The sudden duality of everything

Dean Kopitsky
SPORTS EDITOR

I took a seat on the first of sever-
al long, broad concrete stairs
descending to Lake Clara Mere
in the middle of Piedmont Park,
Atlanta. On the dock below me,
a father and son minded a
fishing pole in still blue water.
Wind gently materialized in the
rustling of gardenia flowers.
Flash of grey and brown tails
ricocheted between thick green
bushes. So much peace in the
midst of an invisible pandemic.
This was the duality I needed to
conjure a headache.
I felt the presence of trillions
of hazardous molecules orbiting
around me, invisible to my eyes
but all around. The sun shed
warmth on the eroded concrete
slabs of the stairs. I felt it on my
skin—pale and out of place—from
a Poughkeepsie winter. The mo-
ment. The news doesn’t bother us
move on to a different conver-
sation for them, but soon enough, we
about how that’s wild and so sad
is staring back at us, alarm writ-

campus.

When forced to fly home

March 12, 2020, 11:30 a.m.: I come across an article that
says 55 colleges across the United
States have announced a switch
to online classes for part or all of the
rest of the semester. I tell my
friends. We regard each other
with growing anxiety.
"Okay, but they can’t shut down Vassar," I protest. "They won’t do
it; we don’t have the infrastruc-
ture for online learning." To calm
our nerves, we all sign the peti-

Grieving in the time of pandemic

Amy Miller
GUEST COLUMNIST

On Saturday, March 7, I left
Vassar campus to spend Spring
Break in the suburbs of Allentown, Pennsyl-
vania. On the one hand, I was
relieved to return home—the
past week of my life had been
spent stressing over my thesis
and recovering from a cold. But
on the other hand, I knew the
next couple of weeks would turn
my world upside down. And no,
before you ask, I wasn’t yet wor-
rried about the novel coronavirus.
I was anxious about a different
disease: cancer.
This past summer, my Pop-
Pop was diagnosed with stage
four lung cancer. When I first
found out, I was living in a dorm
at Muhlenberg College during
demanding seven-week sum-
mer job. Despite the fact that
Muhlenberg is located within
miles of my home, the rigors of
the job prevented me from being
with my family as I struggled to
process this new reality. By Au-
gust, I was able to rejoin my fam-
ily and share their sadness as we
did what we could to support my
Nana and Pop-Pop as they grap-
pled with a life-altering diagno-
sis, which would in all likelihood
be terminal.
As I started the fall semester at
Vassar, I experienced the same
anguish of being apart from my
family during a difficult time.
This pain was somewhat eased
by the fact that my Pop-Pop ap-
peared to be responding favor-
ably to the chemo. Then one
day in November, as I was walk-
ing alone across the residential
quad, I got an unexpected call
from my mum. She began: "Are
you sitting?" Quickly, I rushed
into Rocky and took a seat on a
bench near the elevator before
replying: "yes." Then, my mom
told me that the cancer doctor
gave my Pop-Pop between

Isolation is not inspiration

Janet Song
ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

If you are an English ma-
and therefore, by de-
fault, an aspiring writer—the
shut down should be a gift from
Matthew Vassar himself. Here
is an opportunity to live as Em-
ily Dickinson supposedly did,
confined to your home with all
the time to spend writing mas-
terpieces. But you may even
find yourself imitating not only
Dickinson’s isolation, but also
her depression. As your men-
thal health wavers, you may be
assoled with nervousness as well as vinegar and bleach.
My depressive episodes have
depressed; even more went once
it became clear the rest of the
semester was to be held online.
With the closure of gyms and
other non-essential buildings,
the majority of sport workers
went home, too.
The problem for me is that Vass-
ar is my home, and has been for
all two and a half years. During
semesters, breaks, and two sum-
mers I’ve worked at the Athletics
and Fitness Center and have had
no offseason—and I’d have it no
other way. I was there the day
Governor Cuomo ordered all
New York gyms to be closed until
further notice. I had also spent
countless hours training at the
Phoenix Center, a fencing club on
Hooker Avenue, often training
long past midnight. U.S. Fencing
effectively halted all in-person
club activity, so now even fenc-
ing classes are taught via Zoom.

Staying as they go

Abram Gregory
ASSISTANT OPINIONS EDITOR

My windows are directly
over the front door of Lath-
rop, so when Spring Break began
I watched and heard students
leave, whether it be for lavish va-
rations I cannot fiscally afford,
or to go home, which I cannot
economically afford. Those of us
with compelling reasons to stay—
select winter and spring sports
respective hoping to make a
deep postseason run or begin
a successful campaign; spring
break workers, those with out-
standing circumstances or those
with no reason to go anywhere
else—stayed.
Since then, more of the cam-
pus’ soul has leaked out day by
day. When the remainder of
varsity athletics’ spring season
was canceled, the athletes left.
When the semester was tempo-
rarily suspended, more students
departed; even more went once

See GRIEF on page 5
Dear Readers: A Letter of Intention

Over the past few months, the Vassar community and world has experienced a sudden change of life. Stores, schools, restaurants and other places of gathering have closed; at Vassar and institutions of higher education across the country, students have been sent home as administrators work to establish remote learning practices. Some of us have returned to living with our families; others have remained on campus; still others’ living arrangements are in flux. These times are difficult, shifting and uncertain. We hope you are doing as best as you can from wherever you are, and especially lend our thoughts to those who are most vulnerable at this time, including our immunocompromised peers, people whose living arrangements are uncertain or unstable, international students, low income students, people without access to health care and many others.

The Miscellany News editorial and multimedia teams have explored how to proceed in the coming weeks, what our responsibilities as student journalists should be and how we can create a sense of solidarity and community from our places of isolation to yours. This is a time when reliable information is needed more than ever, and also a time for more distraction, more content, and anything that will occupy the mind as we wait for the days to pass. Although our team is scattered across the globe, we will continue to provide our service as a resource for members of the Vassar community to obtain quality journalism and feel connected to campus.

In order to properly report on our communities while maintaining our identity as a publication that covers not just breaking news, but personal narratives, opinions, the arts, sports, multimedia projects and so much more, we are dividing up our production between a COVID-19 Task Force and four-page digital newsletter to be released each Thursday. The Task Force will respond to and inform on coronavirus news—whether local, national or international updates—on our social media and online platforms. For the time being, and despite limited resources, the Misc is no longer exclusively a weekly publication: We will be updating our social media and online platforms as developments occur.

The weekly newsletter will contain creative works, including op-eds and other more personal, narrative-style pieces, as well as any Vassar-related news stories and visual pieces. While the newsletter will not shy away from hard-hitting work, the platform will also feature lighter stories in an effort to help the student body feel connected in these trying times. To that end, we invite any students to submit to the newsletter: This is a place where your voice can be heard. For more information, email misc@vassar.edu.

Although we intend to continue producing work, the pandemic and the College’s decision to switch to remote learning require that our print operations halt until we can return to campus. This decision is difficult—the Miscellany News continued its print operations through both world wars and is a vital resource for students who live on campus. However, we recognize the health risk that distribution would pose to our printing partners, distribution team and students on campus, and understand we must minimize and discourage in-person interaction wherever on campus. However, we recognize the health risk that distribution would pose to our printing partners, distribution team and students on campus, and understand we must minimize and discourage in-person interaction wherever possible. Every institution must do its part to slow the virus’ spread, and The Miscellany News is no exception.

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In these unpredictable and lonely days, we hope our continued digital operations can provide a sense of normalcy, reliable information and a haven for student voices. We hope to stay connected to one another from wherever we may be.

Wishing health, safety and wellness to you and yours,
Jessica Moss
Editor-in-Chief, The Miscellany News

Editor’s note: To accommodate more student voices in this week’s newsletter, it has been extended from four pages to seven. Future newsletters may fluctuate in length depending on student interest. Additionally, you can find the online version of each article in this newsletter by clicking on its headline.

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Womp Womp World
by Frank

My friends did not come back from Spring Break. So, if you see them, please tell them that they need to come back soon to remind me how cute I am.

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MISCELLANY NEWS | VASSAR COLLEGE

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ARIES ♈ Mar 21 | Apr 19
Don’t be surprised if you feel a little extra impulsive this week. Confess your feelings, or air a grievance, or cut your bangs. Just kidding. I know you’ve already cut your bangs.

TAURUS ♉ Apr 20 | May 20
Times are tough, especially when the touch starvation sets in. Sit outside and breathe the fresh air. Make a playlist about how you’re feeling. I know you take too much pride in your Spotify account.

GEMINI ♊ May 21 | Jun 21
Distract yourself with useless information. I’ll help. There’s about six teaspoons in a standard shot. Giraffes can make noises beyond the range of human hearing. My dad’s middle name is Alan.

CANCER ♋ Jun 21 | Jul 22
While it may not feel like it, you’re still in a lucky patch, work-wise. Productivity is pretty high this week—maybe get dressed for all of your classes? Nothing like Zooming in a fresh fit.

LEO ♌ Jul 23 | Aug 22
You’re feeling socially stunted. Uncertainties abound, so there’s only one thing to do: Bake. Everything. You’ll get a feast, plus compliments from your co-habitants. It’s a win-win!

VIRGO ♍ Aug 23 | Sep 22
For once, I’m asking you to work. Use newfound drive to kill it in your classes. Flex those introvert tendencies, and maybe organize your desk at home for a calming space. Caffeinate, responsibly.

LIBRA ♎ Sep 23 | Oct 22
People are missing your energetic, friendly presence in their lives. Send friends carefully curated memes to their tastes. Why not make your own? It’ll be a creative project to calm your nerves.

SCORPIO ♏ Oct 23 | Nov 21
Novelty isn’t your strong suit, so take this week to focus on yourself. Really, truly focus on yourself. Your emotions, your needs. Have you considered soup? It’s really good. Maybe you need soup.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Nov 22 | Dec 21
At times like these, focus on your friends. Need more friends? I am available! I am always in my house. I only talk about the Bon Appétit YouTube channel. And I am terrible at Snap streaks. :)

CAPRICORN ♑ Dec 22 | Jan 19
We’re all stressed, you included, but don’t be surprised if people come to you seeking help. It’s your stable presence that calms us all down. Plus, you know where the unmute button is on Zoom.

AQUARIUS ♒ Jan 20 | Feb 18
It’s been a sec since you’ve gotten obsessed with something—now’s the time! Animal Crossing is finally out. If you’ve ever wanted to be in debt to a raccoon, you can now experience it firsthand!

PISCES ♓ Feb 19 | Mar 20
Pre-Quarantine I bought three tiny glass bottles and they made my life a thousand times better. Dig around and see if you can find any small glass bottles; it will change your whole outlook.
Continued from Empty Campus on page 1

I got the equipment back to my room and watched the lights of the fieldhouse, where I had just won a conference title for Vassar several weeks prior, eerily fade to black.

And so March 9. I’d taken a call from my mom on March 2, I await the news of whether or not I will be allowed to stay on campus despite having been assured by the administration not a week earlier that I’d be allowed to stay. Whether or not I am allowed to leave me removing me because I pose a threat to others potentially more susceptible to the coronavirus than me, or to better balance a checkbook and reduce Lathrop’s electric bill, I do not know. I’ll admit I suspect the latter because, rather than risk further disrupting the already-disrupted education by making me find an apartment in New York: the day classes resume, they could have elected to lockdown me out of the first-floor classes so I wouldn’t come on campus. Moreover, the lack of any real attempt by the administration to prevent people returning to campus to get shuffled with their friends one last time makes me suspicious that some corners of the administration don’t care about or incorrectly understand students’ safety to any degree more than legal to do.

At any rate, with this precariousness in mind, I've been living in an emptiness that no Vassar students have perhaps ever felt at as great a scale. During the day, campus is a beautiful place to go roam— it actually resembles the liberal arts school located in the Scenic Hudson Valley** that was pedaled to each of us in our high school at days. Night, however, it's sad. As I write this on a Saturday, the sidewalks that would otherwise be carrying students of varying intensities into Lecture Hall lay bare; the night is still and the wind whistles through in our absence.

The Deese is open, but it is as depressing as the times necessitate. The entry and middle third of the building is cordoned off, and dystopian signs remind us not to even think about being less than two yards apart, dammit. The Deese workers, all glove- and mask-clad, peer in at those of us still here as though we are spectators for their gaze. Everything is sanar-wrapped and physical distance is kept. However, the fact of the matter is that those of us fortunate to still be on campus are on the inside looking out, not on the outside looking in. I admire the dining hall workers and thank them for their resilience. The productive state of the “outside,” if you will, for those of us fortunate as widely your neighborhood can afford to quarantine itself. With the departure of Vassar students, much of Arlington is shut down. On St. Patrick’s Day I’m left to drunken stroll down the empty campus.

I get a call from my parents. They tell me they've booked me on an 11 a.m. flight to India. And so, here I am, flying from the United States if Vassar does indeed close. "It just can't, I say firmly. It’s ‘Vassar.’" March 10, 2020, early evening:

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that all tourists visas have been suspended until April 15, 2020, including visas held by Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)—a category I come under, as a person who isn’t an Indian passport-holder but is an Indian origin and of Indian residence. I realize I've been slowly going into a funk, and am stranded in the United States if Vassar does indeed close its doors. It still doesn’t really hit me. I jokingly ask Sami Hodes ‘20 if I can live in her dorm in Florida if something were to happen. She says yes, she’s even asked her mom’s permission, but I laugh. After all, I'm not sure how to begin processing all of this in mind, I don’t think I’ll return to Vassar. We tell them to sign.

I had just won a conference title for Vassar during a state-wide lockdown, pretty sure that we've got a little over 24 hours to get here and you have a little over 24 hours to get here before borders close,” I hear my dad say. “I and you have a little over 24 hours to get here before borders close.”

March 11, 2020, late afternoon: I click on the article I saw earlier that day—the one about all the empty class rooms, the emptied in-person classes—so that I can send the link to my mom. The headline now reads, "Up to 130 Colleges Have Canceled Start Dates. What Happens to the Class of 2020?"

Last but not least: "Fears and frustrations: When forced to fly home during these uncertain times, unsure of when and where you’ll be able to fly, many of us aren’t seen as qualified candidates, but rather as economic burdens. The world's becoming more xenophobic. Many of us aren’t seen as qualified candidates, but rather as economic burdens. Many of us aren't going home and that I have to leave campus by 5:30 because of a flight that they've booked me on an 11 a.m. flight to create, ‘Modi’s travel ban has gone into effect on 13 March at 12:00 p.m. GMT. You have to leave, Sasha. It's a day-long journey and you have a little over 24 hours to get here before borders close.”

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We welcome you to add your language in our comments section to create a sense of togetherness while apart. Interested in having your photos featured on Through the Lens? Send all submissions to yijiahu@vassar.edu with your name, class year and photos with one caption.
In isolation, families must grieve without funeral

Continued from Duality on page 1

ments seemed slightly out of rhythm, lag-
ing behind reality by a brief lapse in my perception, and I felt paralyzed by this slow quiet, sensing that something frantic and rough was standing still.

The ominous title of this piece is not an exaggeration—it’s not a lured insight or a fal-
sifiable assertion. It’s what I felt, sitting at home in Atlanta on a Monday evening eating lunch at 11:45 a.m., watching a commercial for another new beer. I saw gleaming mi-

lennials in target audience apparel pranc-
ing through multicolored clouds, blissful and together. Women with luminous skin sip their drinks back-to-back, wearing slow motion smiles. “Social distancing” isn’t something this world knows about.

Friday afternoon, I was walking my dogs on a slow and warm Atlanta afternoon, exactly where I didn’t think I’d be in mid-

March. My spring track season was can-
celled. Four-hour bus rides to New Jersey meets vanished. The sweet possibility of post-race Nutella and bagels vanished from my stomach. Training, and all the above—simply not going to happen this sea-

mester. I quietly pondered what the semester might look like with a hole the size of a

400m oval in the center. The season would have been tough for other viral reasons. For

the last month, before when the panic was no more than a distant meme, and during the meat of our regular season grind, when we push our bodies from mildly in shape to peak performance, I was sick in bed. Noth-

ing too severe, but by the time I returned to

practice, my stride had fallen flat and my lungs gulped less air than I knew they could.

Running is addictive. Patrons of recent

Whirl Pops know this. Despite the fact that I won’t stick safety pins into my running bib, lace up my spikes and toe a start line again until a whole other cycle of seasons is complete.

Running is a sport concerned with solv-
ing the only operation that matters: time
to divide by distance, and whittling that pro-

portion down to the best of your abilities.

But a lot has changed and stopped since I was competing in my sophomore year track

in Jewish camp. Meters are like a test every week. With or without school, I won’t need to

solve equations any time soon.

More than an email or a news break, the most obvious sign that my season was over is that I ran, without a watch. I didn’t know my pace or distance—I don’t care to know, truthfully. Then, I did something unnatural. I stopped. I sat on some steps above the lake in Piedmont Park, I watched. I listened.

For the first time in my life, I had no plan or regimen. I was nervous. I was tired, so I sat there with the restless and unrequited pro-
motum of this semester settling inside me. I stood up to continue running, which I planned to do...at some point. I looked down at my legs, to the muscles I’d given hours to strengthen. I rubbed my fingers between the cartilage, bone and fat, and felt a rush as I hadn’t known in quite a long time. I set out at a slow jog and joined the other live images surrounding me.

Living in this time of pandemic, we see

that seemingly unrelated moments have obvious parallels. Unrelated stories pull into sharp relief the crisis of the present-day.

Some 82 years ago, a Jewish boy and his parents were one of many families to flee

Germany. The escaped in 1938, the year of kristallnacht, a night when Nazis stormed neighborhoods and smashed shop windows and synagogues emblazoned with yellow Yiddish and Hebrew. Impossibly, the family escaped to New York, worked as maids, and in an auspicious decision that bewilders me whenever the thought crosses my mind, began saving for their grandchil-
dren. Not themselves. Those savings even-
tually helped send their great grandchild to

college, who is now at home typing this in his running shorts.

On Friday, I drove my mom to the airport. Her father, that German Jewish boy, was going into surgery for a new heart valve. At 86, and with so many swarming confound-

ing-store boots (but not pants) wagging by, and as if I had seen anyone talking pictures. I hadn’t. I kept the image of him turning back, his briefs barely visible below his shirt.

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motum of this semester settling inside me. I stood up to continue running, which I planned to do...at some point. I looked down at my legs, to the muscles I’d given

In isolation, families must grieve without funeral
Weber stereotypes, self-isolation and mental health

The admin of the historicalwomen. com Instagram page didn't set out to quell the anxieties of uncertain times when she created the account. Since 2017, she's posted hundreds of Instagram stories sharing jokes that poke fun, at critically examined and celebrate the experiences of historically women's college (HWC) students. That vision hasn’t changed. But now, she’s also found herself coordinating a support network for HWC students whose schools have closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Over 100 public and private colleges and universities have announced precautionary measures, such as weeks-long suspensions, transitions to online learning and in some cases, closures for the remainder of the spring semester. Millions of vulnerable students have been left scrambling to find housing, rides to airports, affordable accommodations and even food in the case of some students whose schools have closed. And for the administrators of those campuses, it’s been heartwrenching to see students’ struggles in an unprecedented and immensely difficult situation.

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The Miscellany Crossword
by Frank

ACROSS
1. look forward to consuming this tasty sustenance
2. Electric Point of Sale, abbr
5. divisions of theatrical acts
9. tennis game
14. Hawaiian party
15. driving direction
16. WWII Normandy Beach/city in Nevada
17. first Holy Roman Emperor
18. liquid precipitation
19. all over the internet
20. of utmost importance to deal with ASAP
22. to close off an artery or vessel
23. one hundredth of a yen
24. most common food allergy
25. very long period of time, alternate spelling
26. leg
27. to make a mistake
28. upper limbs of bipedal vertebrates
29. opposite of a bottom
30. what Hailey plays in Mozart in the Jungle
31. diameter halves
32. devotion and sacrifice
33. to buy things
35. not yours
36. swollen lymph node in armpit
37. small ovum
38. mineral or metal rock
39. serf in ancient Sparta
40. animal doctors
41. to move by
42. steep Scottish hillside
43. to make a mistake
44. unit of distance in astronomy
45. to move by
46. country and A Flock of Seagulls song
48. court of justice
49. alien spaceship
50. largest city in North Dakota
51. “yee ancient days”
52. spreads substance across a surface
53. mathematics of triangles
54. court of justice
55. Jamaican tangelo fruit
56. meanders or winds
57. Phineas who survived a grave head injury
58. to protect one’s loins
59. to repeatedly yell as a group
60. radiates light and warmth
61. to get out of your head
62. to move by
63. to buy things
64.Firestore error:
65. to repeatedly yell as a group
66. Spanish word for ‘friend’
67. to buy things
68. to repeatedly yell as a group
69. developed after atomic bomb
70. without, French
34. substances that provide nourishment
35. book of food options
36. ice lettuce
37. book of food options
38. book of food options
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63. book of food options
64. book of food options

DOWN
1. shoes that flip flop
2. unusual and startling, French
3. made with or containing oats
4. name better ones, we’ll wait
5. large, open, skylit room
6. mathematics of triangles
7. mathematics of triangles
8. mathematics of triangles
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Answers to previous puzzle:

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