



Disembodied Voices: Friendship During the Pandemic

"I'm a bad friend/So don't ask me where I've been/Been avoiding everything..." - Bad Friend, Rina Sawayama

We are curating a series of essays, interviews and stories on friendship, particularly friendship during the COVID-19 pandemic. How we think of friendship, intimacy and closeness has radically altered during this period. Lockdown and quarantine has had us relishing time with friends and family, or dealing with feelings of isolation, anxiety and abandonment – and sometimes a mixture of both. WhatsApp, Zoom and social media have become lifelines and changed how we communicate. We've reached out to old friends and been turned away by new ones; rekindled some relationships and discarded others. There are friends who may have inspired or infuriated you during this time. We may feel like we've failed a friend by not being there for them when they needed us; or, there may be those of us who feel supported and loved in a way we never have before.

We want to receive honest stories about friendship during the pandemic. We are especially keen to hear from marginalised perspectives and people from communities impacted by COVID-19. We also encourage writers to think about form carefully. For instance, essays that are co-written with a friend or recorded conversations can be an excellent way of exploring this theme.

We are also open to submissions and pitches on the representation and concept of friendship more generally. How friendship is represented on television, film and social media, in books, music and videos, before and during the pandemic, is also important. Are there representations of friendships that have given you hope and

comfort during this time, such as the problematic but uplifting friendship enjoyed by Arabella, Kwame and Terry in [I MAY DESTROY YOU](#), or the outlandish and hilarious connection shared between Ilana and Abi in [Broad City](#)? Perhaps there are depictions of friendship that have appeared toxic to you online, such as that recounted by [Natalie Beach about Caroline Calloway](#), or displayed by so-called “Squads” associated with various pop icons and celebrities. Such explorations of friendship across media may have fed into your idea of what ideal friendship is, or encouraged you to let go of certain people in your life. If so, we want to hear from you about the *representation* of friendship, and how it may have influenced you in life, too.

Topics on actual friendships can include:

- Support received from friends (new and old)
- Feelings of disappointment, abandonment and loneliness during Covid-19
- Outgrowing friendships / friendships falling apart or being rekindled
- Hibernating/self-isolation as healing
- Social Media friendships / how social media has shaped the concept of friendship / the language around friendship (bestie, BFF, frenemy, squad, clique, fam etc.)
- Representations of friendship in film, music and on TV, Netflix, Prime etc.
- Fictional friendships in literature

Forms can include:

- Personal essays
- Photo essays
- Essays / Features on fictional / celebrity / artistic friendships
- Letters
- Recorded conversations/interviews
- Aphorisms or manifestos
- Recreated WhatsApp conversations

Send your submissions to: friendshipandcovid@gmail.com
 Submissions are open until the end of February 2021

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

Aysha Abdulrazak & Sumaya Kassim,
 Friends (and LWP Guest Editors)

About Aysha Abdulrazak

Aysha Abdulrazak is a writer, critic and illustrator. She has worked in the education sector for several years. Aysha is interested in the power of words and creating more productive self-narratives. She is currently working on a project to promote self-empowerment and self-love in children. Follow Aysha on Instagram [@aysha_azk](#). To see Aysha's illustration project with Banan

Alkhazraj, Bananabread, follow them on Instagram [@bananabreadnco](#) and [@aa.doodles](#)

About Sumaya Kassim

Sumaya Kassim is a writer, curator and critic based in Birmingham, UK. She writes fiction and critical essays on art and culture and speaks regularly at universities, art galleries and museums about decolonising histories and the power of storytelling. She is currently working on a creative non-fiction project on autoimmunity as well as her first novel. She tweets [@SFKassim](#)

About Lucy Writers

[Lucy Writers](#) is an inclusive online platform devoted to uplifting the critical and creative voices of women and non-binary writers. In collaboration with [Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge](#), Lucy Writers supports and promotes the work of writers all around the world, from inside and outside the college community. With a thriving [Arts](#) editorial, including reviews and features on the latest shows from Tate, Royal Academy, Sadler's Wells, the National Theatre, Barbican as well as smaller arts venues around the UK, Lucy Writers aims to forge a nurturing and inspiring online environment for the next generation of writers and journalists.