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Nota di contenuto	Introduction: Living with the virus that knows how we see each other / Kristin Ann Hass -- ; Part I. naming -- "This virus has no eyes: Telling stories in the land of monsters / Christopher Matthews -- Facing our pandemic / Sara Blair -- Living on loss of privileges: What we learned in prison / Patrick Bates, Alexandra Friedman, Adam Kouraimi, Ashley Lucas, Sriram Papolu, and Cozine Welch -- Not even past: Archiving 2020 in real time / Michelle McClellan and Aprille McKay -- ; Part II. Waiting -- Waiting = death: Covid-19, the struggle for racial justice, and the aids pandemic / David Caron -- Buddhism, the pandemic, and the demise of the future tense / Donald Lopez -- Covid diary: Hands, nets, and other devices / James Cogswell -- Social distances in between: Excerpts from my Covid-19 diaries / Amal Hassan Fadlalla -- ; Part III. Grieving -- Grief and the importance of real things during Covid-19 / Suzanne L. Davis -- Looking backward in order to look forward: Lessons about humanity and the humanities from the plague

at Athens / Sara Forsdyke -- Protests, prayers, and protections: Three visitations during covid-19 / William A. Calvo-Quiros -- Soliloquous solipsism / Melanie Tanielian -- ; Part IV. More waiting / Sheltering -- Finding home between the Vincent Chin case and Covid-19 / Frances Kai-Hwa Wang -- Caged with the tiger king: The media business and the pandemic / Daniel Herbert -- Prosthetics for right now / Nick Tobier -- ; Part V. Resisting -- Covid-19's attack on women and feminists' response: The pandemic, inequality, and activism / Abigail J. Stewart -- The virus that kills twice: Covid-19 and domestic violence under governmental impunity in Nicaragua / Eimeel Castillo -- "Our steps come from long ago": Living histories of feminisms and the fight against Covid in Brazil / Sueann Caulfield -- Making sense of sex and gender differences in biomedical research on Covid-19 / Abigail A. Dumes -- Digital encounters from an intersectional perspective: Black women in Argentina / Marisol Fila -- The media discourse on women-led countries in the Covid-19 pandemic: Using Germany as an example / Verena Klein -- Coronavirus capitalism and the patriarchal pandemic in India: Why we need a "feminism for the 99%" that focuses on social reproduction / Jayati Lal -- Whose challenge is #ChallengeAccepted? Performative online activism during the Covid-19 pandemic and its erasures / Ozge Savas -- Covid-19. Nigerian women and the fight for holistic policy / Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Ronke Olawale -- ; Part VI. Not waiting -- Covid-19 through an Asian American lens: Scapegoating, harassment, and the limits of the Asian American response / Roland Hwang -- The high stakes of blame: Medieval parallels to a modern crisis / David Patterson -- Unmuting voices in a pandemic: Linguistic profiling in a moment of crisis / Nicholas Henriksen and Matthew Neubacher -- Quarantine rebellions: Performance innovation in the pandemic / Anita Gonzalez.

Sommario/riassunto

Science has taken center stage during the COVID-19 crisis; scientists named and diagnosed the virus, traced its spread, and worked together to create a vaccine in record time. But while science made the headlines, the arts and humanities were critical in people's daily lives. As the world went into lockdown, literature, music, and media became crucial means of connection, and historians reminded us of the resonance of the past as many of us heard for the first time about the 1918 influenza pandemic. As the twindemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice tore through the United States, a contested presidential race unfolded, which one candidate described as "a battle for the soul of the nation." *Being Human during COVID* documents the first year of the pandemic in real time, bringing together humanities scholars from the University of Michigan to address what it feels like to be human during the COVID-19 crisis. Over the course of the pandemic, the questions that occupy the humanities--about grieving and publics, the social contract and individual rights, racial formation and xenophobia, ideas of home and conceptions of gender, narrative and representations and power--have become shared life-or-death questions about how human societies work and how culture determines our collective fate. The contributors in this collection draw on scholarly expertise and lived experience to try to make sense of the unfamiliar present in works that range from traditional scholarly essays, to personal essays, to visual art projects. The resulting book is shot through with fear, dread, frustration, and prejudice, and, on a few occasions, with a thrilling sense of hope.
