My dad’s car broke down the other day and I had to drive him home.

The Ford Explorer has had issues before and although it was slightly inconvenient for me to put *The Road* down, I conceded, meeting him at Route 5 Auto. As a state trooper, he’s an essential worker unable to stay home and isolate to prevent spreading. The rest of my family and I do all we can to keep our distance, limit contact by wearing gloves around him, bump elbows and use words of affirmation instead of kissing his cheek or hugging him, and in the car driving home, I kept the windows down to keep the air circulating. It was cold and windy and I couldn’t hear whatever Eagles song was playing, but I hardly even noticed—not with the road looking so bleak.

I saw maybe five cars on 295. There are normally double that in a Dunkin’ drive-through alone.

That was when I realized that the apocalypse hadn’t started with an invasion, a volcanic eruption, or the sun dying and thrusting our planet back into an ice age. No, instead it was something much simpler, something much more human. It started with people falsely believing
that nothing could ever happen to them and only realizing the consequences of their actions when it was too late.

Climate change, deforestation, overconsumption, and pollution prove just that.

Life has become a novel I have never read before, one in which things simultaneously seem fine but chaotic, the world desolate but healing, and me, although with family, more alone than ever. Corona has created contradiction after contradiction, and no dystopian novel has prepared me for this life. Not *The Hunger Games*, not *The Handmaid's Tale*, not even *Lord of the Flies*. What will history compare us to? What will they think of us?

I don’t know, but there’s no doubt in my mind that there will be people to learn about our experiences because this is not the apocalypse or the end of the world, merely a hindrance, and we, as a species, will persevere.