Intersections

A Pandemic Reality: Reflection in Displacement

**My Classroom**

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrust hundreds of millions of the world's children, adolescents, and young adults out of their schools and, if they are lucky, into distance-learning environments. I find myself unexpectedly longing for my utilitarian, fluorescently lit classrooms and lecture halls, and I miss the mundane routine of stumbling through mazes of desks and chairs to find a seat. I fondly recall seeing the smiles of my friends around campus and engaging in the lively clusters of chatter that fill the minutes before the beginning of each class, similar to a vignette from an admissions office promotional video. Now, in the unwelcome shelter-at-home reality, I am surrounded by the books and toys of my childhood, now tangled in the device chargers that provide my only tethers to my community of professors, peers, and friends. My LED desk lamp illuminates my computer screen, my sole porthole from the pandemic. There are no desks but mine. There are no chairs but mine. As the class gathers for a remote session, my classmates and instructors smile from their homes, and the sounds before the lecture are the whispers among students logging in before we all click the mute button.

**Childhood Hero**

I have long admired D.C. muralist and self-styled “patient rights art advocate” Regina Holliday’s portraits of celebrities that have graced the back of my favorite childhood spot, the American City Diner. The once lively diner on Connecticut Avenue permanently closed a couple of years ago, and the street, lined with local restaurants and a toy store, is uncomfortably barren amid the pandemic lockdown. Never has this portrait of a nurse, tucked away on the left side of the diner parking lot, felt so relevant. This nurse gazes out from among the faces of Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe as she looks across toward Judy Garland and Elizabeth Taylor. Even in the presence of these pop culture icons, Holliday titled her work “We Need More Nurses.” This nurse has always been a genuine hero, but now her eyes convey her determination and the urgency of this moment.
Biographical Statement

Sophie Hurewitz is from Washington, DC, and is a junior at Duke University in Durham, NC. Sophie is pursuing a major in Neuroscience, a minor in Global Health, and a certificate in Child Policy Research. She plans to become a pediatrician to combine her interests in clinical medicine, health policy, and child and adolescent development.

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