

The Sounds of What is Lost

Some things, such as a home or a job, are lost but can still be reclaimed. Other things, such as time or mental peace, cannot. The COVID-19 Pandemic managed to take away a little bit of everything from my family. My partner lost her job, then we lost her condo. My students lost an entire year of their very young lives. I missed out on a funeral for a loved one that was never legally allowed to take place (and for good reason). One of the most significant losses I experienced, however, was the sounds of the world.

Sensory history challenges us to represent the past in the ways in which the people would have experienced it through their own senses. With the experiences of worldwide coronavirus lockdowns entering all sorts of (future) historical texts, I believe my sensory history would be represented through sound. Because of the silence created by all the life changes brought forth by COVID, there is really no audio for me to record. I could record a *cough* in the grocery store, but it would be meaningless without being able to capture the anxiety they now create. I could record the sounds of one-seater airplanes flying overhead at my old condo, but the memories of leaving there are still too fresh. Instead, I offer these words. Manufactured out of angst, frustration, sadness, guilt, and fear, it is a compassion lacking understanding that has fuelled my resistance to quit. I do not have it difficult. My partner, our less than two-year-old puppy, and I have it normal. We have endured what some were fortunate not to. We have endured what many would have given anything to have back. We have endured together, and we are beyond lucky to say that.

While we may no longer have my partner's condo, and while I may not have had the opportunity for closure, what we do have is the silence. The silence of a foreign street. The silence of our newly rented apartment; both of us forced to wear earphones through the workday as we try not to disturb the other from mere feet away. Both of us together, in a new world without the familiar sounds of home.

by j. cortez chappell