

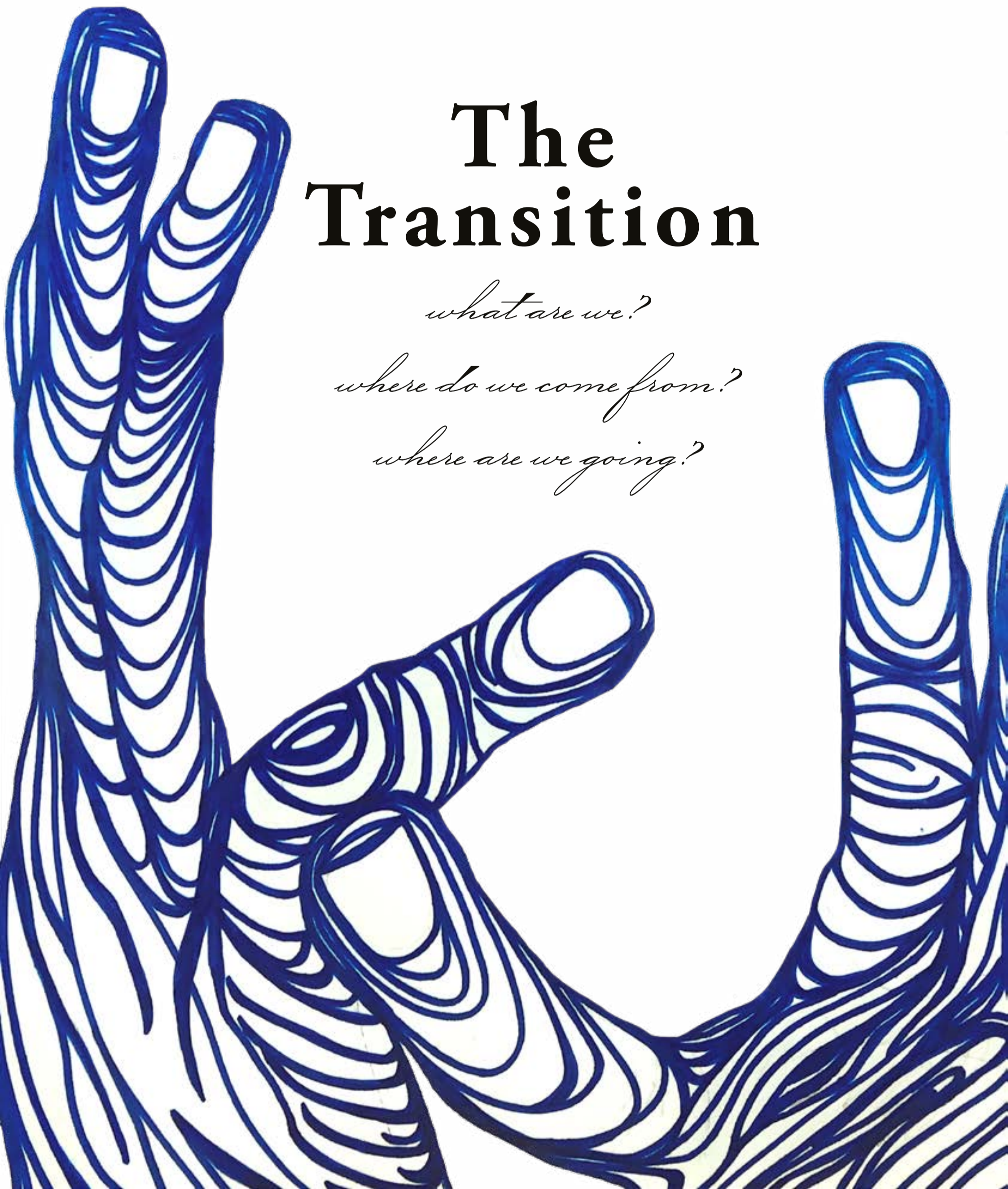
THE HARVARD  
**independent**  
THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969

**The  
Transition**

*what are we?*

*where do we come from?*

*where are we going?*





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February 4th, 2021

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*We belong to no one but ourselves.*

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

illustrations by  
Ellie Hamilton '23

**T**he staff of the *Harvard Independent* is proud to present to you our first issue of the new year: “The Transition.”

While thinking about our plans for this issue and this year as a whole, we were reminded of the questions posed by French painter Paul Gauguin, and addressed in an article by our previous President, Jilly Cronin '21:

*Where do we come from? What are we?  
Where are we going?*

These words capture the enigma of the now — our endeavor to position the *Independent* on a timeline of its past, present, and future.

They also speak to the many transformations we are currently witnessing: on the national level, a political transition, with many Harvard alumni filling the seats of a new



Jilly

Cash



administration; on the local landscape, a cultural transition, where Harvard students face a de-densified campus and remote learning for the first time in school history; and, specifically impacting the *Independent*, a transition in its leadership. I'm here — your new Editor-in-Chief — to speak on the behalf of the new Executive Board.

*Where do we come from?* The *Independent* comes from its student protestors of 1969 who sought to break away from the hostile press environment of the time. The *Independent* also comes from the generations of students that followed, who questioned and wrote and drew and printed and did it all over again, week after week, for the past fifty years. We are proud to belong to this history.

The second question is one of the present. *What are we?* Well, we're journalists. We tell stories — short and zippy, long and probing. We interrogate ourselves, each other, and our

leaders, at Harvard and beyond. We summon the courage to uncover truths, to illuminate the unknown, and as a result, we shine the spotlight on *who we are*.

Our job is necessary. As it was in 1969, the year 2021 begs for honest dialogue, objective reporting, and keen introspection. This semester in particular demands good journalism: we are physically distanced from many of our classmates. We can't debate each other over trays in the dining hall or serendipitously approach a professor after class. We can, however, carry on the conversation as best we can through published word, bringing us all a little closer together while seizing the journalistic opportunities of the moment.

That brings me to the third question, *Where are we going?*

I think of Amanda Gorman's words at President Biden's inauguration:

*We did not feel prepared to be the heirs*



Marissa

Mary Julia



*/ of such a terrifying hour / but within  
it we found the power / to author a new  
chapter.*

In this issue and future issues, we will continue to derive light from darkness, brilliance from obscurity, and power from a previously blank page. We will lean into our distinctive edge, the flourish of art and language that links us to the counterculture in which we were founded.

But this vision is only a fraction of the story. The *Independent* will be defined by a kaleidoscope of voices — our writers, editors, illustrators and photographers; our designers, technicians, and marketers; our committed alumni, whose traditions we inherit; and future Indyites, who will carry on the legacy of our narrative today.

It's a new year. A new semester. A new dawn for our country. And at the *Independent*, a new chapter begins.

Yours in the Indy,  
Mary Julia Koch  
Mary Julia Koch '23  
Editor in Chief

Celaya



Michael



Cade



Eleanor



Noah



Ellie



Lucy



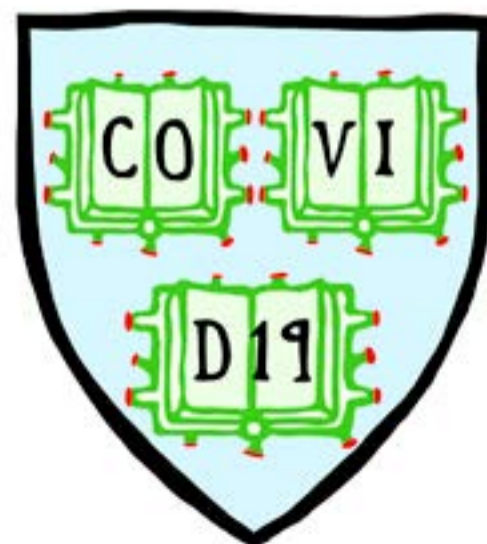
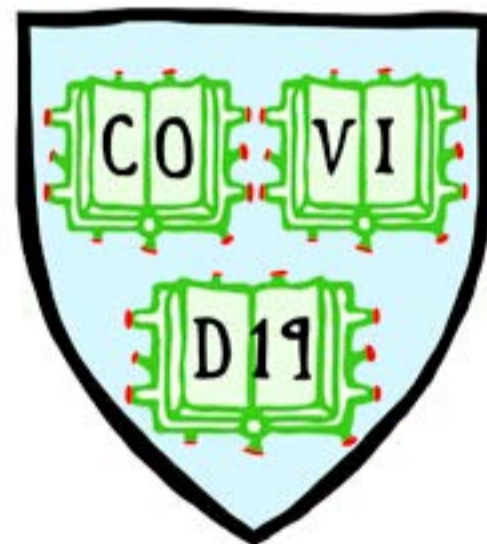
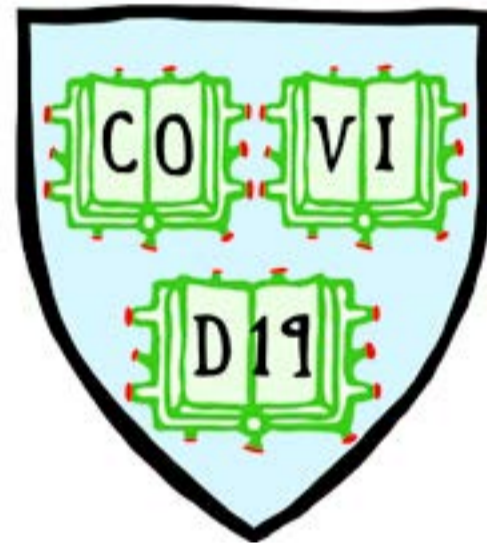
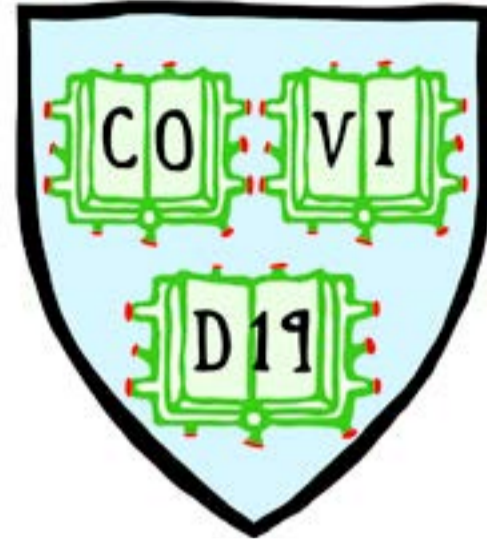


# Lost in Transition

BY RYAN STANFORD '23

*What do we gain, and lose, when residential life moves off campus? What should off-campus students expect this spring semester?*

illustration by  
Lucy Hamilton '23



**H**ousing has always been an integral element of Harvard student life. From the distinct personalities of the upperclassmen houses, to intramural sports and Housing Day, Harvard places a high priority on making residential life feel communal and special. And, historically, they've been successful. Almost every Harvard student will remember hearing one of Harvard's favorite taglines at some point during their admission process: 98% of all Harvard students live on campus. Or, more accurately, lived.

Since March 15th, 2020, a maximum of about 50% of Harvard students have been able to reside on campus at a time, leaving the other half of the community to make alternate arrangements. In the fall, the freshman class was invited to move onto campus for the first time. This spring semester, the seniors—and the juniors, per a last-minute decision—were invited to return. Special considerations were made for athletes and other students who requested on-campus housing. Excepting Covid-19 regulations and a mandatory quarantine period, move-in has been close to normal for members of the Harvard Community.

For some, though, this transition back to 'campus' has been anything but standard. Sophomores, freshmen, and upperclassmen who've elected to live off-campus in the Cambridge area have traded dorms for apartments and AirBnBs. With online classes providing unique flexibility, what prompted them to move into Harvard's backyard?

For sophomore Tobias Edelstein '23, who was not given the opportunity to live on campus either semester, his motivation centered around normalcy. "I knew other kids from school would be [in Cambridge]," he explained, and added that, "it wasn't going to be a traditional college experience, but it was the next best thing."

Carli Cooperstein '24's reasoning was similar: "My friends and I decided to live in Cambridge [in the spring] as opposed to elsewhere because we haven't even had a full year of the Harvard experience and want to get the most out of this semester!"

As for what to anticipate in the realm of off-campus living this spring, there is a precedent. The first wave of off-campus living began in the fall, with a small portion of the student population moving into properties scattered across Cambridge, Allston, Somerville and Boston. Perhaps the best indication of what to expect in the spring can be derived from their experiences. Josie Coleman '23 lived in Cambridge with friends this fall; speaking on the experience, she said she felt like she was afforded "a lot more freedom due to less supervision [than in dorms]."

On the other hand, though, "you're not as immersed in the Harvard community living off-campus". Another sophomore

lived with her blockmates near campus and described the experience as "great". She added, "it was so nice to be able to walk through the square again... and feel a connection to Harvard."

Harvard is trying its best to foster this connection, too. This spring, off-campus students will be able to borrow books from Harvard libraries, receive HUIT support, on- and off-site access to HUHS and CAMHS, as well as various other resources listed on Harvard's 'Off-Campus Students Page'.

Further, an important consideration for many off-campus students is the risk of Covid infection. As of January 8th, 2021, Cambridge's official Covid-19 count reported a case rate (cases per 100,000 people) of 37.1, the highest the city has seen in the entirety of the pandemic. Harvard aims to mitigate this concern by offering free weekly Covid testing. Cooperstein mentioned

she'd be participating in the program, explaining that "having a regular testing schedule takes off some of the stress of living away from home during COVID and makes socializing feel safer". Off-campus housing inevitably lends itself to larger, less-supervised gatherings, and partaking in regular testing is a good way to keep transmission rates low and to protect the Cambridge community.

With some students settled into their off-campus housing already, and others yet to move in, it may be too soon to gauge how the spring will compare to the fall, but students are hopeful that it will live up to expectations.

Josie Coleman '23 "look[s] forward to creating an off-campus experience unique from past semesters", touching upon the breadth of opportunity for off-campus students to explore the surrounding city and enjoy a change of pace from dorm life. Plus, the promise of a spring climate is appealing; one student said, "I think with warmer weather it will be great to get outside more, and I am hoping more of my friends who I haven't seen since last March will be in the area and we'll be able to connect!"

While the reality of spring off-campus living may still be up in the air, one

thing is certain; this semester, there will be more students living off campus than ever before. Is this trend merely a pandemic phenomenon, or could it be a continuing tendency? Do the benefits of off-campus living outweigh the traditional on-campus experience?

Edelstein doesn't think so. "[Living off campus,] I had my own bathroom, bedroom and kitchen... my own personal space. But I'm willing to give that up for a normal college experience again."

Harvard's off-campus resource page reads "No matter where you are, you are Harvard," reminding us that the true value of Harvard has always been in its student body and not in its physical campus. With that in mind, when we can do so safely and responsibly, I think we're all ready to come home.

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campus.*





# All Roads Leads to The Capitol

*A Short Story*

BY ABIGAIL KOERNER '21

**J**anuary sixth began with sunshine. The city experiences winter differently than most places—the swamp underneath DC radiates heat so the cool of winter gets wrapped up in a blanket of humidity. The surviving trees of winter paint the blue skyline with their shades of green. On that easy day, I was there to enjoy the company of old friends at our favorite local pizza spot. Conversations reminded me of what it was like to be fifteen years old. Back then, the capital city of the United States of America was our playground.

DC was lovely on a regular pandemic day. Bikers rode down long streets and masked pedestrians could be seen enjoying oddly warm winter days. Clear skies peeked out between buildings. Long avenues running north to south began their route in the innermost point of the diamond-shaped city. They met smaller streets and roads that spiral outwards with sacred symmetry. From the highest point in the city, the grid system of the streets becomes clear: all roads in DC lead to the Capitol building at its center.

When we were even younger, we were taught rules about where we couldn't go—there were important people in important buildings that Secret Service officers at times would quietly shuffle us away from. Our job was to act like we didn't notice, to stare up at the sun as they snuck by.

The sounds of sirens are regular in our city where motorcades carry high profile politicians and police cars racing down streets echo into every day and night. Their sounds pierce through humid DC air to interrupt sentences and thoughts.

That day, we noticed planes and helicopters joining the chorus. And it got louder, darker. Smiling faces turned upside down to accommodate raised eyebrows and tight throats. There was something wrong. Something going on. Something caused the sounds of the city to drown out the words that came from our mouths and the plans we had for the day yet to come.

The city wept and slept and healed and waited: streets and roads faced the nervous silence of anticipation. Freedom remained in question.

We had seen them all week: maskless and unafraid. Slowly, they poured into the city, infiltrating shops and neighborhoods. We saw them walking on the streets. They carried flags in red, white, and blue that we once held too. Pride and patriotism. Betrayal. American flags hung from pick-up trucks with license plates from states far away. They rode through the city with their windows down and music playing. January sixth was a sunny day for violence.

There was a lie hanging in the air. One about democracy and the soul of the American people. They needed the lie to execute this insurrection. They needed lies to take lives and lies to steal time. Yet, they came to Washington to hear their truth. It was a delusion.

The sounds of sirens only grew louder and the helicopters above came lower. We could hear them rushing down long avenues towards the heart of the city where the building faced a mass in red.

Emergency alerts screamed from cell phones. Someone had broken into the Capitol building and the pulse of the city started to speed up. From where we sat, it was like we could feel the building at our city's center start to shake and rock. Like a heart attack. Cardiac arrest. Roads flowing outward from the heart to the limbs of the city were stopped and the people in the city stood still.

Trauma is known to haunt the body. Sometimes it can be felt more often than it can be seen or heard.

The day faded to black and with each passing hour, the city waited to be freed. In its broken state, large military trucks, vans, and buses carried armed soldiers to our swamp. Barbed wire stood between people and their places: fences to protect and hold the Capitol building in its space. We thought about the people who we elected to be inside.

Pleasant thoughts of fleeting moments came as quickly to the mind as those of fear and chaos. From a mile away, the sounds of the crowd pushing on and in grew to create a dull roar. Then the sirens drowned out the sounds of the crowd forcing barriers to crumble. We waited for good news to jolt the city back to life but none came. Then, the soldiers, sirens, and fences jarred the silent, empty streets. It's hard to remember what the view of my beautiful city was like before that horrific day.

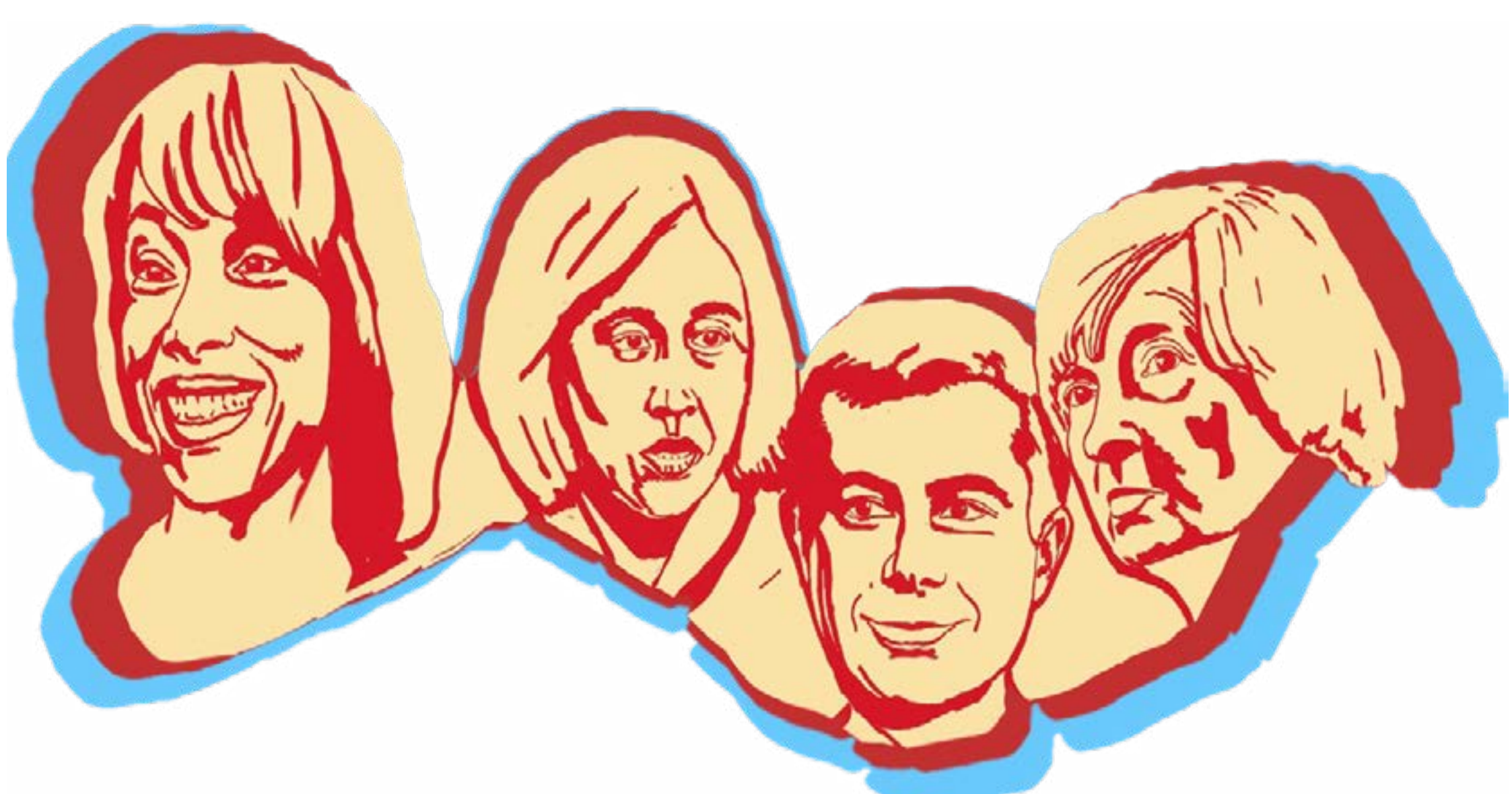
I felt fear and I felt hope. I saw neighbors exchange kind words under masked faces as they passed each other by. Homes and buildings were still decorated with signs celebrating care and justice. Even after the tall barricades came up, my city glittered in the spots where the sun hit the hardest.

The protagonist of this sad story is not me, but the lie itself. It is a dangerous and twisted artifact of a time in American history that we should not forget: false claims of a fraudulent election by a sitting President threatened our democracy itself.

On January fourth, Washington, DC began asking for protection. On the fifth, the FBI told the world there would be an insurrection. On January sixth, all hell broke loose. Bombs were set to blow and even in their failure, the lie became a murderer.

*illustration by  
Marina Zoullas '23*





*from left to right: Cecelia Rouse '86, Katherine Tai, Pete Buttigieg '04, Janet Yellen*

# HARVARD'S HISTORIC FIRSTS

*Representing both diversity and Harvard.*

BY ELEANOR FITZGIBBONS '23

**V**ice President Kamala Harris made history this year as the first woman to be Vice President of the United States, inspiring women and girls all over the country by shattering the glass ceiling and disrupting the pattern of men who preceded her. As Kamala Harris steps into her new role with President Joe Biden by her side, a whole new administration is in the process of being confirmed by the Senate right now.

Less than a month into his presidency, Biden has announced almost all of his appointments, and fortunately, Harris is not the only one making history. In a country as diverse as the US, it's about time our government starts to look more like the people it represents. While we still have a ways to go, the new Biden-Harris administration takes us a step closer to the diversity we should be seeing in our government officials. Each of these nominations is exciting for numerous reasons, but below I look at the historic firsts with ties to Harvard.

We all know Mayor Pete from his campaign last year to be the Democratic nominee for president. While his bid was not successful this time around, Biden has nominated Pete Buttigieg to be the Secretary of Transportation. If confirmed by the Senate, Buttigieg, who graduated from Harvard College in 2004, will be the first openly gay cabinet member. At Harvard, Buttigieg concentrated in history and literature, and he was the president of the Institute of Politics. A member of Leverett House, he lived in Lev at the same time as Colin Jost!

Another Harvard grad making history this year is Cecilia Rouse. If confirmed by the Senate, Cecilia Rouse will be the first Black

chair of the Council of Economic Advisors. Rouse graduated from Harvard College in 1986 with a degree in economics. According to the *Crimson*, she lived in Adams house and wanted to be an engineer, but she changed her mind after taking Ec 10 as a freshman.

Katherine Tai unfortunately went to Yale, but she is redeemed in our eyes by the fact that she went to Harvard Law School. If she is confirmed by the Senate, Tai will make history as the first woman of color and the first Asian American to be the US Trade Representative.

Although not a graduate of the College, we can claim Janet Yellen as a Harvard affiliate because she taught as an assistant professor of economics from 1971-1976. Yellen has already been confirmed by the Senate, so she is officially the first woman to be Treasury Secretary. No stranger to making history, Yellen was also the first woman to be Chair of the Federal Reserve, a position she held from 2014 to 2018.

Historic moments and firsts are always exciting, but I look forward to a time when a Black woman or a gay man in a position of power is nothing momentous or new. Nevertheless, for now, I will applaud these moments and think about the younger generation who gets to grow up thinking a female Vice President is nothing more than the norm. I am excited to see what each of these new nominations accomplishes, especially those who went to Harvard!

Speaking of Harvard grads making history, this weekend, Amanda Gorman will be the first poet to perform at a Super Bowl. I, for one, am looking forward to what I know will be a sensational performance.

*illustration by  
Ellie Hamilton '23*

# Is it My Turn Yet?

BY LULU PATTERSON '24

*Harvard's Vaccine Plan,  
Explored*



**O**n January 20th, students received an email from the University Health Services (HUHS) indicating that Harvard had acquired shipments of and received approval to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. Throughout the nation, underdog states like West Virginia are leading in vaccine distribution without priority-based phases, while wealthy states like California lag behind and face issues with vaccine scarcity. Thus, many students wonder if Harvard might offer them the fastest access to a vaccine. The anticipation of immunization from COVID-19 holds immense value for a student body filled with freshmen who haven't met in person, seniors who long for a normal goodbye after an abnormal final year of college, and professors and teaching staff eager to deliver their lectures in person, among other members of our community.

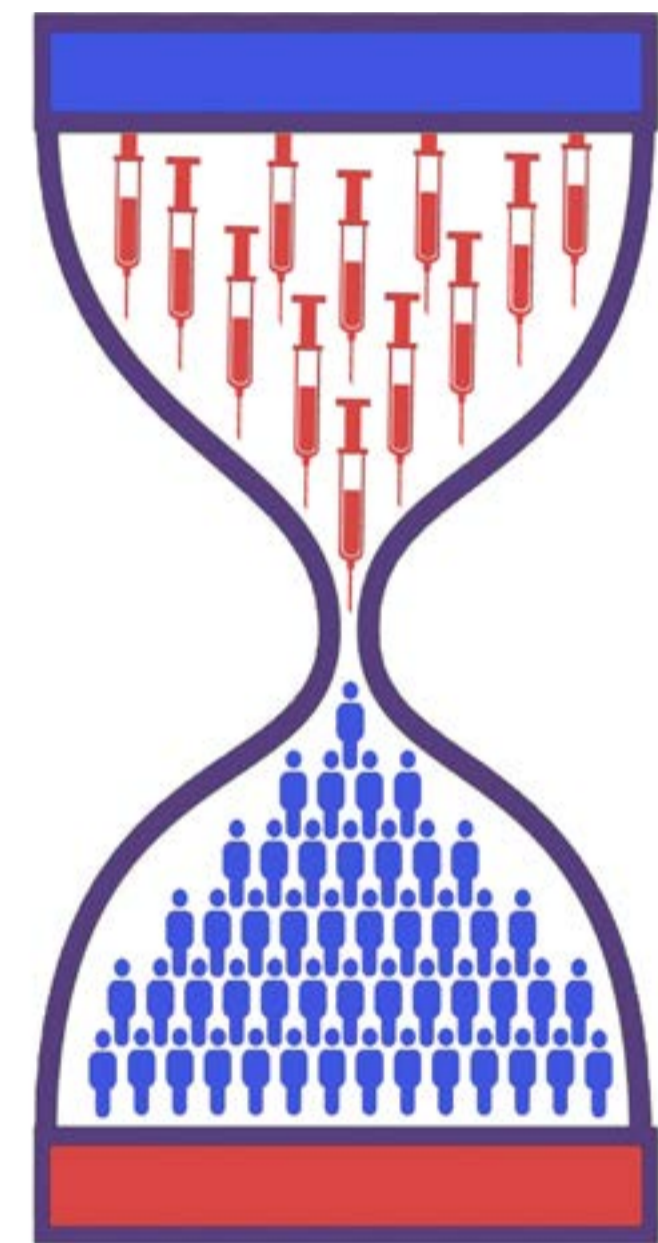
So what does Harvard's vaccine rollout timeline look like? At what point will Harvard vaccinate its faculty, staff, and students? Will vaccination be mandatory? And of course, what is the possibility of a full student body, on campus, in person, for a normal Fall term?

Harvard's vaccine distribution must follow the Massachusetts state guidelines which prioritize groups based on risk factors. The state has completed Phase 1, which included "clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care; long term care facilities, resting homes and assisted living facilities; first responders; congregate care settings; home-based health care workers; and health care workers doing non-COVID-facing care. Massachusetts has begun Phase 2, now vaccinating people over the age of 75; the rest of Phase 2 is expected to last through March, with the plan to vaccinate first based on age and comorbidities, and then to many workforce individuals, primarily in fields of education, food, transportation, law, and medicine. The

Massachusetts website ensures individuals that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and will always be free.

Phase 3 holds hope for student vaccination opportunities. In April, Massachusetts plans on opening vaccine distribution to the general public — including us, college students. While remaining at home until April may sound soul-shatteringly disappointing, other states like California do not anticipate opening vaccination to the general public until June. Students who receive their vaccination in Massachusetts will need to book an appoint-

*There is hope  
for a normal, or  
perhaps more nor-  
mal, 2021 Fall  
term.*



says, but it is highly encouraged.

Though Harvard's current COVID-19 case rates are relatively low, they are many times higher than the rates during the fall term. Within the last seven days, Harvard has run 18,052 COVID-19 tests, only 43 of which have come back positive, leaving the school with a 0.24% positivity rate. Yesterday, of the 3,823 tests analyzed, nine were positive; five of these tests belonged to faculty, staff, and other affiliates, three belonged to graduate students, and only one was attributed to an undergraduate. Cambridge as a whole holds a 1.31% positivity rate; the figure grows to 3.23% in Boston, and 3.61% in Massachusetts.

These numbers mirror national spikes in infection rates that resulted from holiday gatherings and travel. College students are generally not at high-risk for COVID-19 complication if they contract the disease, but higher case rates contribute to the inevitable fear of missing out on what are described as the prime years of our lives. This feeling is tangible, both for the students in Zoom classrooms and for the many others who chose to take time off from school. However, given the speed at which Massachusetts hopes to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine and the low infection rates among undergraduates throughout the 2020 fall term, there is hope for a normal, or perhaps more normal, 2021 fall term. The next few months — during which we will observe the trajectory of infection rates and witness the vaccine's defense against aggressive new COVID-19 strains — will dictate whether this prospect will become a reality.

*Within the last seven days, Harvard has run 18,052 COVID-19 tests, only 43 of which have come back positive, leaving the school with a 0.24% positivity rate.*

ment and show proof of identification before receiving their first round of vaccination, along with a vaccination record card that should be kept to ensure individuals receive the same vaccine for the second dose.

What is HUHS's role in Phase 3? While HUHS declined to comment, their website for COVID-19 vaccination offers a broad overview of vaccine status at Harvard. Their February 1st update states, "at this time, HUHS does not have a supply of vaccine to provide to patients." But HUHS will notify community members upon the arrival of vaccine shipments, and specifically reach out to patients once their vaccination group has been approved for inoculation. The vaccine is not mandatory, HUHS



# Boots.

BY NOAH TAVARES '24

**B**oots don't have a good formal definition or a clean etymological lineage. Simply, it's understood that boots must cover the entire foot and part of the leg. In the transition from the worst part of winter to the slightly less worse part of winter, boots reign supreme among all footwear. Demonstrated by the costar of *Dora the Explorer*, Boots, the shoe can be someone's identity.

From California, your reporter/writer/critic never had to deal with the intricacies of daily bootwear. As someone with a closet full of mostly white sneakers, Mother Nature's heavenly *soup du jour* rarely disturbs what I'm rocking. However, now, back in the snow, boots loom like an oppressive cloud. In the words of a Harvard student, *[Men's] boots are not drippy*.

Our expedition: find drippy masculine boots that also insulate your foot from the snowy, icy elements. Immediately your *Chelsea* and other leather ankle boots are suspended from our inquiry. They lack the necessary warmth in this bitter cold--the unfortunate circumstance of function weighs us down in an already remarkably boring winter season.



Balenciaga's Tyrex Leather Biker Boots  
Saks Fifth Avenue

Timberland Boots (top) L.L. Bean Boots (bottom)



This season, after being cooped up during a summer of rampant pandemic, several fashion houses turned to solve the men's boots dilemma with a surprising energy. After Winter 2019, which was full of calf hide, *Balenciaga* approached 2020 with the Tyrex Leather Biker Boot.

Reminiscent of an Italian fascist statue, the Tyrex This boot, a descendant of *Balenciaga's* Tyrex Sneaker, despite the hefty price tag, could be perfect for our purpose except that we would be bound to its decidedly less inspiring black colorway. \$1500 for an uncomfortable black ski-boot is surely a waste of money.

So now we swing to the other end of the spectrum: *Timberland*.

Constructed for the New England workers facing harsh winters, *Timberland* has transcended into a streetwear staple via Rap. Legendary producers, like Timbaland, reinterpreted *Timberland* boots for the survivors of the concrete forest. Their six-inch boots afford basic protection and comfort, becoming a staple in wardrobes across the country. But, without the ability to always get limited edition colorways *Timberland* can quickly become---boring.





*Off-White's Ridged Sole Lace-Up Sneakers*

***Our expedition:  
find drippy, masculi-  
ne boots that also insu-  
late your foot from the  
snowy, icy elements.***

Then there's the duck boot, *L.L. Bean*. Since they are classically Northeastern, they suffer from the same challenge Timbs do: boredom. If you closely monitor *L.L. Bean's* website you might be lucky enough to grab a limited edition colorway, but otherwise the overwhelming popularity of its upper beige/brown area.

While *Off-White* seemingly refused to offer us a new pair of "durable" boots this season (glossy leather hiking boots don't count), Virgil Abloh did provide an interesting hybrid concept that nods to the workman culture of *Timberland*. I present the Ridged Sole Lace Up Sneakers: These at least give us an idea of a world where boots and sneakers begin to blend, yet after contemplating these, I decided to take a more pure approach to our search.

What is left?

Well, a lot of boots are left but you're getting bored and want to know what boots are fun for right now...

# Uggs!

Look. At. It. Versatility. Infinite colors. Incredibly plush.

Compared to every other boot in this examination, they provide unparalleled comfort, a unique silhouette, and outfit versatility. I won't praise these boots for their water repelling capabilities (which can be improved with a simple spray), but now is the time for them to return to our feet.

Shunned by fashion since 2012, and since embraced by the women of middle america, it's now time to restore *Uggs* as iconic, the ir deserving label. They are symbols of rebellious adolescence: for those brave enough to flaunt their simple luxury in the face of the ever-encroaching slush.

*Uggs Boots*





*We tumble into the break,  
free and exuberant. Free of  
worldly shackles we hedonis-  
tically descend into Winter.*

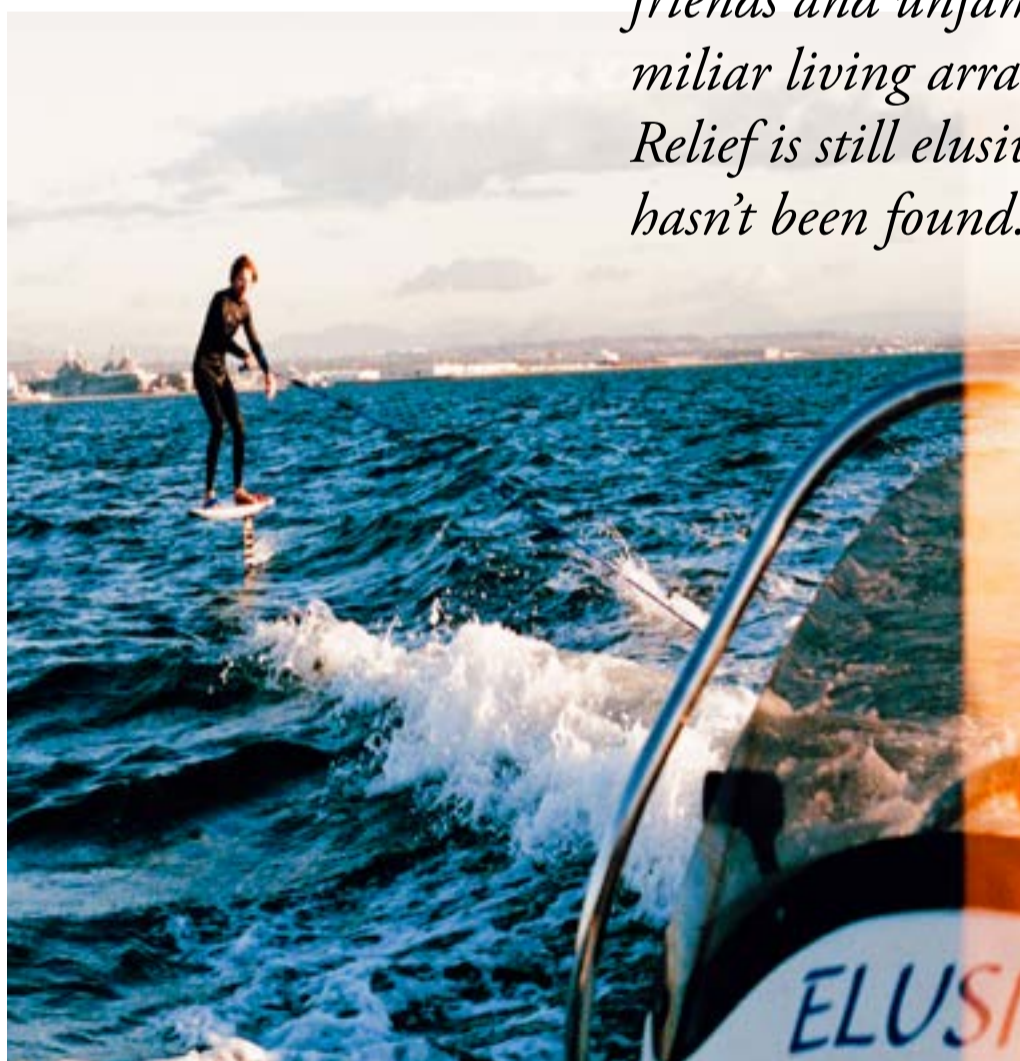


## *Over Winter What Changed?*

The break between semesters often feels like a moment of drift. We are all of a sudden devoid of the artificial purpose injected by school. Photographers Ghislaine Taubman and Marbella Marlo investigated that space with their cameras over break.

By Noah Tavares '24,  
Ghislaine Taubman '24,  
Marbella Marlo '24

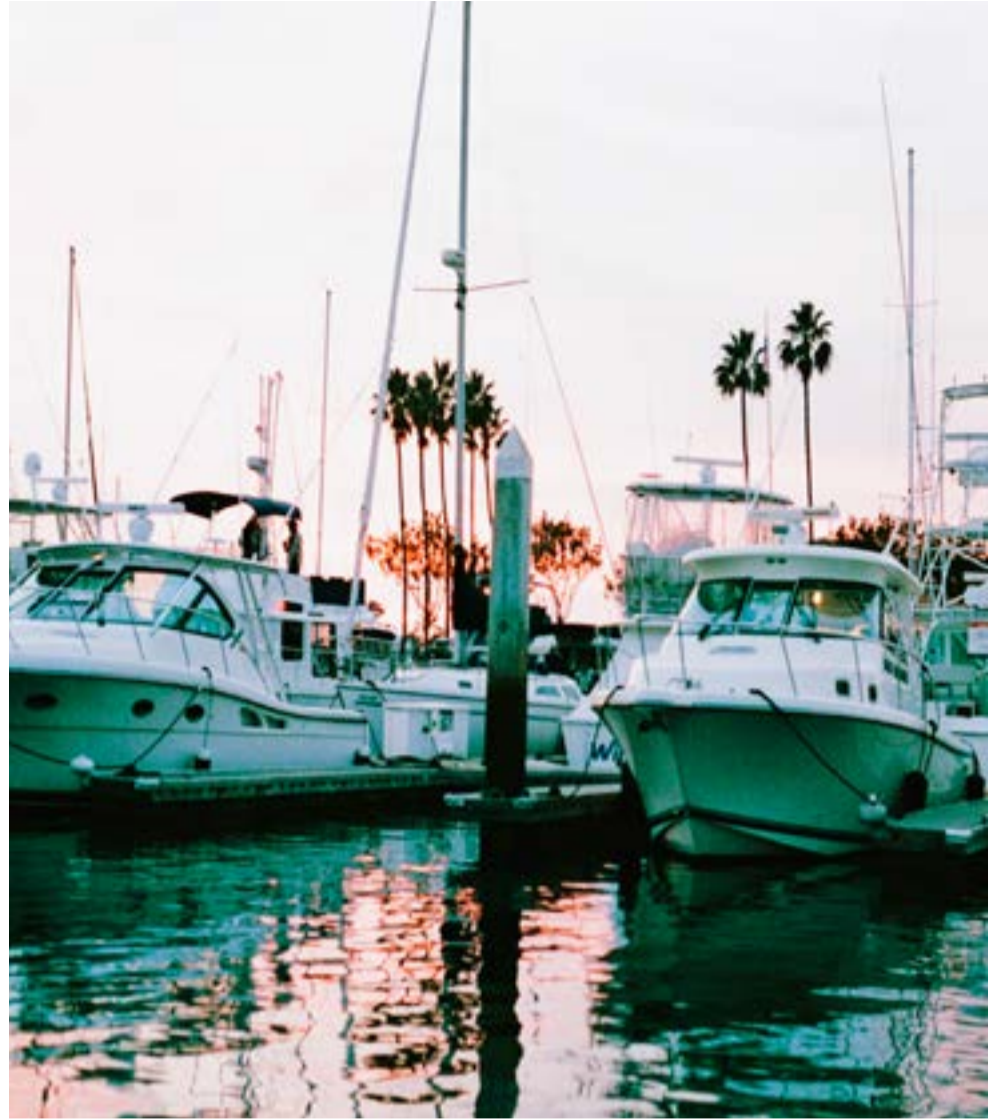
*We ripple onwards, bounc-  
ing over the chaos of family,  
friends and unfamiliarly fa-  
miliar living arrangements.  
Relief is still elusive, comfort  
hasn't been found.*



*The season turns from excite-  
ment to solemn cheer. Holidays  
approach bringing with them  
prescribed rites of joy.*



*Honor the babe. Is snow that pure?*



*Now we drift.*

*A new year, reinvigorate us. A yearly infantilization that opens doors of possibilities.*



*Before we know it the break is over. Back to screens, back to our scheduled programming.*





*illustration by  
Mary Julia Koch '23*