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A fog, a weight, a program running in the background (<https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html>)

February 22, 2021 (<https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html>)

"I don't know why everything is so hard," you say to me. Everyone's hitting the wall, I point out. We're reaching one year of global pandemic. Even if we're okay, it's okay with an asterisk. Okay within global pandemic parameters. Not the same.

You protest: "but I'm fine. I'm not sick. My family isn't sick. I don't know why I'm struggling so much. I'm healthy, I have a job, I have electricity and internet, I'm as lucky as anyone can be. And yet life still feels like slogging through cold molasses."

I can't tell you how many people have said those things to me. (So if you're reading this and thinking, "Is she blogging about *our conversation*?" the answer is, I've had this conversation lately more times than I can count.) Almost everyone is struggling.

As longtime readers know, I've lived with grief (the end of my marriage, mourning my mother's death) and I've lived with depression. As we reach the end of the first year of COVID-19, I think a global pandemic is a little bit like both of those.

The pandemic is a fog: we can't see the future clearly, or plan, or dream, or anticipate. The pandemic is a weight pressing us down, always there. It's a program running in the background, draining resources and slowing processor speed.

*

Half a million people have died in our nation alone. Five hundred thousand human beings. Remember the horror of learning that 100,000 had died? Now it's 5x that. And then there's "long covid (<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/08/long-haulers-covid-19-recognition-support-groups-symptoms/615382/>)" -- people who survive, but don't get well.

New and deadlier variants are sprouting. Asymptomatic spread means we never know whether we are carrying a deadly pathogen that might kill the next person we breathe near. That's background noise in our hearts and minds, now, always.

Last spring most of us believed that if we sheltered in place for a few weeks, we could stop the spread and that would be the end of it. And then two weeks of staying apart turned into two months turned into a year and we're still nowhere near done.

Sure, we've grown accustomed to wearing masks, social distancing, not embracing, not shaking hands, not being indoors with other human beings who aren't in our quarantine pods. But it's still impacting us in countless subconscious ways.

Purim is in a few days. Last year, Purim was the last holiday we celebrated with others before lockdown began. Traumaversaries (<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-to-cope-with-the-anniversary-of-trauma#:~:text=Oftentimes%2C%20when%20the%20date%20of,more%20for%20years%20and%20years.>) are real. And it's February, which doesn't help anything, at least here where I am. So if you're not okay? You're not alone.

*

There is light at the end of the tunnel. We've made it through the darkest part of the winter. Warmth will come. The ability to see each other outdoors will come, and that will relieve some of our isolation, and some of the feelings of being stuck in place.

Vaccines will come. The rollout has been slower than we might have hoped, and we all know people who are trying to get appointments only to learn that supply has run out again. But vaccines exist, and they work, and they will reach everyone.

We will make it to the other side of this sea. For now, what I can offer is this: it's okay to feel the way you feel. (I mean. It's not okay. It's miserable. But it's normal and human and you are truly not alone in it, even if you feel isolated in every way.)

Be gentle with yourself, and with each other. If you can, seek out little ways to be kind to yourself. For me that means hand lotion as a treat for winter-dry skin, coffee, a bouquet of bright flowers, cooking good food. You'll know how best to take care of you.

Be gentle with yourself. If you're finding that it takes longer to get tasks done, or if you can't get them done at all. If you're forgetting things, or struggling. If you feel hopeless or low. Be gentle with yourself. I promise, life will not always be this.

Posted at 12:39 PM in [death and mourning \(https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/death-and-mourning/\)](https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/death-and-mourning/), [depression \(https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/depression/\)](https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/depression/), [pandemic \(https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/pandemic/\)](https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/pandemic/) | [Permalink \(https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html\)](https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html) | [Comments \(1\) \(https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html#comments\)](https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html#comments)

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Beth (<http://www.cassandrapages.com>) said...

One true statement after another, Rachel. Thank you.

Reply February 25, 2021 at 04:44 PM (<https://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2021/02/everything-hard.html#comment-6a00d8341c019953ef02788017e98a200d>)

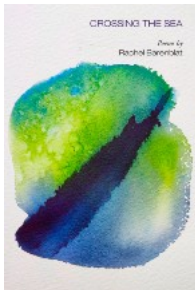
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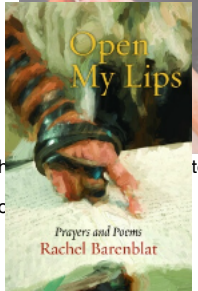
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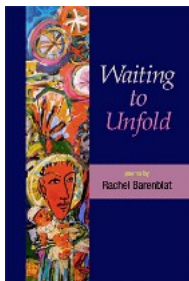
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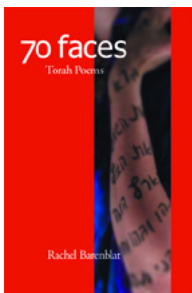
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