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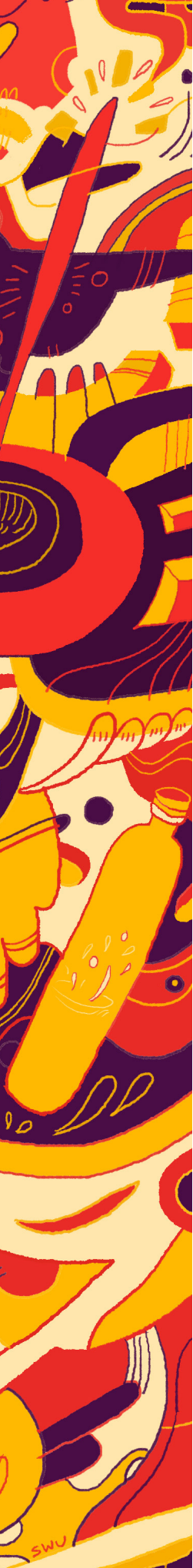


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I Hate Music (tbd)

Subhead (tbd)

Written by Cathy Campo — Illustrated by Gaby Trevino

At the end of a particularly strenuous day, my hands can't seem to reach for the remote control fast enough. In a world where music seems to be the prevailing form of escapism, I choose instead to turn to my favorite characters for comfort. Of course, we all find solace in art—but I'd rather wait until I can sit in front of a screen than to experience an immediate relief by simply popping in earbuds.

More often than not, my character of choice is Jane Villanueva from *Jane the Virgin*. The protagonist of a five-season telenovela-esque series, her outlandish obstacles include an accidental artificial insemination, gruesome murders, and an undercover drug lord. In other words, she's basically impossible to relate to. Whether it's *Jane the Virgin*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, or *The Good Place*, all television provides a function that I don't find in music: it's distracting. Do you want to forget about the laundry you haven't done in a month? The readings you're behind on? The 19 voicemails from your dad? Then boy, do I have news for you—that shit literally doesn't happen on TV.

Sure, on-screen characters deal with problems too, but they're nothing like mine. My biggest stressor is that I'm a senior, and I still have no idea what the hell I'm going to do with my life. Jane's deliberations about whether or not she should have and keep her child put my woes—applications and a lack of interest in classes—in perspective. It's almost too easy to put a wall between myself and the characters presented to me on screen. I can effortlessly remove myself from Jane's

problems—to sympathize, but not empathize, with the inner turmoil she endures when (spoilers) her husband is shot and killed by a drug lord—but oh wait, as it turns out, he's actually alive and just has amnesia.

Aside from giving me selective amnesia, allowing me to forget about internships I've been rejected from, TV has the uncanny ability to make me feel as if I'm surrounded by loved ones when I'm alone. In a weird way, Jane is one of my best friends. She comforts me when the stress of my own aimlessness becomes too much to handle. She's there for me whenever I need her, for the small Netflix fee of \$10.99.

But, when my friends are in need, they turn not to Jane, but rather Elliott Smith, Lana Del Rey, and Nina Simone for the small Spotify fee of \$9.99. My friends and I share many of the same woes—depression, identity formation, unrequited love—but they choose to pop in their headphones and listen to them on repeat: “Fooling everyone, telling them she's having fun” (“Carmen” by Lana Del Rey). Call me crazy, but I don't want my most distressing thoughts blasted in my ears. I'd rather ignore them forever, thank you.

For whatever reason, almost all popular songs just feel so personal and sad. Between parties and Jo's, pop seems to be the only genre I encounter, and while it may be true that not *all* of it is depressing, enough of it is to turn me off from the whole art form. These little, usually three-minute-ish pieces don't have time to establish characters or flesh out full, detailed scenarios. When Julia Michaels, an artist I know nothing about, sings, “I got issues, and one of them is how bad I need

you” (“Issues”), it's impossible not to put myself in her shoes. It becomes *me* asking my former lover to “bask in the glory of all our problems.” Music hits too close to home in a way that television and films cannot. I'm not anything like Jane who must face outlandish obstacles—God knows I've never had my baby kidnapped by a drug lord. Meanwhile, Michaels's scenario of a woman with issues who loves someone else with issues is so vague that it's impossible *not* to relate to it.

And while we're at it, pretty much *all* pop music is vague as hell. Who hasn't, like Ariana Grande, felt “so f*ckin' grateful” for their ex (“thank u next”)? Who hasn't, like the JoBros, at one point been a total “sucker” for someone (“Sucker”)?

Facing music means facing my problems—it means coming ear-to-headphone with my lack of life direction. I can't bear to sit in my room with the lights off and hear Selena Gomez remind me that I'm a “bad liar” (“Bad Liar”)—that no matter how confident I may sound about my future plans, the truth is that I'm scared and unsure. I run from course selections that might actually interest me, and instead, opt to take those that I know will be the easiest. I run from conversations with my parents and the advisor of my concentration that I don't even like, about what next year means for me. And I run from music too. I admire my friends and normal people alike who find solace in melodies, but to me, it will always be a fast track to unpleasant thoughts about my painful reality.

Meanwhile, Jane isolates me from my life and sucks me into her own...so maybe our friendship isn't so healthy. Television can be a beautiful, distracting thing, but sometimes, you just have to get your shit together and schedule a meeting with your advisor.

When it comes to spring weekend, I can't exactly say with honesty that I'm excited to hear Mitski remind me that “no one will save me” (“Nobody”). Thanks, girl! But I am looking forward to returning to my real-life cast of characters: my best friends. Sharing the experience with them will push me out of my emotional headspace—and you know, the fact that I'll be drunk won't hurt either. I'll always look to Jane to help me forget about some aspects of my life, namely what exactly I'm doing with it—but there are other aspects I want to be fully present for. No distractions. ■



Granola Bowls or Porridge?

Breakfasts with Body Dysmorphia

Written by Rob Capron — Illustrated by Katie Fliegel

Content warning: Mentions of eating disorders and body hatred

The best weekends of my life have always begun the same way: with a “healthy” breakfast of granola, strawberries, choc-olate chips, and brown sugar. Episodes of *This is Us* keep me company as I eat. In these golden days of old, this delectable cocktail proved a source of reprieve and relaxation. But this semester I’ve gone abroad, and granola bowls have vanished into that good night with little to no fanfare, replaced by the amicable blandness of store-bought porridge from my local London supermarket. My hasty departure has left me consumed with guilt, for I failed to grant my sweet granola bowls the send-off they deserved. I wasn’t there to say goodbye. I never got to say “I love you” one last time, to cry into the coconut shavings

as season three of *This is Us* unearthed more Pearson family secrets. I couldn’t even attend the funeral with my paltry rebound: the traditional English Sunday roast. I suppose I could have sent flowers, but after bungling my way into a £50 arrangement of roses on Valentine’s Day, I’m a little hesitant to enter a flower shop again anytime soon.

Yes, I’m an Englishman now. At least temporarily. Which is to say, not at all. I sense my American heritage is fairly transparent to the natives. What little practice in regional dialect I have received from my program of study—learning the “standard” accent of Received Pronunciation is mandatory at the London Dramatic Academy—has proved largely ineffective for a blubbering twenty-something who can barely pronounce words in American English. I order a black coffee and see the disdain in baristas’ eyes

as they ask if I mean an “Americano.” My Rhode Island ID is constantly scrutinized as a shoddily-made fake; my strict dieting and slim 5’6” frame does me no favors to convince bartenders I’m above fourteen years old. This isn’t all that bad, really: When you’ve been grappling with eating disorders for the last seven years, the suspicion functions as an odd sort of compliment—especially when my free time has been devoted to strictly-scheduled gym sessions as opposed to sight-seeing. Truthfully, I have largely considered my experience abroad as beneficial: here, I can easily resist the temptations of Blue Room muffins, Spicy Withs, and those dastardly delicious granola bowls.

Yes, I confess: at the time of my departure, my dear granola bowls were less of a childhood sweetheart and more of a toxic lover. Allow me to enlighten you with the history of our tragic affair, which





began shortly after that fateful first walk through the Van Wickle gates.

November, 2016: Most freshmen are concerned with whether or not they'll pass their classes, make friends, carve themselves an identity. I'm more worried about the freshman fifteen. The sacks of fat which wrap around my stomach are much smaller than they used to be, sure, yet the fear I might return to my former size consumes my waking days. How can

and try a granola bowl, specifically with coconut shavings. I doubt I will. If I'm eating junk, at least let it be junk I choose to indulge in. My daily caloric intake doesn't grow on trees.

April 2018: Warmth envelops me, and I cannot determine the main source. As a sophomore, I have settled into the comforts of familiarity, knowing which foundations to rest upon when the going gets rough. Weekly therapy sessions haven't hurt either.

isn't being cleaned.

February 2019: Coldness envelops me, and I cannot determine its main source. Perhaps it is the caffeine coursing through my body, making my skull throb, both friend and foe to the myriad of tasks set before me. It could be my sense of inferiority, an unshakeable feeling that, despite friendships and encouragement, I do not belong in London, in the program, or in the acting world. Or maybe it's the rush of anxiety whenever my new girlfriend, Julia, offers me chocolate. I think back to the chocolate Blue Room muffins I sputtered into the toilet, chocolate Insomnia Cookies that returned in mushy heaps to their containers, the chocolate granola bowls that always seemed to latch across my stomach and throttle my brain. All these are foreign to me now. I swore off their seductive ways in favor of a healthier lifestyle—dictated by rigid exercise and a strict diet of chicken, whole-wheat products, organic peanut butter and good ol' English porridge. What better way to maximize my fitness training than with consumption of strictly nutritiously-advantageous foods? No more greasy dining halls and lunch dates with unpredictable caloric values. I am in full control of how I live. I have structure, safety, and security, both in the people I have befriended and the food I consume. Everything is exactly as it should be. So why am I unhappy?

She smiles at me, a thumbnail-sized block of milk chocolate in hand. Even in my neurotic madness, I know to reject her offer is ridiculous. A voice in my head devises a new rule to follow: never reject chocolate from a girl who loves you.

And yet I do. Over, and over, and over again.

Until one day I don't.

In less than a week, I will be back home in Rhode Island. My London endeavors will be a fond memory. But while my semester has ended, there's a way I can still carry London with me - to home, to Brown and beyond.

The ingredients are simple: yogurt, granola and a whole bag of chocolate chips thrown in there for good measure.

I think it'll be a hell of a lot better than porridge. ■

The granola bowls have vanished into that good night with little to no fanfare, replaced by the amicable blandness of store-bought porridge from my local London supermarket.

I make new friends when I'm constantly on the precipice of obesity? Though I'm not exactly counting every last calorie, I have devised an ingenious fail-safe, one that allows me to indulge in—and simultaneously prevent the repercussions of—endless binge-eating sessions. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the “chew-spit.” Three easy steps, repeatable ad infinitum:

1. Chew up foods you crave, but do not need—i.e. pizza, sweets, desserts (shout out to Cajun apple cake!).
2. Find a suitable location to spit out the food (a napkin or empty to-go box are generally accessible; if timing and location are flexible, a bathroom works quite nicely).
3. Spit out the remains and stay fat-free!

This system doesn't always work, of course. Dates require constant interaction, and unless your potential suitor leaves to go to the bathroom, you're forced to endure whatever has ended up on your plate. In such scenarios, I have no choice but to force myself to eat the standard number of calories per day, and even to try foods that are objectively bad for me, such as the breakfast burritos which draw out obscene amounts of people at Andrews on weekends. A girl I have befriended insists I “switch sides” during our lunch dates

Yet, there's something special in this very moment. Perhaps it's the way my girlfriend clings on to me. It could be the loop of The Velvet Underground's “Sunday Morning” that sways through my head. Or maybe it's the tasty concoction of granola and chocolate that smothers my taste buds in decadent delight. It feels good to let food go down your throat.

She offers me her leftovers. “I told you you should switch sides.”

For once, I do not hesitate to eat more.

November 2018: Two minutes of sugary bliss, and now I have to work it off in a gym session I cannot possibly fit into the day. All the chocolate and carbs and sugar are turning to blubbery fat as I speak. I need to go to the gym. But when? I can't delay learning my lines for *The Antipodes* again. I can't cancel on my friend—that'll be the third time this week. I can't forget about the response paper for Latin American History and Film. And I told Katie I'd meet her for dinner. That means I *definitely* have to eat more. I'd look like a moron if I made plans for dinner and then say I already ate. What kind of friend would I be? What kind of person am I? Why am I even having this conversation with myself?

I have to—need to—let this tension out. Some Blue Room muffins should do the trick. I hope the second floor bathroom

Good Enough to Tweet

On the Increasing Aestheticization of Food

Written by Zach Mazlish — Illustrated by Connor Gewirtz

The aestheticization of food is an inescapable reality. Every dish is an opportunity for photography, and many places cater to Instagram tastes before gastronomic ones. Twenty-somethings on their phones line up around cold city blocks for trendy no-reservation restaurants—the dings of BuzzFeed “Tasty” videos echoing out from their accumulated Facebook feeds.

Food has a long history of transcending the caloric and becoming artistic. Across cultures and time-periods, the upper class has turned what is meant for consumption into an object of presentation. Think of Renaissance paintings that depict glorious cornucopias of artfully arranged fare. Contrary to popular belief, a whole boiled calf wearing a helmet first appeared in Ancient Rome, not on the Granoff menu.

But the current ubiquity of food’s aesthetic status is unparalleled in history, and it is not just a matter of rising wealth diffusing the privilege to view food as art to more people. Food is attaining an aesthetic primacy that rivals, and maybe even threatens, the rest of the art world.

Other art forms are caught in turmoil about loss of interest in aesthetic matters. It is not hard to find articles lamenting the decline of poetry and fiction reading, decreasing attendance of art museums, or the narrowing of aesthetic criticism by millennials ready to “cancel” whoever thinks about gazing out the Overton window. Much of the “crisis in the humanities” is blamed on art’s primary value being transfigured from aesthetics to politics.

Food’s aesthetic revolution surges upwards against this prevailing trend. It’s rare, for example, that you’ll hear leftists making claims about the oppositional potential of Fukuoka-style ramen. Indeed, culinary creations are uniquely democratic. Uniting our shared taste-buds, food welcomes the kind of low-risk, high-participation appreciation that the stuffier arts never could. Articles with titles like “Fluffy Japanese Soufflé Pancakes Have American Fans Waiting in Line” make their way into the New York Times “Most Popular” rankings, while “The Breakout Star of the Met Opera’s ‘Ring’” lags behind.

The digital age has shifted the way aesthetic material is accessed, and it’s possible food has benefited the most from

this change. Netflix shows like *Chef’s Table* and *Ugly Delicious* necessarily fetishize the visual aspects of food, and the promotion of restaurants by social media “influencers” bleeds into non-digital behavior. A 2017 Atlantic article mentioned that, for the first time, Americans are spending more money dining out than at grocery stores.

Food’s increased role as aesthetic good has turned it into cultural capital, online and in the real world. When building a brand, where you eat now supplants the poetry you read and the art you collect. Is there any better way to signal one’s coolness and strike up a conversation with other young and urban types than to call oneself a “foodie” and start expounding on the local restaurant scene?

Confession time: I am as guilty of this as anyone and I don’t know how to feel about it. I have asserted my “foodie” status at many a meet-and-greet, and devoured the aforesaid Netflix shows. And part of me brims with self-condemnation.

Isn’t taking aesthetic pleasure in food, rather than more traditional art forms, the ultimate form of millennial frivolity? It is fueled by the desire for heedless consumption, and sustained attention and contemplation are far from required. Food replacing more complex art is commensurate with the way “low-culture” items—short attention span garbage like superhero movies or *50 Shades of Gray*—will always reach peak popularity within their forms. What are critics to do but rage in ignored columns?

Furthermore, the desire to convert food aestheticization to status recognition can easily turn into the fetishization of distant cultures. It is one thing when David Chang or Anthony Bourdain travels the world and actually interacts with local communities, but there is something a little off about the love for “authentic Sichuan Chinese food” or “real Mexican food.” It tends to be more of an expression of “in-the-club” superiority than palate preference, and in doing so establishes a relation between the speaker and the foreign locale that only goes one way. There is a touch of early 20th-century artistic “primitivism” in the way the foodie collects cuisines of other nationalities—their ability to curate given by their “superior” cultural understanding.

Yet, I’m ambivalent. All these critiques strike me as an older-generation’s typical cultural conservatism and inability to accept change. Movies, TV, photography, and even novels were all once decried as pulp before they ascended to their current status as high art.

And if food is stealing aesthetic attention from other art mediums, isn’t that a democratization of sorts? After all, food is universal and non-elitist in a way the western literary canon or artistic master’s can never hope to be. Food appreciation is still often used as a means of class elitism in that many of the “hottest” spots are still only accessible to a select income bracket, but it has democratic roots which other art forms lack.



The increasing embrace of and appreciation of non-European culinary traditions can also be construed as a change for the better. Rather than assimilating or appropriating foreign food cultures, the millennial food obsession has created an avenue for increased cultural understanding, and delivered job opportunities for immigrants looking to preserve their heritage.

It is time to start recognizing, and coming to terms with, food’s new aesthetic primacy. Many are participating in the transition of power from the mediums of the past to the medium of the plate without even realizing it’s occurring. Our literal taste in food now signifies as much as our taste in opera or baroque architecture once did. As someone interested in the food scene and the place of the arts in American cultural life, my feelings are still torn about this change. I’m not planning to stop wasting days away browsing Eater and lining-up for Providence pop-ups, but maybe I’ll do it with a little more reflection. After all, what is modernity if not making oneself unsure about easy pleasures? ■

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Aminé

Sa nosae nonestis est, occae lautemporem

Written by Nicole Gegan Illustrated by Nina Yuhci

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Mitski

Sa nosae nonestis est, occae lautemporem

Written by Nicole Gegan Illustrated by Nina Yuhci

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Morning Ritual

More than the Morning (Coffee) Grind

Written by Caroline Ribet — Illustrated by Cricket McNally

For a long time, I woke up early. My dad, also an early riser, would almost always come to my door when he heard my alarm go off. He'd ask, "Would you like a coffee, CR?" It was too early to talk, but on those mornings we would drink coffee for a few minutes together, finding a quiet solitude in the last moments of night and the first moments of day. It grounded me before a busy day at school; it was my special time with my dad. Our morning ritual.

One of the first things I did when I got to College Hill was scout out—first on Yelp, and later in person—where I'd buy coffee beans. I wanted the sorts of beans that people describe as having hints of nuts or chocolate or citrus—not the pre-ground, instant stuff. I was determined to continue my ritual even far away from home.

Luckily for me, there are a lot of options. Coffee Exchange on Wickenden has many

kinds of whole beans, from the barista favorite Fondo Paez blend to the more complex Lake Kivu. Dave's on South Main has beans that are a little more expensive but absolutely delicious (Quonnie is a favorite). There's New Harvest Coffee in the Arcade, which is nice but a little too expensive for me and is also patronized by a crowd so hipster I feel like I'm going to melt when I enter the dimly lit room. Of course, there are always the two Blue State Coffees on Thayer Street. The perpetually busy Starbucks. Malachi's on Ives Street. Sydney by the State House. Bolt Coffee in the RISD Museum. Each coffeehouse has its own character and whole bean offerings. When I first got to Brown in the fall of 2015, many of these places didn't even exist. Now, each has become the site of familiar baristas, regulars I almost recognize, memories of long conversations, first dates, paper-

writing marathons, shrines of finals past.

Sometimes I feel like coffeeshops are where college happens; spend a few hours in the corner of Dave's or Blue State and you'll see what I mean. Students are crammed onto every possible seating apparatus from open until close. They're in the corner chairs on their laptops and cellphones, engrossed in a novel or textbook or Twitter feed or conversation. Some students are in a rush. A few have all the time in the world and lounge in the prized armchairs, gazing out the window. Of course, actual adults are there too, holding their work meetings or picking up their morning usuals before heading off to the office. It's the perfect place to be a student; just loud enough to count as white noise, just quiet enough to make out what people are saying.

Have you ever seen an AeroPress? It's a coffee-brewing device made of two plastic





cylinders and a filter. After assembling the cylinders in a way that looks complicated until you've done it four or five times, you add in your ground coffee beans and hot water, screw on the filter, flip the device over, and use the pressure of air to push the coffee through the filter. It's among my dad's preferred coffee-making processes, for whom brewing coffee is a form of art. He weighs out the recommended 17 grams of carefully-chosen beans, purchased from our local farmers market, grinds them on the spot, and uses near-boiling water so as not to "insult" the coffee grinds. Right before I left for college, he taught me this sacred process and bought me an AeroPress and a small hand-powered coffee mill so I could make coffee for myself once I left home.

For four years, I've been trying to figure out whether coffee culture is actually a fundamental part of the Brown University experience or if my sample of friends and acquaintances just happens to be skewed towards coffee-drinkers. When I go to my humanities seminars (where surviving an entire 2.5-hour discussion without *something* to drink, caffeinated or not, is a universal challenge), everyone seems to have a cup from the Underground or Starbucks or Blue State. On weekends, I struggle to find a single seat in any of the shops within a mile radius of College Hill, where students are hunkered down with their \$3 drinks and free wifi all day.

Other days, I meet students who can "wake up just fine without coffee" or "prefer tea." They don't feel the need to engage in the delicious indulgence that is my favorite beverage. Some don't like the taste. Others can't metabolize caffeine or don't like how the "drug" makes them feel. A few drink coffee only when they need to pull an all-nighter, an experience that couldn't be more different from my highly methodical, deeply personal, and semi-religious morning ritual.

Getting familiar with the unique environment and unspoken expectations of campus-adjacent coffee shops has been part of the fun of caffeinating away from home. Someone pointed out to me that "Coffee Exchange is off-campus, so it feels like a different world." The older crowd there, according to her, loves to "give their hot takes on the rise of China

or their marital problems," the kinds of discussions that could not feel further from the collegiate talk around campus. It's fun to listen, she says. By contrast, "Blue State is where you go on Sunday, and people talk about who they hooked up with." She refuses to go to the Shop just a few blocks up Wickenden, because there she "feels like a stereotype of [herself]." Plus, they barely have any tables, and it's hard to get a place to sit.

Every coffeeshop has its own special character. The Underground—the weekday, student-run coffee shop in the basement of Faunce—was nothing more than an idea and a coffee machine during my first year. Now, it was described to me by barista Olivia Hinch '20 as "the anti-Blue Room experience." The mood-lit basement of Faunce features cheap coffee drinks, Knead donuts, and a fancy espresso machine, not to mention familiar faces standing behind the counter ringing you up. At Bolt coffee, you have to specifically *request* milk in your coffee, showing your cards as a non-black-coffee-drinking peasant. At Starbucks, you wait in the wings while people smart enough to take advantage of mobile orders stroll in and out. At Sydney, a coffee shop I often patronized while working at the State House over the summer, the fancier downtown corporate people choose espresso drinks and Perriers and summer salads that have always looked delicious to me but not quite filling enough given how expensive they are. At Bagel Gourmet, when they ask if you want cream and sugar, you should always say "yes."

I've found it's possible to combine coffee culture with other interests. My friend Julia and I, who are running buddies as well as close friends, have together invented lots of training routes that end at different coffee shops near College Hill. When I have boy problems or a lot of papers due, we end at Dave's (my favorite). When she has boy problems or a lot of lab work, we run to Malachi's (her favorite). We roll into the coffee shop sweaty, feeling superior to the people in line because it's 7:30 a.m., and we have already burned a million calories, imagining ourselves justified in ordering a whole milk latte, which is closer to a cup of steamed milk than anything else. If we feel adventurous, we run to Borealis Coffee

Company in Riverside, Rhode Island, and take the bus back. That hipster coffee shop is the type with minimalist wood tables and industrial metal stools and succulents in fishbowls on the tables, patronized by people with ambiguously ironic facial hair. In our running clothes, you can bet we don't fit in there.

As much as I love the Providence coffee scene, most of my caffeination still occurs in the quiet solitude of the early hours, and it's become a morning ritual all my own. I wake up a little after dawn and make coffee for myself—with whatever beans I've been onto lately—the way my dad taught me all those years ago. Then, I go running or concentrate on work while most students are still asleep. I need to take advantage of those morning hours because I can't focus in the afternoon or evening, and I like the loneliness and the silence and the way I can hear my thoughts so clearly.

As I boil water, grind my beans, and brew coffee, I imagine that in a few hours my dad will wake up in California and make coffee for himself. I look back on how hard it was to adjust to life in college, to make friends, to take care of myself, and to get used to working all the time. I remember all the friends, courses, interests, and workout routines that have come and gone, and the ways that my morning ritual has anchored me through the more difficult or lonely or painful moments at Brown. I wonder about moving away and moving on. I think about which of my habits I might hold onto and others that will evolve into something unrecognizable in support of my new job and my new life. I contemplate what coffeehouses I will get to explore in a new city with new friends I haven't even met. I map out where I will buy my beans during this next chapter and how I might avoid waking up a future roommate with the deafening noise of grinding coffee. I consider all the places that the AeroPress has come with me so far—every dorm, sublease, and apartment—and I envision where it might go next. I visualize myself in the new apartment I haven't even found yet, drinking coffee by myself in the early morning, preparing for the kind of adult life I don't know anything about. I'm scared for graduation, but excited, too. I'm drinking coffee in anticipation. ■



The Closer

The PawSox Legacy and their Last Season at McCoy

Written by Sarah Lettes — Illustrated by Owen Rival

On a sunny day in late March 1997, my parents put a baseball cap on my four-month-old head and drove me to Turner Field. The stadium had been built for ceremonies as well as track and field events for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, but had been recently retrofitted into a baseball stadium. On that 70-degree day, the Atlanta Braves were about to play their first game in the ballpark.

That first game did not lead me to an undying passion for baseball (I slept through it). But I did develop a love of *going* to baseball games. I thrived on every minute of the fan experience. The days that I got to throw on my Chipper Jones T-shirt and a Braves baseball cap were special ones. My family would hop into the car and navigate the tangle of Atlanta highways. Once in our seats, I'd watch each pitch with bated breath, listening for the satisfying thud of the baseball hitting the catcher's mitt or the crack of the ball making contact with the wooden bat. After a couple innings of dedicated focus, my little brother and I, and later our little sisters, would peel ourselves out of the hot plastic seats to run laps around the stadium. We would weave through the concession stands and admire the glorious array of junk food, hoping to get our own ice cream or frozen lemonades. Then my parents would drive home, while we were half asleep in the backseat of the car after hours of watching and cheering in the hot sun, our shirts sticking to our backs with sweat and ice cream staining the Braves logo on the front. For years, watching baseball was something I associated strongly with Atlanta. Each time I heard the notes of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," it would take me back to those summer days at Turner Field.

But near the end of my first year at Brown, I realized that this iconic American sport was something that I could also experience in Rhode Island. In fact, I learned that there was a minor league team just a few miles away. So, a few people from my floor met at the Thayer tunnel and hopped on a RIPTA bus to McCoy Stadium, home of the Pawtucket Red Sox. The bus took us up Hope Street, across I-95, and over the Seekonk River before plopping us in the middle of a

sea of houses. The neighborhood was so residential that it felt impossible to have a stadium nearby.

But after a couple minutes of walking, the ballpark came into view. The structure sits at the end of Pond Street, a subtle reminder of what had existed there before it. The Narragansett and Wampanoag peoples had originally lived on the land before European settlers came and established Pawtucket as an industrial center. In the 1830s, a man named Samuel Hammond constructed a reservoir there. Hammond's Pond was used as a recreational area for decades, but over time fell into neglect, eventually becoming an unappealing swamp.

In the 1930s, Mayor Thomas P. McCoy requested to put a stadium on top of this swamp. According to someone who knew the mayor, he pushed for this idea "against the pressure of EVERYONE in his Democratic city organization." But this mayor knew how to get what he wanted. He had undeniable charisma and passion, and became a very influential figure in Pawtucket. At one point, McCoy was the mayor, city auditor, city comptroller, chairman of the Sinking Fund, chairman of the Purchasing Board, clerk of the city council, and the city's Weigher of Merchandise. McCoy saw baseball as a morale-booster for local mill workers; he had been a union leader and saw a stadium as a way to not only give workers a diversion, but also employ many of them who were recently unemployed.

McCoy got what he wanted, and stadium construction began in the 1930s. The project was expensive, especially because, as Pawtucket folklore tells it, trucks kept getting sucked into the swampy ground. It was completed with a final cost of \$1.5 million, far above the projected \$600,000. McCoy laid the cornerstone in 1940, and in 1942, the city officially celebrated its completion. At the time of opening, tickets were free with the purchase of a 25-cent defense step to support the war. McCoy passed away in 1945, and the following year the city dedicated the stadium in his honor.

Initially, the Pawtucket Slaters, a minor league team named after the industrialist Samuel Slater, played at McCoy. They left after four seasons and

then, for 14 years, Pawtucket did not have professional baseball. The city used the stadium for events and treated it as a storage unit for heavy machinery and sand. That dry spell ended in 1966 when the Pawtucket Indians came to McCoy for two years before moving to Connecticut.

In 1970, the first team known as the Pawtucket Red Sox started playing there. The team got its colloquial name, the PawSox, in 1977 after a uniform error. That year, self-made millionaire Ben Mondor had saved the team from its downhill spiral by taking it over. However, three weeks before the season started, they still didn't have uniforms. The Boston Red Sox general manager Haywood Sullivan sent over a set of 48 old home and away uniforms. These uniforms bore the word "Boston," so the Pawtucket general manager suggested they remove that stitching and replace it with PawSox, which the team has been known as ever since.

Throughout this historical rollercoaster ride, one claim to fame has stood out in Rhode Island lore: on McCoy field in 1981, the PawSox played the Rochester Red Wings for the longest game in baseball history. On April 18 at 8:25 p.m., the game began, and the teams battled it out for 32 innings (a normal game has 9 innings) until 4:07 a.m., when the game was finally suspended. By the end, only 19 fans remained in the stadium. The game resumed on June 23, and within 18 minutes, the PawSox scored a 3-2 victory after a total of 33 innings.

This hub of sports and community, once filled by millworkers and later attended by new waves of immigrants who moved to Pawtucket, is now in its last season. The PawSox are set to move to a new stadium in Worcester, Massachusetts next season, where they will be renamed the WooSox.

When I first walked up to McCoy Stadium on that May afternoon, I had no idea about the history that brought that stadium into being. All I knew was that I couldn't wait to sit down with a bowl of ice cream and forget about finals for a few hours. The first thing I noticed was how approachable the stadium was. Atlanta's Turner Field, where I grew up attending Braves games, could fit almost 50,000 perspiring fans. In contrast, McCoy holds



barely over 10,000 seats. During my first game, my group's tickets were general admission, so we had free reign to choose our seats (at least I think we did; if we were wrong, no one corrected us). It was a drizzly day, so we had free pick of most of the stadium, sliding into seats a few rows behind home plate.

At McCoy, you get to see talent that's almost on par with what you would see at Fenway, but in a much more intimate setting. These minor league players are just at the brink, working towards their big break and a chance to move up to Fenway Park in Boston. Indeed, famous players like Roger Clemens and Kevin Youkilis spent time playing for the PawSox in the minor leagues. Also, major league teams sometimes send players down to their minor league teams while they recover from injuries, as the Red Sox did with "Big Papi" (David Ortiz).

Beyond the high quality baseball, McCoy never fails to deliver a stellar fan experience. After one game, PawSox reps asked fans to come down to the field and grab a partner. They handed each pair of fans a baseball. Over 1,100 of us lobbed the balls back and forth with our partner, and together we broke the record for the world's largest game of catch. The following spring, I witnessed a giant candy hunt on the field after the game. Kids darted around the green grass and grabbed for Smarties and Twizzlers. The PawSox

also let kids stay after some games and run the bases. On some summer nights, they fill the outfield with tents for Scout sleepovers.

I most recently attended a game at the beginning of this school year. That time, a mix of the original first year crew and some others who I had told about the PawSox just the day before loaded into a car and an Uber and headed out. At that point, I really should have known to check the schedule to see what kind of treat was in store, but I enjoyed being surprised. As it turned out, there was a *Grease* themed fireworks show to cap off the game. It was a warm night during Labor Day weekend, and the stadium was packed with families soaking in their last taste of summer. The sun moved its way across the sky throughout the game, casting bright shades of orange as the fourth inning began and disappearing by the final pitch. Minutes after the last ball thudded into the catcher's mitt, one burst of fireworks shot up into the night. Then "Summer Nights" came on over the sound system, as well as "Greased Lightnin'," "You're the One that I Want," and all of the hits that gave us nostalgia for a time period none of us had ever experienced. It was the second to last game of the season, and the crowd sang along to every word as they clung on to the final remnants of summer.

On April 13th, the team played their last home opener ever as the Pawtucket

Red Sox. Next year, they're going to fold up their PawSox uniforms and button up WooSox uniforms, entering a new chapter of baseball for this team. A lot has changed about McCoy since the first pitch in 1942: the stadium itself has been renovated and expanded, the fanbase once attracted millworkers while the PawSox now sport "Osos Polares de Pawtucket" (polar bears) uniforms at Tuesday home games "to celebrate the team's surrounding Hispanic community." The players now come from across the globe and live in a different world than the players who first took the field at McCoy. And outside the blue plastic stands, the city of Pawtucket has continued to evolve. But some things have stayed the same: the hush before a pitch, the sound of a bat making contact with a ball, and the cheer of fans that echoes through the neighborhood as the ball soars through the air. There is still a whole summer of baseball-filled afternoons in Pawtucket, so make your way to McCoy to cheer on the PawSox.

Details about PawSox history come from Dan Barry's *Bottom of the 33rd: Hope, Redemption, and Baseball's Longest Game*; "A City Braces for Its Ballpark to Go the Way of Its Mills" by Dan Barry in the *New York Times*; and "History of Pawtucket Red Sox Baseball" from Boston's Pastime website. ■

Meeting Myself

Reflections upon Revisiting Symphony Hall

Written by Holly Zheng — Illustrated by Ashley Hernandez

As the audience lights dimmed and the stage lights brightened, I quickly flipped through the concert program to remind myself of the pieces' names. A tuning note from the first oboist broke through the silence of the concert hall. Different timbres of sound emerged slowly underneath this steady note, soon weaving into a comforting harmony.

Having been on both sides of the stage, I've become very familiar with "concert A," the pitch universally used for tuning orchestras and concert bands. This time, the note was even more special because I knew the oboist playing it; she was one of the people I had befriended when I participated in the same music festival before.

Earlier that morning, on a slightly snowy Saturday this past March, I took a train north to Boston Symphony Hall. The concert didn't feature any renowned soloists or guest conductors; instead, the performers were high school students. They had come from different towns in Massachusetts for the annual three-day high-school music conference, whose final performance takes place at Symphony Hall every year.

I participated in this music festival during my last two years of high school. Thankfully, Brown is close enough to Boston that I could attend the concert again this year. I always lament over how I live near Symphony Hall, one of the most stunning concert venues in the country, but seldom have the chance to see a concert there. Going to this one was an effort to change that.

I sat through the choir, jazz band, and orchestra performances before the concert band, the group that I had been part of, came on. Before the concert band musicians arrived on stage, the concert hall staff had to rearrange the chairs and the conductor's podium, so I took this time to walk around in the corridor outside. Last year, I waited in this same corridor with the rest of the band before heading on stage. I had leaned against the wall then, looking forward to my group's performance. Our conductor had added a short choral introduction to the opening piece, having the entire band sing before we started playing. I couldn't wait for the ensemble to surprise the audience with this, but I also knew that when we hit our last chord, my four years of high school music festivals would also conclude, and I wasn't sure how dedicated I would be to music once college started. The thought that it might

even be the last time I would play with a music ensemble made me a little uneasy.

I certainly did not imagine back then that I would be back in the same corridor a year later. Noticing that the concert band musicians had entered on stage, I sneaked back into the concert hall and sat in a seat near the entrance. From past experience, I knew that these musicians must have woken up before five that morning to prepare for their dress rehearsal. The concert band always went first during dress rehearsals but last in the actual performance so that the concert hall staff could set up the chorus risers after the instrumental group rehearsals and leave the risers on stage until the chorus finished performing.

The tiring rehearsal schedule was always challenging for me and my fellow band members, but our successful performance made the 4:30 a.m. alarm acceptable. I tried to hide my chuckle as I remembered the long hours of spare time I had between our dress rehearsal and our afternoon performance. Sitting among our suitcases and instrument cases, I chatted with other musicians, sharing anecdotes about practice while trying to finish a James Joyce novel for my English class.

In the middle of the concert band's first piece, a sonorous trumpet melody brightened the golden tones of the concert hall. Surrounded by the layers of harmonies reflected off of the hall's acoustically-perfect wooden architecture, I forgot where I was. I was suddenly sitting under stage lights, slightly sweating, my clarinet in my left hand, my sore right hand resting on my lap while counting the number of rests I had so

that I wouldn't get lost. The trumpet melody continued behind me.

Then, I was back in my seat in the audience, looking at the musicians on stage. The melody surrounding me had softened the boundary of time. I smiled at my old self.

When I walked out of Symphony Hall into a quiet and ordinary Boston afternoon, I finally realized that my return to this concert hall was more necessary than I had originally thought. Before I left Symphony Hall last year, I was aware that a part of me would be staying behind here in this hall. Now, walking through the same corridors again gave me the chance to confront my worries about the future. I didn't know how to deal with them a year ago, but being back in this space allowed me to address them.

Having spent an afternoon at Symphony Hall reassured me that, despite any emotions that may overwhelm and confuse me now, I will be able to make more sense of them in the future. Perhaps, I don't always need to know how to deal with my emotions in the moment. If I leave such thoughts in the back of my mind, maybe someday, a familiar place or another time-blurring melody will reunite me with them and bring clarity.

Before I walked down the stairs leading into Green Line station, I looked behind at Symphony Hall across the avenue, searching for a glimpse of myself standing at the hall's door last year. Given the chance to speak to future me, I would let myself know that everything would turn out fine. I'm still playing in music ensembles in college and every concert A still gives me chills. Most of all, I look forward to each and every performance, just as before. ■



Flow

Learning the Elements of Dance

Written by Chanel Johnson — Illustrated by Ali Pirl

A few weeks ago, the professor from my Philosophy and Psychology of Happiness course introduced us to the concept of flow. Flow, as he described, comes from taking action to complete a difficult task. When a person is in flow, their enjoyment of a task lies outside the boundary of anxiety and boredom, where a task challenges but doesn't overwhelm them.



My friend and I first saw the hip-hop dance group Impulse perform in the spring semester of my sophomore year at Brown. Halfway through their show, a group called Elements took the stage. The show's program told me that Elements was a beginner hip-hop dance group run by Impulse that teaches students foundational dance skills and choreography. As I watched the group perform, I was amazed by how in sync they moved—confidently and passionately—and began to imagine what it would feel like to be on that stage, even though I had my own reservations about dance.

Dancing and I have had an on-and-off relationship for most of my life. I started with ballet lessons in kindergarten but then, for some reason, I stopped going. My interest in dance revived when I decided to take an African dance class during my sophomore year of high school. But I would always compare myself to my classmates. *How could they do that move so naturally? Why can't I look that graceful?* I didn't take another dance class until the fall semester of my sophomore year at Brown. The course was eccentric, to say the least; we wore strange costumes and even danced in paint. After completing that course, I decided I just wasn't free-spirited or coordinated

enough to appreciate dance. But after seeing the passion and energy of Elements' performance, I decided to give dance another shot and try out the next year.

Yet, when Impulse announced the Elements Beginner Performance Workshop series this January, I still found myself looking for excuses. *You have to meet at least twice a week? I can't manage that with my academics! Over 100 people are already interested, and they're capping the group at 80 people!? What's the point in going if they're already going to be over capacity?* Despite all these excuses, I somehow found myself walking to the dance studio for the introductory meeting and was greeted by a mass of people in a small room.

Maybe I stayed because the student teachers were so welcoming and encouraging. Or because everyone around me looked like they had no idea what was going on either, and we laughed through the choreography anyway. Either way, the workshop culminated in just one performance. How bad could that be?

Good God, I thought many times throughout the next six weeks as we prepared for our performance in the Impulse showcase. The learning curve was steep for me; I had underestimated how difficult it would be to learn and remember the choreography. For the first couple of practices, the only thoughts running through my head were *what are my arms doing? What are my legs doing? What direction should I be facing?* And while trying to figure all of that out, I still needed to be in time with the music, matching the chill vibe of one song or the fast-paced beat of another.

But, it was the first time in a long time that I felt fully immersed in the moment. I'm always thinking about the next five things I need to do—helpful for staying organized but terrible for enjoying myself. However, while learning choreography, I was so focused on my body interacting with the space around me that my looming to-do list never crossed my mind, something I only realized after practice ended. Moreover, after practicing the choreography so many times, I began to trust that my body would remember the moves for me. With each practice, I could relax more with the music. As my psychology professor would say, I entered a state of *flow*.

And maybe that's what my previous dance experiences lacked. Before Elements, I was constantly overwhelmed during workshops—simultaneously trying to keep up with the choreography and make my dancing look effortless. I was so focused on seeming confident that I ended up appearing inattentive and bored. Elements challenged me to let go of what I looked like and focus instead on how my body felt.

Right before I took the stage for my performance, my friend from Impulse pulled me to the side. "I just want to say I'm so proud of you, and that our friends in the audience came to see you. You got this," she whispered, tapping my nose with her finger.

My friend's encouragement and my experience in Elements gave me the confidence to continue dancing after that performance, sparking my desire to grow more as a dancer. I wish I could say my relationship with dancing has been smooth sailing ever since, but that's definitely not the reality. I sometimes still walk into dance workshops and can't help comparing myself to the dancers who are better than me. I still catch myself feeling discouraged when I can't pick up choreography as quickly as I would like to. A month after the show, instead of enjoying the video of my first performance in over five years, I cringed at the tiny mistakes I'd made.

My confidence in dance is still a work in progress. My lifelong, rocky relationship with dance perhaps stemmed from my unwillingness to accept that there would be challenges in the first place. Inevitably, more challenges will come as I learn different dance styles and push myself to participate in more workshops and auditions. But as of now, challenges and all, dancing is the only activity that makes me feel centered and grounded—at once a balancing act and a breeding ground for growth. ■



Band (tbd)

Confessions of an Expat Band Geek

Written by Jordan Hartzell — Illustrated by Rémy Poisson



One Time at Band Camp...

Consisting of 60 hours over five days in the last week of August, camp inspired its own special form of dread, the kind that festers and then collapses in on itself when the thing you have to do gets close. But it was ultra-mandatory: no camp meant no membership in the ensemble for the entire year. Play or get played! The days were army-regimented: morning marching drills before it got too hot, then midmorning large-group work, then midday section work, then marching drills when it was too hot, then large-group work again as the summer light faded. Our director, Mr. Hill, was a squat and balding man with beady eyes and crooked teeth. Too much hair

gel. He spent the days at camp telling us how inefficient we were. Lazy, too. Unable to meet expectations. Every day was the same mess of brass and put-downs: hot air all around, accented by short whistle blows. Always sunburn.

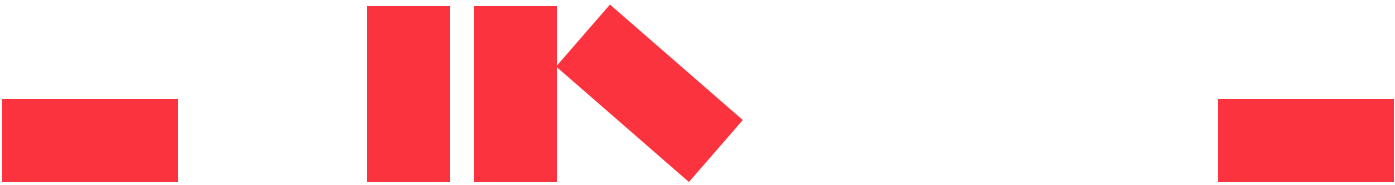
Into the Wild Blue Yon-der!

Central Pennsylvania has a lot of vets. Memorial and Veterans' Days were major events, as were the parades. For the few days before them, we used our morning practices to play "Battle Hymn" and "The Star Spangled Banner." After we mastered a piece, Hill would order us to stop playing and get in parade formation. We'd march around the school

football field in silence, instruments in playing position but not making a single squeak until dismissal at 7:40 a.m. when the school day began. Roll step to honor the troops.

Never Have I Ever...Cried During Rehearsal


The band was the only school group that had 7 a.m. practices, which were held inside during the winter season. Winter meant no football and more concerts. I was second chair alto saxophone, and it was two days before a Friday night show. Our first chair player decided he'd rather go to his baseball game than the concert, so I stepped up to take his solo. It was a short ditty: some sharps and



flats for technical flair, but no biggie (sax is all about faking it anyway). But on the morning of the concert, I still couldn't play those few measures perfectly. I tripped over the transition down to low F, which set me back half a beat and messed with the trumpets' intros. I tried the run twice; my third time was not the charm. Hill had heard enough: he stopped the entire ensemble to stress the importance of individuals delivering on their promises, of preparation as a form of respect for the group, and, I guess, the importance of

a row toward the back, resting his knee on the metal siding. We went over a bump and his knee thudded against the bus, ripping his patella out of place as if it hadn't been attached at all. He didn't cry or moan; instead, he stood and held himself up with the back of the seats, trying to get someone's attention. No one believed him (the bump was tiny, you've got to be kidding!) until someone went over and took a look at the kneecap jutting out way too far. I walked down the aisle and rolled up my sleeves to pop it back in, thinking

my sweet spot. Jazz ensemble was the only reason I hadn't quit playing. The group was optional for band members, but participation in the marching and concert bands was a required corequisite. Some kids put down their marching instruments to riff on bass guitar, piano, or a full drum set; everyone played like they meant it. Soloists ripped up nasty improv sections, and we all swayed when a piece started to groove. It was the kind of music that makes you close your eyes, so you can feel yourself making it.



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not being a major screw-up in general, with me as counter-example #1. He rapped his stand with the baton. *Try again.*

Shut Up, It's Not Dislocated.

The back of the band bus was a lawless place. On the outside, it was just a regular school bus that carted us around to play at Friday night football games. But the bus always saw more drama than the field: a girl threw up everywhere, a boy got a blow job under a blanket in the back row, the driver accidentally backed into the school at an away game. On one drive home, a kid from the drum section was sitting cross-legged in

that I could maybe follow instructions over the phone from my dad (an eye doctor with a knack for giving emergency advice to his kids). Apparently a patella dislocation isn't as dangerous as a full knee dislocation, and performing an impromptu relocation isn't a good idea if you have zero medical knowledge or training. The kid stood for the rest of the ride, wincing on every turn. We all sat quietly until we returned to school.

Swing Low

Jazz was "Apple Honey" by Woody Herman and "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder—the best part of being in band and

Quitting, in C Minor

My musical career ended in mezzo-forte. Jazz just wasn't enough anymore. Band had lost whatever sparkle it once had, and the near-constant dread outweighed any joy. Hill said something like, "That's too bad. I understand," and then I might have said, "Okay, well, I enjoyed my time in the band." That was it. It was the end of junior year and I was six years in—four under his direction. The moment felt like a drained A-flat with a fermata that wasn't held long enough—awkward, with no resolution.

You'll Be Missed and Other Lies

The band played on without me, as bands tend to do. I told myself that quitting wasn't about the music; it was the too-severe director and the too-boring football games and the too-little happiness it brought me. I told myself that I'd keep playing, that I could separate the making music part from everything else.

Go Bruno

I didn't bring my sax to college. ■

The Pen Is Not A Sword

On the Power of Writing

Written by Kaitlan Bui — Illustrated by Kathryn Li

We often hear that the pen is mightier than the sword.

Throughout my years as a writer, I've proudly clung to this expression, mistakenly believing that it promised me the possibility of transcending the bookworm archetype. It offered me a weapon to wield, one even mightier than a sword, and I became a warrior-leader-pathfinder—with an emphasis on “warrior,” of course. After all, that was the juicy stuff, the stuff of power. In a world that seemed to champion CS majors and pre-med kids, I could at least hang onto this one thing, this single thread of pride. It was my battle cry.

One of my first adventures in Providence involved bookstore-hunting. I gallivanted the streets with three new acquaintances (Hello-my-name-is-Kaitlan-and-I-plan-on-concentrating-in-English), and we eventually stumbled into a pretty little bookshop. Soft music emanated from a corner of the room. The cashier peered at us through his glasses. Books lined the walls: *1984* and *Cloud Atlas*, *Great Expectations* and *Memoirs of a Geisha*. My companions had read them all and wanted to know what I thought of them. But I couldn't respond, because I hadn't read any of them. So I concealed my lack of opinion with a wordless shake of my head. Though I tried to play it cool, self-doubt flurried in my mind. What was wrong with me, what was wrong with me—wasn't I the professed English major? They, in the reading they'd done in their free time, outshone me in my area of “expertise.” I was invalidated. Inadequate. Ignorant. Anything but powerful.

As the semester progressed, I wrote and read and wrote some more and eventually began to realize that I wasn't really becoming a “warrior” at all. Response papers asking me to answer questions such as “what is home?” forced me to acknowledge my horrifying feeling of displacement. Academic essays were subject to intense scrutiny, and for the first time, I worried that hours of drafting would not be enough to land me an “A.” Even my own journal entries were flooded with confusion about identity and self-worth. Time and time again, those bookstore insecurities reemerged. My pen wasn't doing much blocking, parrying, or slicing at all. It was only forcing me to profess how weak I was. It seemed I was anything but powerful.



As freshman year winds down, I continue to reflect on my struggle with security, confidence, and power as a writer. I now see that the kind of “power” I had previously sought was—and still is—unattainable, because it didn't exist in the first place. I had misconstrued the pen as an evolved weapon, stronger than the sword in the same way a car differs from a horse. I thought that I could use it to make myself feel stronger, to forge success and make my voice heard. But the truth was that the pen could not transform me into a warrior—at least not one with gold-plated armor and a jewel-encrusted helmet. Because it wasn't supposed to. It wasn't a sword in the slightest.

But it did demand courage. The pen, I learned, blatantly exposes our greatest insecurities.

It's true—I can express heartache through piano keys in ways that I cannot through journal scribbles. But when I write, there appears a kind of candor I cannot find while playing Chopin. Words unmask me, even when I don't ask to be. They become blunt and scary because words are how we most directly communicate, and writing them is even scarier because it comes with an inescapable permanence. There are no walls to hide behind, no distractions to blend

into. I can only write with what I know—even my imagination is lined with personal beliefs and previous experiences. I can only write with who I am.

Now, when I see a blank sheet of paper, not only am I filled with a nervous excitement (what kinds of stories will appear?) but also with a subtle anxiousness. With each word, I strip yet another layer of myself bare to the world. Am I ready to do this? Am I brave enough?

Sometimes, I find that I don't have the answers to these questions. Nevertheless, I write.

It's not a matter of how many books I've read or how perfectly my essays answer the prompt. It's not about comparison or competition or covetousness. I've come to realize that my true power lies in that profession of vulnerability, in my perseverance despite my uncertainties.

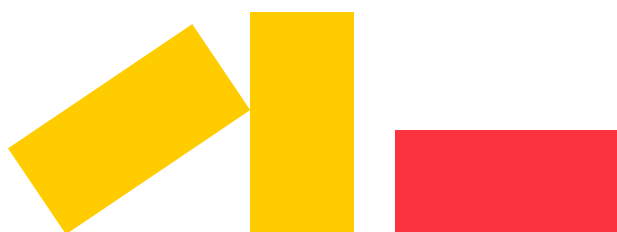
The pen is not a sword because when I pick up my pen, my sword inevitably clatters to the ground. The pen forces the shield out of my hand, lifts the helmet off my head, and strips me of my heavy armor. It is not a sword because it is mightier: it obligates me to reveal my scars to all who care to look. I hold my naked heart in my worn-out hands and let the world think what it will.





top ten weekends (that aren't spring weekend)

1. The Weeknd
2. Fyre Festival 2017
3. Vampire Weekend
4. Three-day weekends
5. Halloweekend
6. Weekend at Bernie's
7. That weekend you spent in Las Vegas
8. Rebecca Black's weekend
9. Your carefree childhood weekends of pure adolescent poppycock
10. "Friday, Saturday, Saturday to Sunday"
— will.i.am., c. 2009



overheard@brown

"How come no one knows any decent taxidermists in this area?!"

"Prioritize your f*cking self over your f*cking self."

"My mom said she still felt like a child at age 30. What does that make me—a fetus?!"

"How do you have the with-it-ness to do anything in the morning?"

hot post- time machine

"I imagined how nice it would be if I got the \$350 refund and opted to buy her a ticket to the countryside, say Idaho, where she would plant potatoes and surely be unhappy."

— Daniel Murage, "One Minute Early," 4.27.17

"For example, she tells her tour groups, 'The urban legend of the Soldier's Arch is that if you kiss your partner underneath it, you will both be married. But the legend doesn't specify who you will be married to.'"

— Chanel Johnson, "spirit of brown," 4.6.18





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