If Looks Could Kill

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Abstract
For me, rhythm means having consistency. The piece highlights my own experience with the disruption of my daily rhythm due to COVID-19. The first half shows my routine and interactions prior to COVID-19 while the second half shows my experiences in the present day. Prior to the virus, I had a day to day routine that was filled with noise. Everyday moved quickly and I established a daily rhythm. However, when COVID-19 spread, it changed everything. I felt like I didn’t have a routine anymore because I wasn’t allowed to go anywhere. Time was moving much slower and worst of all, xenophobia was growing at a significant rate. As a Chinese Canadian, this was the first time I truly felt the weight of the color of my skin. COVID-19 changed the way that I consistently assumed that the color of my skin wasn’t something that strangers would significantly care about. However, as I got on a bus, I unintentionally scared a woman simply because of my skin color. From that point, I knew that xenophobia would affect the way people perceived me everyday. The woman was scared of the virus—which in turn was scared of me—and I was scared that she would thwart her anger towards me because I am Chinese. If looks could kill, then the woman and I ironically both feared each other. Now, due to COVID-19, I am adapting to a new routine. A routine where the color of skin rings louder than any other sound.
Hop, skip, jump
Time skips by without me even blinking an eye
Bring Bring
Time to open my eyes
Chirp chirp
Baby robins start my day

Patter patter
My feet pacing down the stairs
Drip drip
The melodious tick counting down to my cup of coffee
Click click
Two clicks and a phone screen away from the world
Clink Clink
As I brush over to grab my keys
Morning, Morning
Common catchphrase for a bus driver
Hello, hello
Figures merging together
Creak Creak
The bumps and bruises of the road shaking the bus

And again.
And again.

*Hop, skip, jump*

Time skips by without me even blinking an eye.

What time is it?

*Thump*

Was that a racoon on my porch?

*Click Click*

Two clicks and a phone screen away from my family

*Shuffle*

The sound of my feet dragging down the stairs
Click Click
Two clicks and a phone screen away from breaking news

Good Night, Afternoon, Morning
I wonder what time it is in China?

Thwack Thwack Thwack
One thwack for the mask and two for the gloves

Clink Clank
As I grab my keys
I smile through the mask
My bus driver can’t even see it.
There’s a figure

Slide
The shift of their hand to their mouth as I walk by.
Stuck like two magnets

Ahem
My throat clears
A disgusted glance shot at me
A glance that pierces through a paper mask
And skids through the thick air
I guess looks can kill

And again.
And again.