside calling me. I look over my shoulder again to see them walking away. They left.

They left me to my own devices.

Anthony Damon

They trust me.

They love me.

They know that I can do it.

But I don't know if I can. But I have to try for them. I have to be strong and at least give it a shot.

So I turn around and walk through the doors into my new life. My old life is behind those doors now, I have left it outside and it is gone. I am starting college.

I am 300 miles from home.

I am lost.

I am now home.

I am sad.

I'm going to miss everything that I had, and I don't know what I have to look forward to. I am lost and must find my way. I will do it, I am strong.

Well I couldn't do it. I failed. I am not as strong as I thought. Actually I didn't fail, Plattsburgh failed. That shithole of a place didn't want me there. It was a disgusting place, the dorms, the dining halls, and even the bathrooms!

I tried.

I hated it.

I left.

College is a party they said, college will be fun they said, college will be the best four years of your life they said. Well I hope to god that that isn't anything close to the best moments of my life. They tell you that everyone is different, and that going away isn't for some people, however it shouldn't be for anyone. If you like unclean bathrooms, dirty people, and an incessant amount

Anthony Damon

of drinking then sign yourself up. If you're normal on the other hand, then stay as far away from a dorm as possible. Paying to live in my own filth, I think not.

I return home to my parents waiting at the apartment door for me. As I open it they look the same as they did when they left me.

I am calm.

I am happy.

I am home.

They are still just as proud of me as when I left. They are happy that I'm home. They are grateful that I finished the semester.

As I grab my wallet to put it away, I catch a glimpse of my MetroCard and realize that I am home, and this is where I was always supposed to be.

I do regret Plattsburgh.

I do live in Brooklyn, and I can promise you that I am never leaving.

November 11, 2020

This paper does not discuss my knowledge of astrophysics or anything related to the field of astrophysics.

Every morning when I wake up I eat kielbasa sausage, two slices of toast, half of a banana, half of an apple, and a glass of chocolate milk.

Trump, Biden. Who won, who lost? The news screams, extremely biased with little to no objectivity in its reporting.

Anthony Damon

I take a walk most days to get the paper and a cup of coffee around the corner from my apartment. The paper and coffee are always \$3.



I dropped soup all over the floor, luckily I had on my kitchen apron so I didn't get burned. It did however splash my ankles which didn't feel too good. As I bent to clean it up, I slipped and the mop fell on me. Naturally, my boss comes in with the delivery right at this time forcing me to rush cleaning the soup. Running out to his car we grab everything from Jetro. I go to put the dried beans on top of the cabinet, and I slip on the soup and the bean bag breaks and goes all over the place.

I always carry my wallet in my right pocket when I leave the house.

“Your father worked hard to give you this big house...” (Foster 79). “Phil is my dad so don't even front/He took me from a boy to a man so Phil is my father/cause my biological didn't bother,” (Shaquille O’Neal - “Biological Didn’t Bother). Appreciate who is there for you because in an instant they can be gone.



Anthony Damon

Celebrations in the streets. The blare of car horns fills my ears as I walk up and down seventh avenue. Pots, pans, bells, anything that can be used to create noise was used. The smiles on people's faces are ones that I haven't seen in a long, long time. Pure and raw emotions of joy and relief. The whole city felt as if it was taking a collective deep breath. It's finally over.



Soup didn't sell because it was too hot outside. I got a whopping \$8 in tips, for a 10-hour day. Soup all day, everyday.

“It's not long before the National Guardsmen march down...” (Paredes 28). That's what I'm afraid of, they could come. He still has about two months left, so anything is possible.

Went to the doctor's office. Wired a few hours for her injections. The needle was so large, I got chills just looking at it. She came out in pain, but I know that she will persevere because she is strong, and relatively young. That's what the doctors said at least. The pharmacy comes next to get the pills, and now the real challenge starts. It's an uphill battle, but one that can be won. Hopefully good times lie ahead.



Anthony Damon

“Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

Progressives, moderates and conservatives.

Young and old.

Urban, suburban and rural.

Gay, straight, transgender.

White. Latino. Asian. Native American,” (Joe Biden in his Victory Speech).

History: The first time that the transgender community was mentioned in a victory speech by a President-Elect.

Another week, another cycle of the same thing over and over again. I start class, as I usually do on a Monday and then I cycle through the week as I usually do. This one will be better, it will fly by and then there will be another one. A fresh start every week, even though the weeks seem to blend into one another. Time flies even when you're not having fun I guess, but that's just how life works.

December 9, 2020

As the semester comes to an end, COVID-19 is getting worse. The election is over and Trump has been defeated, but the country is still massively divided. As the cold weather comes in, so does the wave of new cases and hospitalizations related to the virus. A lot has happened this

Anthony Damon

year, but there is an end in sight. I fear for what will happen in the future, but I try to remain hopeful. A vaccine has been developed and is beginning to be distributed in the United Kingdom. Hopefully we will get it soon here in New York City, and then this madness can finally come to an end. This has been an interesting and terrible year, the pandemic isn't over but hopefully 2021 can bring something positive into our lives because this sure has been a year that we will never forget.