



"One Day in May"

(May 15, 2020)

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Class Year:

Connection to the College (student? faculty? alum? friend of the College?): Faculty/staff

Describe your day today -- did you go out? what did you do for fun? did you cook or eat anything special? did you do work or chores? who did you spend time with?

Today is May 15th, the Feast Day of St. Isidore the Farmer, the patron saint of my mother's hometown, Madrid. For centuries, May 15th in Madrid has been a day of celebrations in the street and contagious happiness. But in 2020, it will pass by in silence. And it isn't any different here. As one of my favorite childhood readings used to say: *el cielo está cayendo sobre nuestras cabezas* ("the sky is falling on our heads"). But we aren't experiencing the pandemic in the same way as we would in our downtown apartment in Spain. Luckily, my mother came to visit me right before everything exploded, and here we are, strolling next to the beautiful Ohio River, with its sky of infinite colors, pink, purple, deep blue... always up there, inviting us to a peace that is nothing but illusory.

I often tell my students that one of the Humanities' most crucial contributions is the preparation to coexist with uncertainty, because life itself is a mystery. We think we have everything under control. We develop rituals to bridle our future. But the truth is that we never know what will happen tomorrow. We have been in this situation almost two months, and I can't get over my surprise. How could this happen to us? This microscopic creature threatens to wipe out everything we know, having been coronated as the new ruler of our existence. I spend my days complying with my professional obligations, trying to be a better professor and at the same time taking shelter in a much more contemplative way of life than I have ever known. I crossed a whole ocean to be here, and now, I make sure every day that my parsley is thriving, Jazzy and Bagels are happy, purring, and that when Minou comes to visit in his tuxedo, I pet him until he decides he's had enough.

My mother is here completing another jigsaw puzzle. I spend my hours at home with her and my husband, and I feel fortunate I have here, with me, the two most important people in my life. I am grateful we are healthy, and that life has allowed us to live the moment in which the sky fell on our heads in one of the places where every day the sky is more beautiful than the day before.

What do you remember best about being on campus in May of other years?

In 2019 we mounted "The marvelous pageant" ("El retablo de las maravillas") by Miguel de Cervantes, in Spanish. It was a wonderful experience, the audience loved this short, hilarious, extremely smart play, and all of us who took part in it, we will keep it as a cherished memory.

The "One Day in May" project preserves the everyday experiences of Hanoverians on an ordinary spring day (in this case, May 15, 2020). The Submitter has consented to its being made available to library users, and granted Hanover College a nonexclusive, perpetual, royalty free license to use, duplicate and distribute it.