

The Uncertainty

By Leanna Hartsough

I don't know what this is, but this sickness isn't a cold.
My body hurts. Head to toe.
Headache. To ear ache.
Tummy ache (something I'm used to.)
Feet and all muscles are sore.
I have to work but I have to feel better. I guess I'll focus on both.

This day is so long. I'm hot but I'm normally cold.
This night is so confusing. I'm now cold but sweating.
This night is so abnormal. I can't sleep yet my body restricts movement.
Maybe this is serious.

Next day, still sore.
I can actually eat without forcing it.
Wow am I full.
Wait, that might not be fullness. It's hard to breath.
Air is restricted. Forcing it-- there's resistance.

My first doctor appointment in years.
It took abnormal breathing and virtual convenience.
I'm working from home.
I'm young. I'm healthy otherwise.
I might have COVID-19.
Oh wait, my partner works on campus. He could spread this thing.
I'm self isolated and don't need to be tested now.
Save the tests for those who need it.

Living with low immunity is scary.
If I was older, I could die.
When I'm older, if this happens again, I'm at risk.
There's so many people living with fear right now.
I have fear and I'm young!

So many people have this. So many people must be struggling too.
Yet I feel so alone.

Told my mom.
Told my grandparents.
Now my family knows.

Some family members say, "Sounds like you have anxiety." "Sounds like you're stressed."
I empathetically listened. I disagreed yet listened.
My family doesn't want to hear that their close relative has this.
They want to believe it's not the case.
I don't want to scare them. I want to talk to them when I have good news.
My partner I live with doesn't want to believe it.
We're socially distant because I keep socially distant.

Well here's to stocking up on immunity boosters.
Every day.
Thanks to my mom and my partner.
My mornings are dedicated to health.
Once I have enough energy, I can begin to work.
I push through it. I have things due.

I came to terms with this.
When I recover, I will have less fear.
Less fear of getting it.
Less fear of spreading it.

Day 4 and able to workout at least. Some movement helps.
Next day Sunday yoga, my legs shake during poses I do frequently.
Next day Monday ab work, easy workout, I'll be fine.
After workout, legs shake. Can barely walk.
Felt like I ran stadium stairs. I didn't even think I worked my legs?

One week in, I feel heavy. There's resistance in every step.
How much do I weigh any way? It feels like 384750234lbs.
Oh wow, I lost 4 lbs.

The only COVID-19 symptom I didn't get was the cough.
Nevermind, I have the cough.
I can't think of a reason why I don't have COVID-19.
Maybe this isn't so uncertain?

About the Author

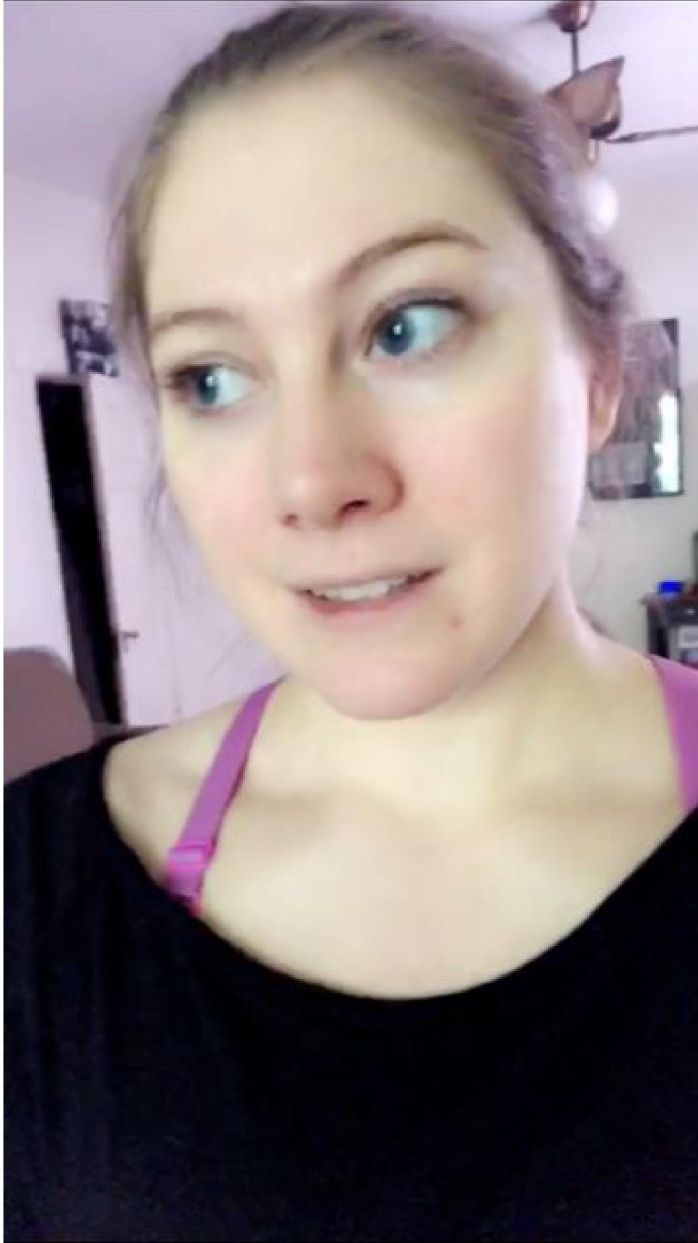


Photo of Leanna Hartsough taken during the sickness, self-isolated in Lexington, KY

Leanna is a 27 year-old PhD student and instructor at the University of Kentucky. She wrote “The Uncertainty” as a poetic diary. The purpose of the poem is to spread awareness of young, otherwise healthy individuals that can also struggle with the sickness.