



<https://dearquarantinediary.com/blog/pinky-fingernail>



Dear Quarantine Diary,

May 11, 2020

pinky fingernail

For the first time in over a year, the fingernail on my left pinky is growing out. Before, as soon as it emerged even a tiny fraction beyond the edge of its bed, it would split, and I would cut it as short as possible and file it so that the place where it broke apart wouldn't catch on my clothes or pull as I shampooed my hair.

Sometimes, pre-virus, I'd get a manicure. Or I'd paint clear polish over that baby nail to protect it. Then I'd curl my fingers and rub my thumb over it to feel its smoothness, its cohesiveness, and I'd hope that maybe this time it would keep growing, brazenly pushing forward, oblivious to its commitment to the split. But it never did, and I reconciled myself to this minor annoyance, this easily remedied but probably permanent malfunctioning of my body.

My nails have never been a source of vanity. I keep them short, cut regularly with a drugstore nail clipper, occasionally filed. I don't examine my hands, and I don't worry about other people examining them. But if you had looked closely at my split pinky nail, you would have noticed a faint line extending all the way to the cuticle, as if the split were already embedded there, waiting to bloom.

Yet now, five weeks into quarantine, there is no line. There is no split. The top of my pinkie fingernail ends in a little ivory crescent, the same width as my other crescents. When I touch its rim, it is a solid edge, no hint of fissure.

I don't know why this is happening. I don't know if it will last. Each day I rub my thumb over the nail to see if the damage is returning, but so far it isn't. My pinky fingernail remains intact. Slowly, invisibly, it is moving forward, up, out into the world.

-Susan Hodara