

# A Day in the Life: Minute Memoirs Example

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Stacie Weatbrook

**3/18/2020 7:10am**

I wake with a start on our third day of COVID-19 school closures. I feel shaky. No, the house is shaky. *Earthquake*. The sound of a heavy dump truck rumbles through the house and the china chatters in the glass cabinet.

“Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!” my youngest daughter\* yells in her sleep.

\*I've used generic names here, but specific names give more detail to your writing.

“It’s an earthquake,” my husband says as he comes to check on us. And then surreal quiet.

Not twenty minutes later we get calls from the college and the middle school. Both schools are closed. I feel an aftershock, but not literally--that will come later. I’m amused and alarmed to realize it’s a double-no school day.

**3/18/2020 10am**

I’m filling up water containers after the neighborhood chat says water mains were broken in the city. The sharp rush of the water from the sprayer hits the empty plastic jug I’ve rested on a chair by the sink. I’ve always loved the taste of our tap water: fresh and almost sweet. I heft the jug to the floor, its plastic cool on my hands. I hope for the best--that we don’t need this water and I get to put it on my garden when the weather warms up.

**3/25/2020**

The days blend into each other; it’s well past 2 and I realize I’ve been grading student papers all morning and haven’t had lunch. Through an unspoken arrangement, the three of us each make our own lunch. The kitchen still smells faintly of my husband’s fried egg and my daughter’s macaroni and tomato juice. It’s close enough to dinner to skip lunch, so I bite into a perfectly chewy mixture of brown sugar, vanilla, and chocolate chips. Feeling somewhat guilty, I vow to make a nutritious dinner with plenty of vegetables.

**3/20/2020 2:30pm**

The dog groomer calls to cancel Polly’s appointment. I’m outside with SophiethPuppy. When I come back inside, Polly greets me by standing up to my leg. Her claws press solidly into my leg and she looks up at me through her long bangs with her filmy black eyes. I pet her shaggy head.

“This virus is serious,” I say to her. “They cancelled your hair appointment.”

Polly makes a disgusted grunt in the back of her throat and walks away. I feel uncertain about my judgement. I might be reading too many human emotions into her response.

### **3/21/2020 Saturday 3pm**

Miles of drizzly grey interstate and dull brown landscape has led us to stop in the small town where my aunt lives. We have four boxes of plain instant oatmeal to give her even though she told me a few days after I bought it to just keep it in my pantry. She'd found some at another store. I insist we drop it off to her because it's one of the few things she can eat. *And*, we're not fans of plain instant oatmeal.

We pull into the driveway, moving the Domino's Pizza boxes to the backseat. My cousin is in his truck finishing a phone call. When he steps out of his truck, we keep an awkward distance and my uncle comes out to say hi. I place the boxes on their porch table and step away. There are only 2 reported cases of the virus in Idaho and about a dozen in Utah. We don't have symptoms, but we don't want to unwittingly spread it.

The cold drizzling rain imposes on us so we keep our conversation short: the oatmeal my aunt couldn't find in Idaho when people started panic buying, the cancelled high school dance, the outdoor-socially-distanced picnic that my cousin's son was to replace it with, but, the rain.

It is strange and sad to be back, to pass Grandma's house and know she isn't there anymore. I feel just like the weather.

### **3/21/2020 Saturday 5pm**

It's cold and I grab gloves for everyone out of the emergency supplies bag I made the day of the earthquake. We're at a trail along a fork of the Snake River. I look at my college daughter in her oversized sweatshirt and leggings with tiny holes in the knees. It feels stifling not to hug or touch her, but to keep her Dad safe, she stays away. She works at a grocery store in a small town where one of the cases was reported. There's a risk. We walk along the river, holding the dogs' leashes tightly as they practically dance along the trail littered with deer droppings. So many new smells! The sun casts a yellow glow over the landscape. There are no mountains to the west, so we can see where the horizon meets the oranges, blues, reds, and yellows of the sky. I take a deep breath and feel peace in this moment.

### **3/25/2020 Wednesday evening**

I'm kneading bread because my Kitchenaid mixer broke yesterday. The dough smells yeasty as I try to work the lumpy ball into smooth dough. The muscles in my arms burn. *Does bread really need to be worked for six minutes?* I asked myself. I am thankful, at least, for all those college ceramic classes I took. That's where I learned to knead dough.

### **3/26/2020 Thursday sometime and all the other days**

For reasons none of us can explain, we're on season 3 of Disney Channel's *Jessie*. It's a vapid show with its bright, fabricated sets and a canned laugh track. But as I stand in the living room, holding on to the cold metal railing, I pause and nearly tear up. I appreciate the predictable jokes and how the pre-recorded audience is always ready for a laugh.

### **3/27/2020 Friday night**

I'm sitting on the living room floor, cutting Polly's bangs. She wiggles and makes her grunting sound, so my youngest silently sits by me to gently hold Polly's head. I hear the slow-motion sound--almost a crunch--as the scissors slice through Polly's hair. SophiethPuppy, realizing she's been left alone on the couch, suddenly pounces in my lap, trying to play with the drawstrings on my pants. My dog grooming work will have to be done. To be honest, I can't hold SophiethPuppy entirely responsible for the mess I've made.

Polly looks up at me with her silent pleading eyes, her crooked teeth just visible through her thin, black lips. A patch of long hair extends between her eyes. Her head now looks too small for her body, like a dinosaur head. Her hair is cropped on top with a slightly bald spot, and her untamed long ears give the distinct impression of a mullet. I can't help but love her and cringe all at the same time.

### **3/?/ 2020 Bedtime**

My chest tightens with anxiety. My husband is holding me, his body warming mine. I hear his soft breath and Polly quietly snoring. It's warm and peaceful, but I can't sleep. I have all these thoughts swirling in my head. *Why did I drink a Dr.Pepper an hour before bed? I hope my students keep up on their work and don't quit. Why do people eat bats? What is the Chinese government not telling us? What's wrong with my dishwasher? And Kitchenaid? My son is an EMT and they have to reuse masks the entire shift because of the shortage. My daughter works at a grocery store. They are both "essential." I just want to be able to have them sit around the dinner table again.*

My thoughts continue to race. *Of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, the pale horse represented disease and death, but what are the colors of the other horses?* I strain trying to remember the colors of the other horses. For some reason it seems important. *I do know the key to Revelations is Christ and that He will overcome.* I feel my chest tighten again with anxiety. *Always there's good with the bad. I don't know how or when this will work out, but I know it will work out.*