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The Love Issue



MASTHEAD

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CONTENTS

3 **A FISH NEEDING WATER**

BY MARY JULIA KOCH '23

4 **Op-Ed: Bacow's Bamboozling Booster Mandate**

BY JAMES WOODS

5 **The Rockiest Bottom**

BY MCGAVOCK COOPER & DECLAN BUCKLEY '24

6 **Lessons of Love**

BY CAROLINE HAO '25

7 **Hasty Pudding's (Wo)men of the Year**

BY DAN ENNIS '25 & CALVIN OSBORNE '25

8 **Friends to Lovers? Lovers to Friends?**

BY MADDIE PROCTOR '25 & HARRY COTTER '25

9 **YOUR FAVORITE FLOWER SHOP IN CAMBRIDGE**

BY ARIEL BECK '25

10 **Your Love Poetry Stinks**

BY MICHAEL KIELSTRA '22

11 **The Indy's V-Day Playlist**

BY MATT SAKIYAMA '25

12 **February Rundown**

13 **TO DATE OR NOT TO DATE**

BY WILL GOLDSMITH '24

14 **At First Sight**

BY PETER LASKIN '23

15 **FINDING TRUE LOVE AT HARVARD**

BY SABASTIAN MANDELL '24

A Fish Needing Water

How the pandemic made us want love

by Mary Julia Koch '23

Many scholars predicted that with most of the population vaccinated this past summer, America would experience a “Hot Vax Summer.” They theorized that jabs of Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson&Johnson would fuel a sexual hookup culture reminiscent of the Roaring Twenties in the 2020’s. But statistics suggest that instead, the desire for serious romance has only swelled across the country since the start of the pandemic. According to the Wall Street Journal’s Justin R. Garcia in December 2021, physical attractiveness was deemed a less important trait in 2021 than it was in 2020. The emotional qualities of a long-term partner—the qualities one looks for in a spouse—matter more to Americans today than they did pre-pandemic. 62% of surveyed singles in America are seeking serious, committed relationships—a figure that grows to 81% among Gen Z respondents. Do these trends also prevail on Harvard’s campus? Are students already thinking about marriage? Out of the 125 students who responded to the Independent’s poll on love, 60% defined themselves as single. 54% of those singles want to be in a relationship—a meaningful relationship. In response to the question, ‘Do you only want to date someone who you could imagine marrying?’ many students who said ‘yes’ revealed a newfound desire for a deep emotional partnership. “I think I am now inclined to date people where personalities are compatible, whereas before it was more superficial,” one respondent shared. Meanwhile, 82.4% of respondents (103 students) said they planned to get married one day.

It appears the pandemic has made many college students—and Americans in general—more interested in traditional, committed, monogamous relationships.

One explanation for this trend is heightened risk aversion during and preceding Covid-19 lockdown.

Research shows that some queer men have gravitated more toward a committed sexual partner than multiple successive partners. “When there is added risk to going out with different people, people need to have their sexual, emotional, psychological needs met and one way to do that is to cut out the risk,” said Timothy Valshtein, a Harvard College Fellow with a PhD in psychology who researches the intersection of motivation, goals and romantic relationships.

Dr. Holly Parker, a Harvard lecturer who specializes on the psychology of close relationships, offered another explanation for the growing interest in serious dating. She referenced one of her favorite sayings: “The last thing a fish notices is the water.” Counter-intuitively, people who are surrounded by romantic relationships are less likely to think about starting one themselves; they might take the presence of love for granted, or be content to focus purely on their platonic friendship. “And to all of a sudden have that connection cut off, it really can make people reflect, whether it’s about a relationship or anything, on what’s really important,” Parker shared. Social isolation during the pandemic has driven people’s desire for social connection—like a fish needing water. Simultaneously, the pandemic might have made people more open to less traditional forms of romantic partnership—like polyamory, in which individuals openly participate in romantic relationships with multiple partners, not necessarily in the form of marriage. “Stigma surrounding consensual non-monogamy in

its various forms is going down,” said Valshtein. During the first wave of Covid-19 in the United States in the Spring of 2020, many people were suddenly more sexually adventurous and incorporated new forms of intimacy. Those who are generally open to new experiences are more likely to accept non-traditional types of relationships. “Reduction in stigma, coupled with some of this early experimenting and exploring, which seems like it will continue, could bring about an unlikely allyship between mormons and the polyamorous community.”

A rise in polyamory acceptance would not go without backlash from traditionalists. To map this onto crude political lines, people on the political right are less willing to accept of nonmonogamous relationships; they align more often with traditional conceptions of masculinity and a sexual double standard that restricts women’s ability to have multiple sexual partners more strictly relative to men.

One Harvard student pointed out potential harm to family life. Nonmonogamous relationships could be “quite confusing for children and for personality types like mine, it would be frustrating and heartbreaking to have a relationship based on polygamy,” they said. Opposition to polyamory is also rooted in fears of jealousy. Mirroring national trends, most Harvard students surveyed prefer to engage in monogamous relationships, conceding that though it’s traditional or “basic,” and commitment can at times be challenging,

“The pandemic placed a spotlight on the sacredness of life, of youth, and of deep, meaningful love—in whatever form people choose to pursue it.”

they couldn’t accept the reality of their partner being with other people. “I really want unconditional and total love from someone. And when I love someone I have no inclination whatsoever to look at other people,” one student shared.

But jealousy might not be as pervasive in multi-partner relationships as one would expect. Valshtein shared that “Once people are in a non-monogamous relationship, they actually report higher than average satisfaction and no difference in attachment style,” meaning they are not less securely attached to their partner, compared to monogamous relationships. Indeed, research shows that emotional outcomes are the same if not better between these two types of pair bonds.

According to Parker, these relationships succeed when “people can really have open communication, and where they can have constructive communication, that’s really the key—whether we’re talking about monogamy, open relationships, swinging, or polyamory. As long as jealousy is worked with in a constructive way, it doesn’t present a barrier in the relationship.” Some students, even those who stated that polyamory wasn’t for them, saw the appeal. “As long as there’s clear communication and all partners are on the same page, love should have no limits,” one said. Similarly, many respondents contended that monogamy is socially “necessary,” but perhaps not biologically “natural.” As evidenced by high national divorce rates, many people are poorly suited for it, but deem it “the

only respectable option in most circles.”

Given the apparent appeal of polyamory, could it be a material threat to the future of monogamy if it became legalized? Some scholars have suggested that marriage law and practice will include polyamorous marriages, at least on the U.S. West Coast, by the year 2036.

Harvard History Professor Dan Smail describes this as a “wild hypothesis... a prediction for shock value.” But the rise of polyamory in cultural discourse, and even in legal marriage, would not undermine the prevalence of monogamy. “Say there are several tens of thousands of polyamorous relationships that are currently not recognized by federal law or state law or county law,” Smail postulated. Legalizing these relationships would not significantly alter the number of monogamous marriages, but it would be “hugely symbolically important” for those individuals. History provides an example: the legalization of gay marriage in 2008 gave more people the opportunity to legitimize their marriage in the eyes of the law, even if gay marriages constitute a small percentage of all U.S. marriages.

Students agree that the year 2036 is unlikely, and the popularity and sanctity of monogamy in America will endure. “If we’ve just managed to allow the queer community to engage in monogamous marriage, I think that we are multiple generations and many culture wars away from legalizing polyamorous marriage,” one student said in reference to Obergefell.

However, public views of romantic bonds have evolved throughout history, Smail says, and current marriage customs will adapt to changing attitudes.

For college students, the current trend is an interest in more serious, committed connections after the isolation of the pandemic. Even serial daters seem to have an eye toward preparing themselves for future partners.

In response to the question, “Do you only want to date someone who you could imagine marrying?” student opinion was distinctly divided, but fundamentally similar.

Respondents who answered ‘no’ gave the following responses: “I want to explore,” “I want to live in the moment,” “I’m still young!” “I just want to enjoy life and love knowing that it doesn’t last forever.”

Respondents who answered ‘yes’ said: “it’s not worth investing time and emotion into someone who I couldn’t see a future with,” “I think it’s a waste of time to do otherwise,” “I do not want to give up the independence and freedom that being single has... unless I think that the person is good enough to marry.”

“Deeply treasured societal beliefs” explains the divide, said Valshtein; some students really value dating someone they can marry. However, both viewpoints emphasized the importance of living in the moment, of allocating one’s time intentionally and refusing to waste it. Perhaps this reflects Harvard students’ philosophy of relentless productivity. Perhaps it also reflects the spotlight the pandemic placed on the sacredness of life, of youth, and of deep, meaningful love—in whatever form people choose to pursue it.

Mary Julia Koch '23

Op-Ed: Bacow's Bamboozling Booster Mandate

The University's booster mandate fails to answer a number of questions
by James Woods

In mid-December I received an email from Harvard that I did not expect. After several months of encouraging students to receive Covid-19 boosters, Harvard was making boosters mandatory. In the email, Harvard told students to “not call or email Harvard University Health Services with questions,” but didn't say where students should direct their questions and concerns. This is an odd approach coming from an institution that is supposed to be committed to intellectual inquiry, and it surprised me on two levels. First, it seemed like a terrible public relations move: anyone who is on the fence about vaccine mandates would certainly be pushed away by a do-not-question-us attitude. Second, I was surprised that Harvard chose to ignore the many unanswered scientific and ethical questions surrounding boosters.

On September 17th 2021, the FDA's independent advisory committee, made up of leading vaccine experts, voted 16-2 *against* authorizing boosters for all adults. Instead, they approved boosters only for those who are at high risk of severe Covid-19 and those with frequent exposure to the virus. However, about two months later, the FDA decided to ignore these recommendations and expand booster approval to all adults. Such internal conflict at the FDA is uncommon, and when it does happen, the FDA is usually more

restrictive than its committee, not less. Since then, two high ranking FDA employees have resigned, saying the booster decision was based on politics and not sound regulatory science. One of them has since written an op-ed in the Washington Post calling out the Biden administration for ignoring vaccine experts.

Understanding why some regulatory scientists are opposed to giving boosters to young, healthy people is complicated. In short, young people are already at such low risk of severe Covid-19, so it's difficult to gather compelling evidence that boosters will offer significant added protection. This lack of evidence, combined with the low level risks that accompany any Covid-19 vaccination, make it difficult to say whether boosters make sense for the average young person. Several academic doctors including Marty Makary at Johns Hopkins University and Vianay Prasad at University of California San Francisco have been quite vocal in pointing out the gaps in current booster data. There is next to no positive, compelling evidence

that boosters will significantly benefit the average twenty year old—a fact which throws into sharper relief Harvard's refusal to provide any evidence themselves.

A big caveat to this whole argument is that the lack of benefit is specific to young people who are otherwise healthy. The discussion is entirely different for those who are older, immunocompromised, or have other risk factors. There is plenty of evidence to show that high risk individuals really do benefit from boosters. This evidence, plus fear of the Omicron variant, is likely what motivated the CDC to recommend boosters broadly despite so many unanswered questions.

However, the theoretical benefit of boosters for young people is further complicated by natural immunity, as many Harvard students have both been vaccinated *and* recovered from Covid-19. Recent

description, but the administration has said nothing about why the WHO's recommendations do not apply to them.

Still, many justify universal boosters by arguing that they reduce transmission and slow the spread of Covid. This could be true, but may not be significant enough to alter the course of the pandemic. According to NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci, “Omicron... will, ultimately, find just about everybody.” The FDA commissioner has made similar remarks, but both leaders emphasize that vaccines and boosters will protect individuals against severe disease even if they don't prevent infection outright. But what about the high-risk individuals in our community, who might benefit from a broad booster program? It's strange to me that there's been no discussion about who these high-risk people are or what kind of public health policies they want. The

high-risk members of the Harvard community are likely limited to the portion of individuals who have not been fully vaccinated and also have significant comorbidities. That is, less than 3% of Harvard affiliates. With such a small group, why not adopt a more targeted set of pandemic policies? We have effective treatments (Paxlovid and Remdesivir), effective masks, and flexible work-from-home policies to protect the vulnerable. Additionally, we can predict those who may be at risk of severe breakthrough infections, and offer them additional resources.

“Vaccine mandates and public health initiatives are not without real costs. We must be thoughtful before pushing broad policies, especially those that infringe on people's bodily autonomy.”

data suggests that this type of hybrid immunity is even stronger than receiving two vaccine doses. So, for those students who have recently recovered from an Omicron infection, the theoretical benefit of receiving a booster is even smaller than it otherwise would be. Despite the accumulating evidence showing the power of natural and hybrid immunity, Harvard's policy still requires all students (without special exemptions) to receive boosters. I have yet to find any data-driven explanation for why this is the case.

Boosters are problematic in other ways, too. In November, three professors at Harvard medical school contributed to an article questioning whether a broad booster rollout is the best use of resources when initial vaccine uptake is limited and global vaccine shortages remain. Many African countries have fully vaccinated fewer than 10% of their populations, and, in December, the WHO specifically criticized “broad-based booster programs” that include “sub-groups at lower risk of severe disease.” Most Harvard students would certainly fit that

There is no good reason to adopt a broad public health approach when a less disruptive targeted one would do the job.

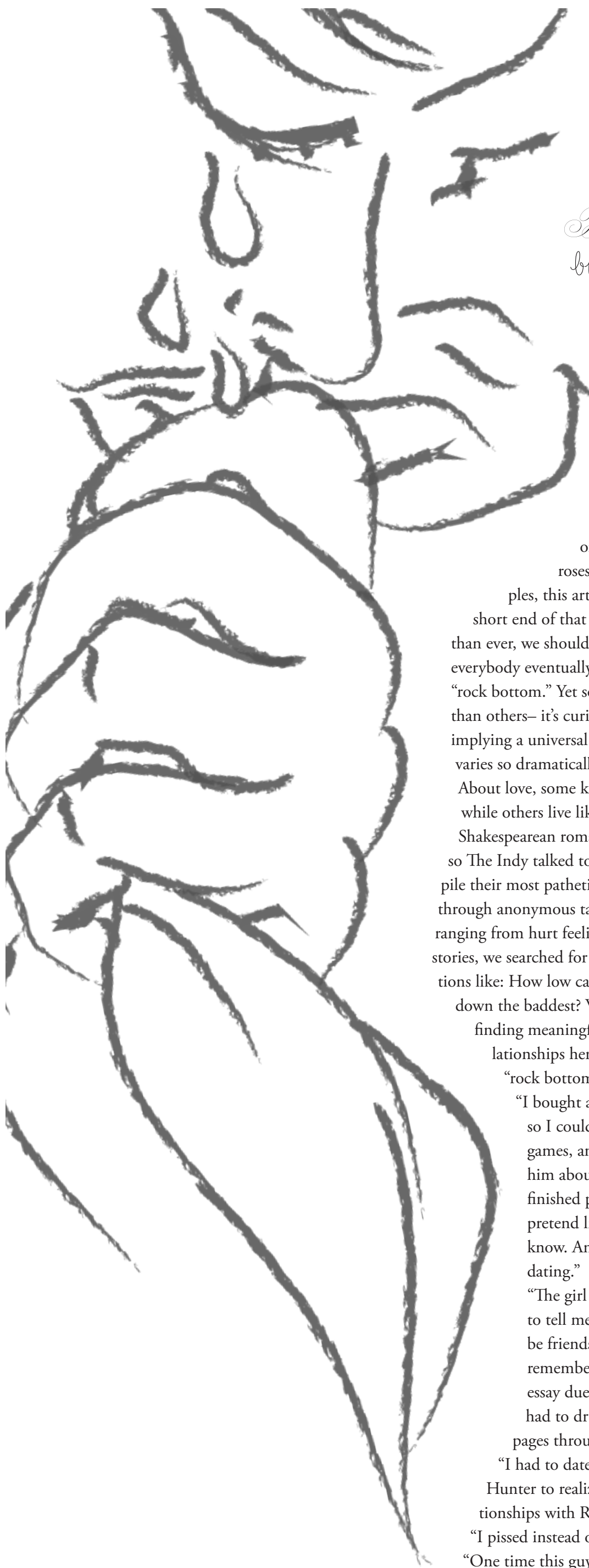
As far as I can tell, Harvard's administration has made no substantial effort to answer any of these questions and instead has expected students to follow blindly. This is the wrong approach for an institution that is a world leader in biomedical science. Vaccine mandates and public health initiatives are not without real costs. We must be thoughtful before pushing broad policies, especially those that infringe on people's bodily autonomy. At the very least, we should expect Harvard to provide thorough justifications for mandates before pushing them onto their students.

James Woods (jameswoods@gh.harvard.edu) is a G1 in Harvard University's chemical biology program.

Graphic by Kate Tunnell '24

The Rockiest Bottom

Heartbreak at Harvard- Have we no Dignity?
by McGavock Cooper and '24 Declan Buckley '24



Yes, it's almost Valentine's day, and yes, this is the Love issue. However, instead of cheerleading red roses and corny couples, this article presents the short end of that stick. Now more than ever, we should remember that everybody eventually hits their romantic "rock bottom." Yet some hit it harder than others— it's curious that a phrase implying a universal limit of heartbreak varies so dramatically between people. About love, some know only success, while others live like characters in a Shakespearean romantic tragedy. And so The Indy talked to students to compile their most pathetic moments. Sorting through anonymous tales of heartbreak ranging from hurt feelings to villain origin stories, we searched for answers to questions like: How low can one go? Who is down the baddest? Wait, you guys are finding meaningful and intimate relationships here? And what is true "rock bottom?"

"I bought a sports subscription so I could watch his sports games, and when I would ask him about his game after he finished playing I'd have to pretend like I didn't already know. And we weren't even dating."

"The girl I loved called me to tell me she wanted to just be friends. I got hammered, remembered I had an expos essay due in two hours, and had to drunkenly write five pages through tears."

"I had to date two men named Hunter to realize I can't be in relationships with Republicans."

"I pissed instead of, you know."

"One time this guy from my high school dm'd me on instagram to get my snapchat and we started snapping. Ten minutes into talking he told me he was coming to my soccer game and showed up with a poster asking me to Home-

coming (keep in mind I have never hung out with this guy nor did I really know who he was). I said yes. The next day we hung out and he ended up showing me something in his camera roll and I noticed something odd. I saw a picture of myself, then I realized he had an entire photo album dedicated to me with pictures of me taken from every social media platform. He somehow convinced me that it was a prank or something... I ended up dating him for a little bit. Until he cheated on me with someone who he also had a photo album of."

"Having the first girl I kissed come out as a gay and the first guy I kissed decide he was straight."

"I matched with a girl on Tinder and we started to text on the app a good bit. We really hit it off and ended up sending each other our Snapchats. She sent me a pic of her face and I sent one back. As soon as she opened it she immediately unadded me. We never spoke again."

"My first girlfriend cheated on me and completely broke my heart. Two weeks later, the guy she cheated on me with sent me a snap of them hooking up with the caption 'lol.'"

"I was seeing someone who was engaged for the majority of my freshman Fall and I had no clue until finals week. Thought I could fix him."

"I spent three hours learning the TikTok "Seve Shuffle" for my girlfriend who thought it was difficult. She said she was impressed. Soon after she said we should just be friends."

"You ever hug yourself to sleep?"

"I obsessively studied videos about how to get your ex back after my first breakup. I also made a private story with just him on it."

"Someone who I thought loved me broke things off in October. I saw it coming but it still hit me like an avalanche. I never truly understood the person's reasoning and the person did things that made me feel worse. I ended up saying things I shouldn't have. Since then I have been at an all time low."

Damn, we're all "strong and independent" until we're checking to see if their Snap Score has changed. Who has it the worst? Well we don't know shit, so you decide. Just remember to have a little compassion when you kick your lonely roommate out of your double this holiday. After all, you may have just read their rock bottom.

Declan Buckley '24 and McGavock Cooper '24 are very free on the 14th. (610)731-6192 and (615)927-3402.

Graphic by Kate Tunnell '24

Lessons of Love

Three Harvard couples spill all the details.

by Caroline Hau '25

Contrary to what some might expect, dating life actually does exist at Harvard. In fact, 38% of students surveyed by the Independent are currently in a relationship, and 55% wish they were in one. We then went directly to the source: couples who have been going strong since the first days of freshman year reflect on love, first impressions, and relationship obstacles. If you're looking for some inspiration this Valentine's Day, here's some young love that will make you say aww, cute.

Tell me the story of how you two met.

Mitchell Saron '23: We met twice. The first time was freshman year, on Mass Ave. It was one of the first days of school. I was with my roommate and some of his teammates. And Stephanie came up, and I thought she was really annoying, like talking a lot. I was ripping a vape. And she just held her palm out to me, and I was like, no.

Stephanie Hong '23: Yeah, so I actually don't even remember Mitchell from that very first night. The first night I remember meeting Mitchell was the First Chance Dance. My best friend was like, that guy, Mitchell, he's so cute. And I was like, okay, I'll totally go set you up then. So I go up to Mitchell and say hi, I'm Stephanie, my friend Grace is super cute, right? And he was like, "what's your Snap?" I gave him my Snap and went back to Grace, saying, I got his Snap, and I'll keep working on it for you, don't worry. And then I guess I just stole him away.

Mani Chadaga '25: Abby and I were in the same FOP group, a virtual FOP group. But we didn't talk once during FOP. We didn't even get a breakout room together. So they were trying to keep us apart. But then on the first day of school, we met at Annenberg game night. I sat down at a random table, looking for a board game to play. And instead, I found Abby. We talked a lot, and I'd say we instantly clicked. We talked for a very long time. At this point, my phone was at 1%, it was almost dead. I actually had to show my Harvard ID on somebody else's phone to get into the game night. My phone was dead, and I needed to get back, so I asked Abby if I could use her phone charger. And that's how I tricked her into spending more time with me.

Abby Miller '25: Yeah, I thought it was pretty sketchy, but I let him in my room and let him use my charger, and we hung out with my roommate.

Andrew Chung '25: It's the first week of school, and we're at Berg. I sit down next to Kelly and her friend, and I had this vegan mac-n-cheese, but I didn't know it was vegan. So I took one bite, and it was so bad, and I just left the rest of it on my plate. Then, Kelly and her friend started making fun of me, and I was like these girls are so weird.

Kelly Nguyen '25: After that, I kind of forgot he existed. I said hi to him once in the street, because I recognized him from that one time, and he was like, who are you.

What do you like to do together for fun?

Saron: We do a lot of stuff. We always eat out. We go to Newbury a lot because my car is here. So we drive there a lot. We like to shop. And we watch a lot of movies together in my room because I have a single now.

Hong: We're also taking a class together. It's called the Psychology of Social Connection and Belonging. And over Covid, we took pretty much every class together.

Saron: Sophomore year, we were both here in Boston. A lot of kids in our grade were living in Airbnb's. We made sure our Airbnb's were always pretty close together.

Miller: We like to go to the gym together. Also, going to Annenberg. Taking walks. We like to go to Boston.

Chadaga: She likes to go to my soccer games.

Miller: Yeah. And we don't really study together, because it's too distracting.

Nguyen: Recently, we've been watching Attack on Titan.

Chung: Yeah, we watch a lot of anime together. And we like to get food.

What have been some obstacles of dating in college?

Saron: The first obstacle was when we got sent home, so we weren't together for a while. Looking back on it, I'd say it made us a lot closer. We were FaceTiming every day for hours. That's when I felt like our relationship got really, really close. And I feel like we would say time management because we're always doing our sports, but honestly, it hasn't really been a problem. She has practice in the morning, and I have practice in the afternoon. So we usually just hang out in the evenings.

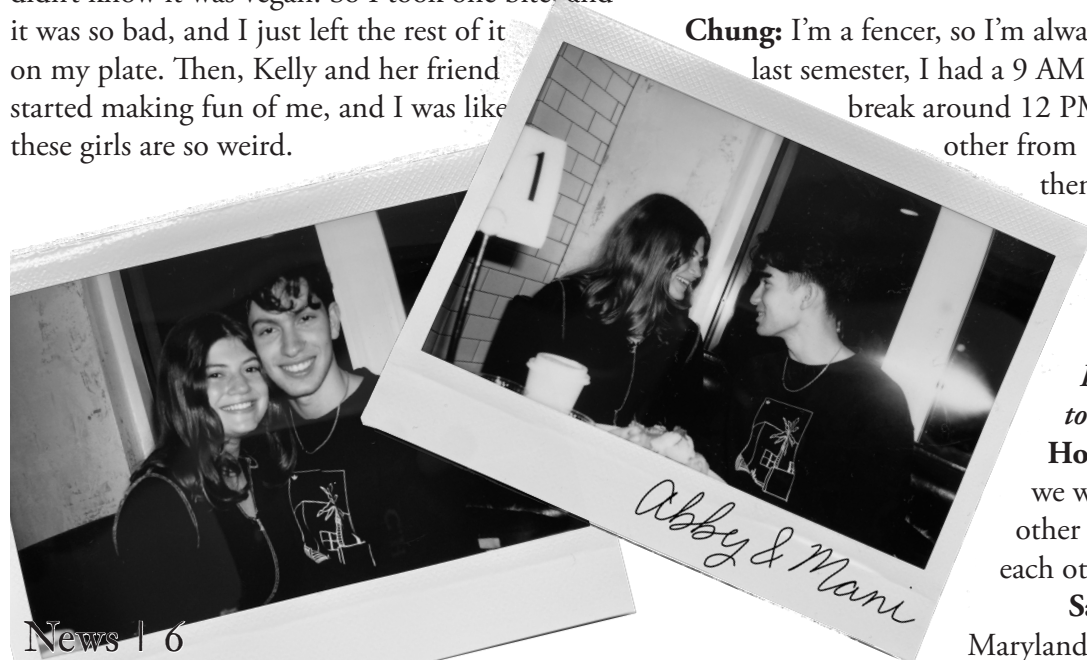
Miller: Definitely time management. I feel like we don't see each other during the day at all, because we have different friends and different classes. We really only see each other at night. So I think just having time for relationships is very hard during college and especially at Harvard.

Chung: I'm a fencer, so I'm always at practice. But last semester, I had a 9 AM class, and I had a break around 12 PM, so we'd see each other from 12-1:15 PM, and then we'd both go to our 1:30's. We make time for each other.

How do you stay in touch over breaks?

Hong: Over Covid, we would visit each other a lot, like go to each other's houses.

Saron: She's from Maryland, and I'm from



New Jersey, so I would usually drive up.

Hong: He would drive down to me, or I would take the bus up. We went on a couple of vacations together over Covid. This past break, winter break, was our longest time apart since we started dating, but we FaceTimed every day.

Saron: It was a month and a half of us not seeing each other, but we talked every day. Obviously, communicating and avoiding fights is harder when you're long-distance, but we do a good job. We'll have a conversation going from when we wake up to when we go to sleep.

Miller: FaceTiming, texting, GamePigeon. Chadaga: I beat you in Word Hunt so much.

Nguyen: Over winter break, I was in Chicago, and he was in California. I set a few rules before we left. We agreed to FaceTime twice a week, and I told him he still had to like me when we got back. Chung: And she got Covid, so she couldn't travel. But we kept in touch.

What is some relationship advice you can share?

Saron: Don't be afraid to go 100% all in if you know that person is the one. At Harvard, I feel like a lot of the people are very methodical about the decisions they make and what they want to put their time into. I'd say not to get into a relationship here and half-ass it.

Hong: Don't put too much stress on it at first. Obviously, I had a crush on Mitchell, but I just wanted to get to know him first and be his friend. So yeah, don't stress yourself out too much about finding someone in college or whatever. Just let it come more naturally. And have it be someone you really enjoy spending a lot of time with, someone who understands you and that you can trust.

Miller: I think having your own friends is important because then you're not always with the same person 24/7. It's important to not close yourself in, especially during freshman year when you want to be meeting a bunch of people and just integrating yourself into the environment.

Chadaga: Yeah, I agree. Definitely have your own stuff going on. Don't make your whole life the other person, but you also want to show that they're one of your priorities.

Nguyen: Andrew is really willing to work on things. If I bring something up, he listens. If I have something that bothers me, I tell him. He listens to me, and we communicate.

Chung: Kelly is very caring, and I think that's important. She cares about everybody, all the time—even random people on the street.

Caroline Hau '25 (carolinehau@college.harvard.edu) is definitely a romantic.

Hasty Pudding's (Wo)men of the Year

Three memorable in the absurd

by Dan Ennis '25 and Calvin Osborne '25

“What the hell is going on?” Jason Bateman asked, knowing full well that he was flown first-class to Cambridge in order to receive a metal pot from a few college kids in drag.

The Hasty Pudding Institute—home to Hasty Pudding Theatricals, the Hasty Pudding Club, and the A Capella group the *Krokodiles*—bestows two awards every year: Man of the Year, since 1967, and Woman of the Year, since 1951. Dedicated to those who have “made lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment,” the award has honored celebrities such as Ryan Reynolds (2017), Amy Poehler (2015), Justin Timberlake (2010), and Scarlett Johansson (2007), among dozens of other talented stars.

After a short Covid-19 hiatus, Man and Woman of the Year (affectionately known as MOY and WOY) came back in full force, starting with the presentation of the award to Emmy-award winning actor Jason Bateman on February 3rd. The recent star of the hit crime drama *Ozark* as Marty Byrde, Bateman's celebration focused on his start as a child actor in *Little House on the Prairie* and *Silver Spoons*. When the actors roasting him on stage asked, “What would you say to your former self?” Bateman said, “I'm so sorry, young man.” The actors retorted, “Does it get any better?” His reply was a steely-faced “No.” And in response to his early exit from high school to pursue acting, Bateman spoke to the audience, perplexed: “How does Harvard give an award to anyone without a high school diploma?”

While never before being honored with the title “Best Washed-Up Child Actor,” Bateman was previously honored for his celebrated work during the pandemic: producing the

Jennifer Garner

Image from The Hasty Pudding Institute



interview/comedy podcast “SmartLess” with Sean Hayes and Will Arnett, which won an iHeartRadio podcast award this year. Perhaps most importantly, though, we at the *Independent* learned a crucial fact in the press conference following the presentation of the award: Bateman will, in fact, be placing his pudding pot above his hard-earned Emmy in his trophy pile, since of course, as he put it, “You can't put your pudding in an Emmy.”

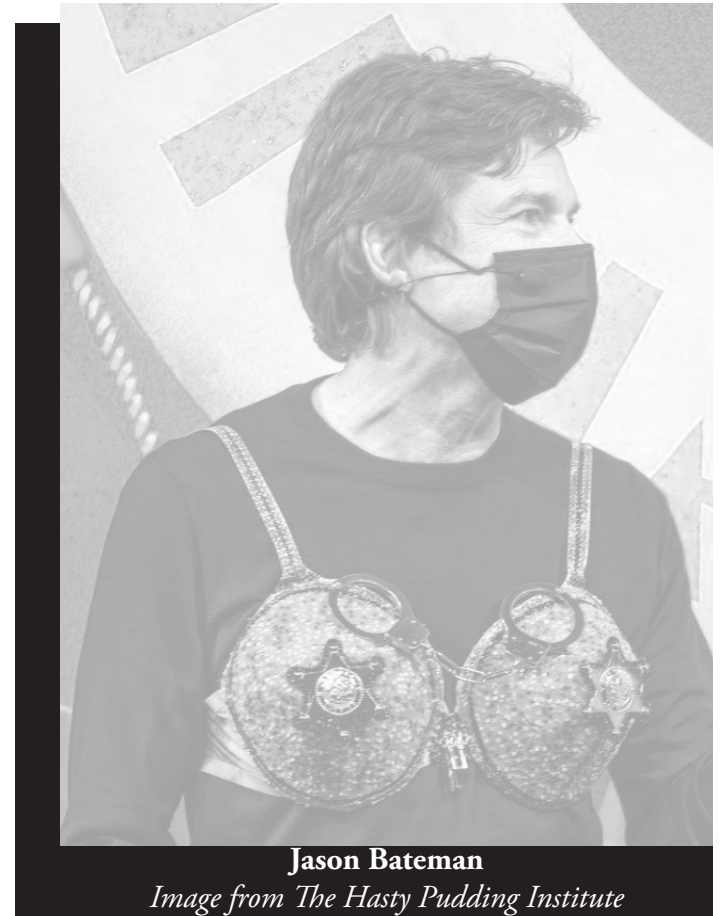
The WOY award presentation began early in the day on February 5th as Jennifer Garner paraded around campus in a large red Bentley, accompanied by the Harvard Marching Band and a swath of storybook-inspired outfits. To the adoring rows of a crowd that followed her down Massachusetts Avenue, Jennifer Garner was welcomed warmly onto the streets of Harvard.

Similar to Bateman, securing the coveted pudding pot was no easy feat for Garner. Garner performed on a long-lost childhood saxophone (which she personally named “Sally the Sexy Saxophone”)—a little-known talent of Garner's.

In regard to her work, Garner was praised for her philanthropic endeavors for early education in rural America, as well as serving as an Artist Ambassador for *Save the Children*, a fund dedicated to improving the quality of life of children around the world. Wrapping up the press conference, Garner was asked a variety of deep and prodding questions, including what she would call favorite Ina Garten recipe (the Banana Crunch Muffin, for inquisitive readers). She also pondered the question we've all been begging to ask for years: “Jennifer Garner, what is in *your* wallet?” Rather than a wallet of polaroids or family photos, she walked us through her full selection of Capital One cards. Garner told future WOY honorees to either “get ready to have a blast” or “stay home and send me instead,” before insisting, “I have a show to go to. I am so sorry, but I'm the Woman of the Year.”

What none of this really explains is the drag. The MOY and WOY awards preceded this year's Hasty Pudding Theatricals performance: *Ship Happens*, a cruise-themed comedy featuring male models, wealthy oil barons, and, yes, a lot of drag. Characters donned costumes from witches to Humpty Dumpty, Little Bo Peep, and even a cactus.

Jason Bateman seemed to be right: What the hell really did go on? Attending a



Jason Bateman

Image from The Hasty Pudding Institute

press conference with Jennifer Garner next to both a sophomore in full-body tucan suit and well-endowed drag queen was not on our list of first-year Harvard experiences, and neither was listening to Jason Bateman belt out “Eternal Flame” after a strenuous swash-buckle with his faux-younger self. Not that we're complaining about either, though.

Perhaps that was the point: that absolutely nothing made sense. Even the night's most steady recognitions to philanthropy and acting inspirations felt foggy behind a backdrop of chaotic craftiness. The Hasty Pudding owned this night of nonsensicalness, and yet, the performance still felt complete. In a word: camp.

Were both evenings worth their triple-digit price tags? We can't judge that because we had press passes. From a purely theatrical perspective, it's hard to justify the expense. The moments of confusion expressed by the two honorees were a good portion of the fun. Nonetheless, there were times when this disconnect felt especially prominent, and the awkwardness may have outweighed the charm.

That seems to be what MOY and WOY are all about—turning a simple award into an occasion. Perhaps these roasts alone aren't what will bring us back to the Hasty Pudding, but their dedication to satirical self-reflection and willingness to make something memorable out of the absurd.

We'll certainly be back to see who gets the honor of kissing the pudding pot next.

Dan Ennis '25 (djennis@college.harvard.edu) really didn't know who Jason Bateman was.

Friends to Lovers? Lovers to Friends?

Dr. Holly Parker explains love and friendship

by Maddie Proctor '25 & Harry Cotter '25

What's the difference between friendship and romance? Should your partner also be your best friend? Can you be friends

with your ex? We spoke with Dr. Love—er, Dr. Holly Parker—to find out. Dr. Parker isn't just a self-professed "love expert" who writes quizzes for *Cosmopolitan*. She has a Harvard Ph.D. in experimental psychopathology, is a practicing psychologist, and teaches a class at Harvard on the psychology of close relationships. You can't get better relationship advice than this.

For many of us, the fuel that sparks strong relationships can be hard to describe. Understanding some of the factors that lead to their demise can help us see what goes wrong. According to Dr. Parker, research shows one of the major reasons behind friend breakups is disapproval from family and other friends. Another reason is perceiving selfishness in your friend—"just feeling like that friend is fundamentally not looking out for the person, not willing to do their part in the relationship," said Dr. Parker.

Other potential causes include a lack of time and moving geographically.

You might think that these all sound like reasons that *romantic* relationships end. You'd be right! But while it may seem natural to take the moving factor and declare long-distance relationships unviable, such a condemnation wouldn't give the whole picture. "Actually, evidence indicates that there is no difference in satisfaction between partners who are in long-distance relationships and partners who are in close-distance relationships. So, where couples really want to make it work, it is not the distance that's going to hurt them," Dr. Parker said. Reducing a breakup to a simple geographic separation can avoid painful reflection on deeper contributing factors. But true romantic feelings ground themselves emotionally first, and then physically. Just as there are many similarities in what makes a healthy friendship and romantic relationship, there are also common reasons for why they end.

Can you stay friends with your ex? 61.6% of Harvard students surveyed by the *Independent* said yes. A couple students said it depended on the depth or intensity of the relationship, while another astutely noted, "it's never simple, but if they work on it, it can work."

Dr. Parker agrees that the transition from lovers to friends is just as possible, and can be just as rewarding, as the transition from friends to lovers. "Is there a transition involved? Yes," she said. "But

I do know that partners can go from being in romantic relation-

ships to having a friendship, and they can absolutely cultivate that."

That being said, you don't have to be *best* friends with your ex. "What I think definitely happens is that there are people who can have very beneficial, active interactions with their exes. Even if they're not close buddies, it doesn't mean that every relationship that ends has to be one where people avoid each other, or it's acrimonious," said Dr. Parker. Very reassuring, Dr. Parker. We needed that. (Note: the *Independent* is not liable for any damages that may be incurred from talking to your ex.)

Most likely, your former partner is someone who knows you very well, who has cared about you and whom you may



have known in a friendship capacity prior to any romantic feelings. The foundations for returning to that friendship already exist. It may just take some time and restructuring of your dynamic to get there.

Entering adulthood and a college environment generally brings a full suite of relationships and group dynamics that can avoid clear definition. Living on your own around so many of your peers thrusts you into a nonstop rush of social situations and bonds that can break as quickly as they form. Young adults can question their sexuality and struggle with unique feelings they haven't encountered before. Who's your friend, and who are you just friendly with? Do you just like that person, or do you *like* that person? There is a wide range of possible relationship dynamics between the strict definitions of platonic and romantic relationships, and the hard truth is that we must define each relationship ourselves, without referring to any strict analytical formula.

"There are going to be other dynamics... feeling romantic and sexually passionate about someone... and I know that can get tricky when we talk about friendships because people can feel that

in friendships too," Dr. Parker shared.

Romantic relationships require two or more people, grappling with their own assortment of confusing feelings and vague desires, to individually decide to place each other above the rest and trust the other(s) to do the same. Recognizing how nuanced and complicated relationships are, how intertwined platonic and romantic love can be, only makes the ability to enter into a committed relationship that much more satisfying and special.

"I think that when you really pare it down, one of the things at the heart of really wonderful romantic relationships is a strong foundation of friendship," said Parker. Friendship is powerful on its own, but in romantic relationships, it may even be necessary. Responses to the *Independent's* poll affirmed this correlation: "I'm big on long-term relationships with best friend types of people," one student wrote, reflecting the attitudes of many.

Harvard students can recall the rush of freshman fall: those three simultaneously instant and infinite months where you meet some of the funniest, smartest, and most accomplished young people in the world. You form relationships that feel as tight-knit and unassailable as those you left back home. When you come back to campus after winter break, some relationships are stronger, some weaker, some lost, and some newly founded. The Dr. Parker-certified clichés ring true: trust, communication, and general enjoyment of each

other's company form the bedrock of all strong relationships—whether they're platonic, romantic, or something in between.

"To really love someone, to really just profoundly care about someone and be emotionally invested in someone, that transcends relationships," Dr. Parker said. "Treating someone, whether it is a friend or a romantic partner, in ways that are really kind, that are considerate, that are caring, that are thoughtful."

She ended with a message to students: "Relationships are so vital to people's quality of life. And I just want to wish everyone, all of your readers, a lot of health and love."

Harry Cotter '25 (harrycotter@college.harvard.edu) hasn't had a girlfriend since freshman year of high school.

*Maddie Proctor '25 (maddieproctor@college.harvard.edu) spent last semester crying over her deadbeat ex.
Graphic by Marina Zoullas '23*



Your Favorite Flower Shop in Cambridge

At least Valentine's Day gives us flowers

by Ariel Beck '25

In 21st century America, anything and everything is subject to commercialization—Christmas, the Superbowl, Groundhog Day. Even our love and affection is tagged with a price. Valentine's Day is simply another indicator of our country's celebration of capitalism. We buy chocolate boxes filled with an assortment of treats, cheesy pop-up cards, stuffed animals that say "I love you" when squeezed, and bouquets of flowers to symbolize our love. What once was an elaborate celebration of love has devolved into the materialistic exchange of items.

But beneath the gift-giving frenzy of Valentine's Day, the beloved Cambridge flower shop, 31 Brattle Street Florist, represents the true value of the symbolic gesture and its importance for local businesses and their customers.

"People buy flowers because it's the romance day of the year, and it affects everybody of all ages—you buy flowers, chocolates, and go out to dinner," shares Steven Zedros, manager of Brattle Street Florist. For Zedros, flowers are more than a materialistic representation of love. "The gesture of giving flowers should be a weekly thing. It brightens peoples lives up." With all the love he has for the store, he states: "My highlights are the people that you meet, without a doubt, and the creativity behind putting the product out."

The shop was founded in 1917 by George Stavros, and John Gomas as a family business. Zedros has been working at the store since he was nine years old and is a part of

the third generation of the family business. "I came after elementary, middle school, and high school. All through the course of my life I have come here to work," said Zedros. After 98 years of owning the store, Zedros' family sold the business to a new owner 9 years ago. Brattle Street Florist has maintained a loyal fan base throughout the years. According to avid customer and professor at the Harvard School of Engineering, William Frasschaert, "It's just such a welcoming place... it's really a tradition here in Harvard Square. I'm glad that Steven will be continuing in Harvard Square and still have a presence." Similar to many customers, Professor Frasschaert returns to the store not only for the flowers, but also for the personal connection. "It means a lot to me to walk into a place and having been here for so long, people know you by name—that's really the greatest thing," he says. Sharing this same passion, Sarah Lynch '22 says, "the people who work at this store are incredibly dear to me." Growing up with a mother that frequently gardens, Lynch feels a sense of community at Brattle Street Florist. "Flower shops are not merely places of business, but community centers, places of gathering," she says.

For Zedros, too, the store isn't just a business—it's a nest for family and friendships. "The people you meet here—it's just the greatest place to be," he expresses. "Students come back for reunions and it's amazing to see what people have done with their lives—you hear great stories."

Zedros and his fellow employees have managed to offer this same feeling to their custom-

ers. "The second I stepped into this store it felt like home," shares Lynch. Upon entering the store, customers often greet Zedros and his employees with hugs and ask how their families are doing, Lynch says. While consumerist culture certainly has its critics, some gifts play a larger role in forming community and sustaining our most cherished local businesses, like Brattle Street Florist.

Modifying their original plan to close the 31 Brattle Street location, Zedros and his family have decided to extend their lease until March so they can be open for Valentine's Day. They hope to relocate within Harvard Square on April 1st. "It's not certain yet that we are moving to another spot, but it's looking really strong," says Zedros. Looking ahead to the upcoming holiday, he wants to make the store's presence known: "We will be here in business for Valentine's Day!"

Ariel Beck (arielbeck@college.harvard.edu) is searching for a valentine to buy her heart-shaped chocolates.

Graphic by Marina Loullas '23

Your Love Poetry Stinks

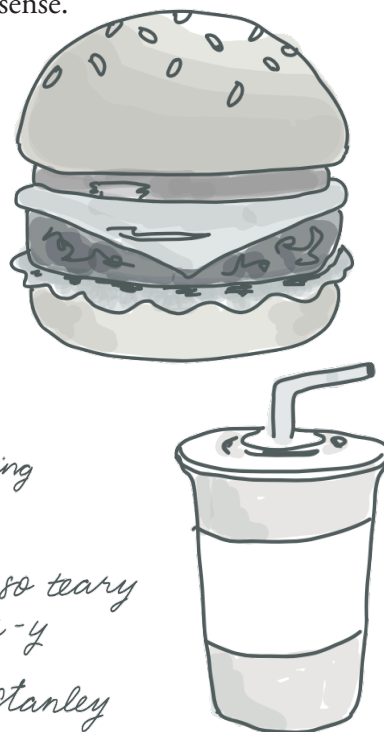
An English Literature PhD reviews students' love poems

by Michael Kielstra '22

Dr. Julia P. Kielstra, D.Phil., Oxon., has degrees in English Literature from Bryn Mawr and Oxford and years of experience evaluating student writing for Cambridge International Examinations. I showed her the best—or worst—love poetry Harvard students could produce. The following responses are more or less verbatim, and completely unscripted. (She also happens to be my mom.)

"Burger and Coke"

I love you more than a burger and coke love a fry
you move through my mind like a cloud in the sky
When I thought you weren't mine I was despondent
'cause you're sweeter than a cake with chocolate fondant
you are my honey pie, my rainbow, my orange
I want to buy you everything I can afford in
Nordstrom, I'll sign a big check, no forging
Just promise you'll be my princess, I will be your king
If you need new pants I'll buy you like four jeans
'cause I'm incoming C.B., I'm loaded with Georges
I'm so rich but I think about you and I get so teary
I'm so drunk on love like I've just drank a beer-y
you'll be my girl, you'll make me feel manly
I'll introduce you to my friends Mr. Morgan and Stanley
and when we are old and so blue and so grey
I hope you remember that day we met up and I said "hey"



"Sweet Maddie"

Help! I think I'm falling in love
She's an angel, a cutie, a special
beauty, one of a kind, or more
precisely a dove
Staying up late to talk about the day
But hey she always find a way
In the morning we'll be sure to crash
But sweet Maddie will always wind
up in the bath
My sunshine, she always makes me
happy and smile
I feel like I should always go the
extra mile
Waiting to be woken up from this
long dream
Might as well get some ice cream
There's nothing I like more with her
then to snuggle
But truly not seeing her every day is
a struggle
It may have taken a month for the
first date
But I have a feeling she may be my
soulmate

That's an obvious place to go, and this word is interesting when you juxtapose it with "honey pie" and "rainbow." "Honey pie" makes you think of food as well, but then "rainbow" is a color... he's clearly wandering across a landscape of metaphor and simile. The sheer breadth is staggering in many ways. I might even say it's unbelievable, and I would mean that in the literal sense.

It's actually been texted! How exciting. Clearly there's a lot of heartfelt and young emotion here, which is great. I'm seeing that there's a time-frame as well: she's been putting up with this for a month. (It's great that it's written in a text, because that means she might not have had to put up with it in person.) There are a lot of syntactic problems: if she's "One of a kind," then we're not anywhere near bird imagery,

so I'm not sure why she's "more precisely" a dove. But "staying up late to talk about the day" is nice. That sort of quotidian detail is always appreciated by poetry readers.

I'm not really sure why she'll end up in the bath. That's that serial killer overtone, which I find less attractive every time I read it. It's quite nice that she's sunshine. Falling back on the tried and true metaphors and similes is good: why not use things that people say every day all the time? I think he's trying to reinvent the way we use language. I'm not sure that that's as successful as it could be.

Everyone who's read even a cereal box will know that comparing love to a long dream is very... expected, but I'm always happy to be able to sleep through some of this kind of poem.

The ice cream is a surprise. I would like to say that I see some reason for it, but I think he's just hungry now and tired of writing this.

Putting ordinary thoughts into short lines, with some words that rhyme, doesn't necessarily make a poem. It makes a very thin bit of prose. Often, people think that typesetting is what moves something from prose to poetry. In this case, sadly, I don't think it does. But I admire the fact that he thought he could show this to another human being and think that she might still want to date him. He's got chutzpah and might well make something of himself.

The first line of this poem starts with "Help!" Now, when you were teaching me to read, one of the books we both enjoyed was Seamus Heaney's Beowulf, which of course starts with "So." There's a long tradition of epic poetry beginning with interjections. Do you think this poem is a worthy inheritor of that tradition?

No.

Could you say more?

This doesn't really fall into epic, does it? There's got to be a descent into hell. Although, I suppose that being without her every day is a bit of descending into hell? You could say that? Maybe the ice cream is a metaphor for a monster? Could we go there? I don't think we should.

We do have Maddie, the Beatrice to his Dante, and the Scheherazade overlay with staying up late to talk about the day. We could pull out many, many references to other literature that's much better than this. It might be a more enjoyable evening to think of some other epic poems, poems which have some quality to them.

Would you have any advice for aspiring love poets, bearing in mind that the man who thought he might be Maddie's soulmate turned out not to be?

Forge and plagiarize. Find good poetry and adjust it to make it yours until you find your feet. Use imagery that proper poems have used. Also, rhyme is no bad thing, because, as we have seen, it does keep you on the rails. Free verse is very dangerous for the novice poet: you get a lot of prose. There is that indistinct and amorphous animal in the prose poem, but it requires a careful handling of internal rhythm. Just copy other people's work—and, if you put the little quotation marks around it, then you don't even have to change it. You can say "I read this and thought of you." Many people will respond more positively to that than to "I thought of you and wrote a poem involving ice cream."

Roses are red/Violets are blue/Michael Kielstra '22 (jmkkielstra@college.harvard.edu) reads the Independent/and so should you.

Graphics by Piper Fingleaf '24

That certainly has a lot of words in it, and we can't underestimate the fact that he did write down lots of words, in an order, which I think is always great. I like to be quite positive about these things.

Starting off with the imagery of a burger and coke loving a fry is great. That's something everyone can respond to. On the other hand, "a cloud in the sky" might be a little transient for the love he's trying to indicate, and "despondent" and "fondant" is very... brave, isn't it? I'm concerned about "orange" and "afford in." I think he's losing the plot a little bit there, although he is keeping up the money theme. I don't know if that's something you Harvard undergraduates are concerned with?

"Promise you'll be my princess, I will be your king" is where it gets a little concerning, because the princess is usually the king's daughter. I can't see he's attempting anything like any sort of meter with this, so "Promise me you'll be my queen, I will be your king" would work just as well, and wouldn't have this weird undertone that he's moving towards now. I think that it's great that he's rich and this girl seems to be impressed with him in spite of that, and that he gets teary and drunk over her, because what girl isn't going to love that? We all love men who cry and men who get weepy when they're drunk. [Mouths "No."]

I'm also liking the very regular rhyme scheme. It really means you can immerse yourself in the meaning, such as it is, here, and you don't have to pay attention to the rhymes. There's nothing much to challenge you here intellectually, which is helpful for the casual reader.

And: blue and gray? I thought you were crimson. Is Yale not blue and gray?

On the whole, this wouldn't attract me to this person. He's sacrificing meaning for rhyme, which you will remember from your childhood is in my book a huge sin against literature.

Tell me about this "orange" thing. Do you think this is a callback to the historical rarity of oranges?

The Indy's V-Day Playlist

The world's best music for the world's worst holiday

by Matt Sakiyama '25

Love is everlasting joy and never-ending pain and everything in between. Love is kindness and cruelty, jealousy and faith. Love has raised and ruined civilizations (citation needed, probably). It's no wonder they dedicated a holiday to it.

Specially curated by the *Independent*, this playlist will be your partner if you don't have one and your third wheel if you do. Here are the songs you should listen to this Valentine's Day.

Taylor Swift, 'Wildest Dreams'

A forever classic; not much else needs to be said. The perfect song to play while pining after that one night stand or that right-person-at-the-wrong-time.

Danny L. Harle, 'Take My Heart Away'

An electro-pop banger that's deserving of more attention. If you can think of a person who makes going to your 9am worth it, this song encapsulates that giddy feeling that not even your scheduling woes can dampen.

Caroline Polachek, 'So Hot You're Hurting My Feelings'

Is there someone who makes your stomach implode? Someone who's so perfect it's borderline offensive? This one's for them.

Iyaz, 'Replay'

Though the iPod has long gone out of fashion, this track has not. This song goes out to all of you who've found true love (but stop being so annoying about it. Please.)

Ariana Grande, Mac Miller, 'The Way'

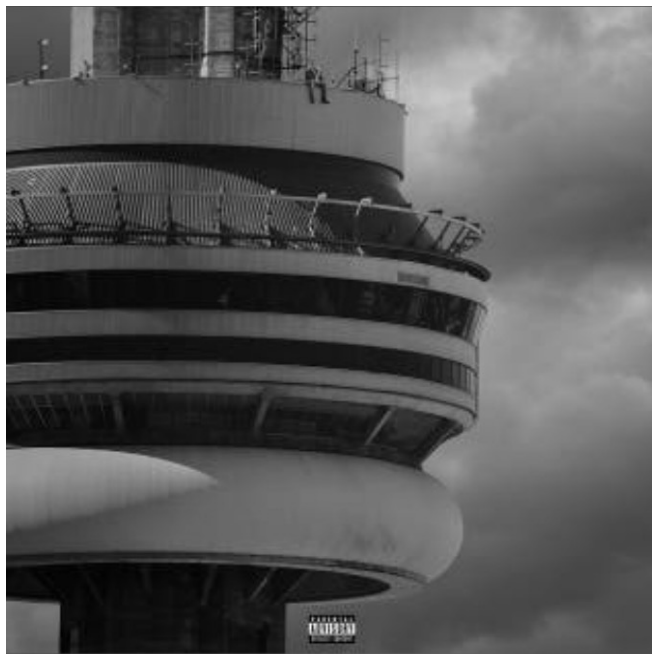
There's nothing that can quite describe the bliss of young love. Except for maybe this throwback.

King Von, 'Ride'

This track is for your ride or die. If they're not willing to hide your guns during a police raid, or stay faithful while you serve your sentence, are they really the one?

Miley Cyrus, 'Wrecking Ball'

You were probably too distracted by the music video to realize what a great love song this is. Criminally underrated.



Charli XCX, 100 gecs, Kero Kero Bonito, Rico Nasty, 'ringtone (Remix)'

This one is for all the cool kids who aren't scared of a little 100 gecs in their lives. I love you all, so you're guaranteed not to be alone come Valentine's Day.

Justin Bieber, Big Sean, 'As Long As You Love Me'

Have you ever met someone who you wouldn't mind being homeless and broke with? Apparently Justin has. Here's to hoping you meet that someone.

Kanye West, 'Runaway'

A toast to the douchebags. If you've ever cheated or been cheated on, played or been played, you know what song to queue up.

Rae Sremmurd, 'This Could Be Us'

For anyone who wants to upgrade their on-again off-again to a full-time deal. Just remember that "money makes your girl go down," so get to working on those internship applications.

Charli XCX, Lizzo, 'Blame It on Your Love'

Some representation for all the toxic ones out there. I'm not condoning it, but whatever floats your boat, floats your boat.

Justin Bieber, 'Baby'

Just because you're not in middle school anymore doesn't mean you can't enjoy this classic once in a while. Maybe try hitting up your 7th grade crush. Or don't, it's a free country.

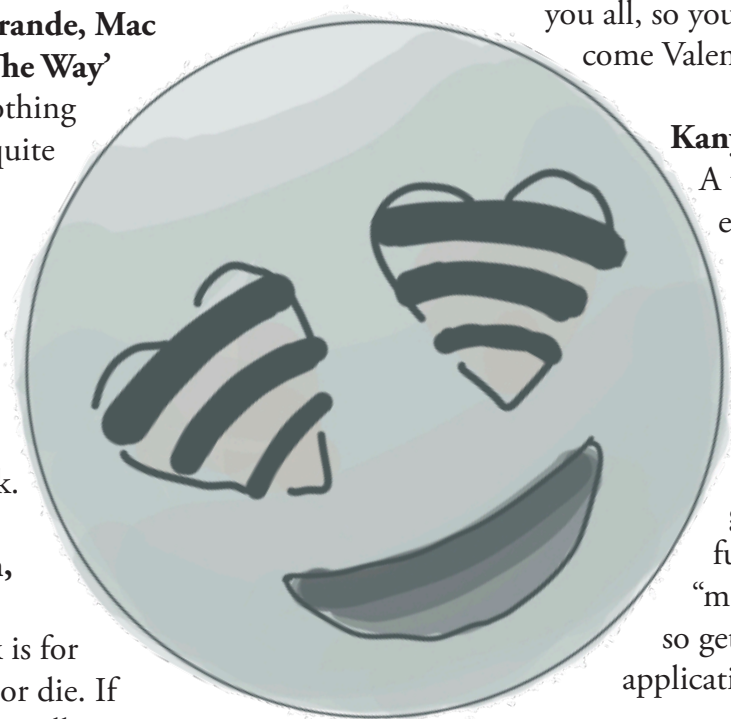
*Matt Sakiyama '25 (msakiyama@college.harvard.edu)
is free on February 14th.
Image from Spotify*

Dorian Electra, 'Your Kinda Guy'

Sometimes you just know you're perfect for someone who doesn't know yet. Listen to this while wiping your tears away.

Carly Rae Jepsen, 'I Didn't Just Come Here to Dance'

If you've ever had your eyes set on that one Sig Chi brother, just know Carly Rae Jepsen has gone through the same thing—kind of.



To Date or Not to Date

An investigation into the romantic lives of Harvard athletes

by Will Goldsmith '24



Harvard

student athletes often claim that playing a sport is like having a full-time job.

Between lifts, practices, and team meetings, players on the same team spend countless hours together every week. This time commitment doubtlessly conduces unity and camaraderie between athletes—but does it inhibit them from exploring their romantic side? Is it better for an athlete, burdened with a rigorous, twenty-hour practice schedule, to seek a partner in an individual with whom they share the interest of athletics? Or perhaps it is better for athletes to date non-athletes, the latter of whom can shape their schedules around that of their athletically-inclined partner?

“I would say it’s hard dating someone who isn’t an athlete,” said Women’s Lacrosse player Chloe Provenzano ’24. “I find that athletes tend to have conflicting schedules which make it more difficult for them to date. In that regard, I would argue that it might actually be easier for an athlete to date a non-athlete, but at the end of the day, most Harvard people are extremely busy people and have responsibilities that would certainly challenge the foundations of any relationship.”

In addition to the scheduling conflicts that impact athletes’ abilities to find time to socialize, the amount of team bonding and subsequent social groups that are formed from doing so lead to several outcomes in socializing.

“I wouldn’t say athletes date athletes primarily because of their schedules but more so because they travel in similar social circles. Every ath-

lete has a different schedule: some sports practice in the morning and some in the afternoon so it could be even harder [to date] if both people are athletes since they have busy schedules that don’t line up. But athletes can be more understanding of each other’s busy time commitments than [non-athletes],” said an anonymous student athlete.

Yet these extracurricular barriers, however transparent they might be, don’t always prohibit NARP-Athlete relationships from forming.

“I find that almost everyone who I’ve talked to romantically has played sports, been an athlete, or is still connected to athletics,” said Women’s Soccer Player Hannah Bebar ’24. However, “It is not hard to date someone who isn’t an athlete because although they may not experience the same time commitment, dedication, or stress of athletics, [non-athletes] aren’t ignorant of [such factors.] I’ve found that sometimes guys who aren’t athletes are more understanding than some athletes and are less conceited.”

“I love having a boyfriend who is also a Harvard athlete,” said Women’s Lacrosse player Stephanie Hong ’23. “It wasn’t a factor that I considered at all when I started dating him but I think that it has been a super big and interesting part of our relationship. He has definitely really helped me in terms of my sport... and I’ve learned so much from him.” Hong also said she had never heard of fencing as a college sport before she met her boyfriend, but the more she learns about it, the more she realizes it is “a super cool sport!” Her boyfriend’s passion for his sport makes their conflicting schedules worth it: “I know he is doing something that he really loves and has worked really hard on.”

Despite the appreciation that non-athletes might be able to acquire for their athletic partners, the reality is that time commitments do create an unavoidable obstacle in any relationship.

The trend exists beyond Harvard’s student body. Bates College junior Richie Nuzum, who has dated a Bates Women’s Lacrosse player for over three years, finds that dating a college athlete requires “a level of dedication that’s certainly not for everyone, and certainly not for me.” However, he enjoys witnessing his girlfriend’s commitment: “Seeing her do lacrosse everyday and love it everyday is something I appreciate. It can be challenging at times considering the craziness of her schedule, but I try to be supportive in every way I can. It pays off when I get to root for her and see her succeed on the field.”

While some athletes seek romantic solace in the arms of peers with similar athletic interests as their own, other athletes join hands with less coordinated members of the student body. At Harvard, where individuals, irrespective of their membership to an athletic group, are constantly engaging in pursuit after pursuit, finding time for love appears like an almost impossible proposition. As it turns out, however, romance is alive and well in Cambridge. Love can conquer all—even arduous athletic schedules.

Will Goldsmith '24 (willgoldsmith@college.harvard.edu) writes for the Independent.

February Rundown

Post-New Year's blues? Fear not, February's not all bad. Read the rundown.

Every Friday 12-6pm and Sunday 10am-3pm: Indulge in the Charles Square Farmers' Market! Vendors from Massachusetts and New Hampshire farms offer organic produce, herbs, cheese, bread, pastries, jam, and fruit.

Wednesday, Feb 9th: Looking for a reason to Keep Your Head Up? Andy Grammer is performing at the Orpheum Theater in Boston.

Friday, Feb 11th: Watch the uber-romantic film *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013) at The Brattle Street Theater in Cambridge. Starring Anton Yelchin, Jeffrey Wright, John Hurt, Mia Wasikowska, Tilda Swinton, Tom Hiddleston. 40 Brattle St.

Friday, Feb 11th–13th: Puruze the pop-up vendor market in honor of Black History Month from Feb 11th - 13th at CambridgeSide, 100 CambridgeSide PL. There will be body products, clothing, art and many other distinctive items all from black-owned businesses.

Saturday, Feb 12th: Watch the legendary cult classic romance film *Harold and Maude* (1971) at The Brattle Street Theater. Starring Bud Cort, Ruth Gordon.

Saturday, Feb 12th: Gracie Abrams performs at The Sinclair in Cambridge as part of her "This is What it Feels Like" tour. Doors open: 6pm. Door price: \$24.50. 52 Church St.

Sunday, Feb 13th: Football fan or otherwise, the Superbowl is a great excuse to gather your friends and eat your weight in nachos. Consider hitting up 730 Tavern for your viewing.

Sunday, Feb 13th: Chinese New Year Parade in Chinatown with lion dances, martial arts and firecrackers. The Chinese New Year began on the 1st, but the huge Lion Parade is on this Sunday from 10am-3pm. Cost is free! Closest T-station to the parade: Orange Line/Chinatown.

Sunday, Feb 13th and Monday, Feb 14th: Watch the beloved romantic comedy *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) at The Brattle Street Theater. Starring Cary Grant, James Stewart, John Howard, Katharine Hepburn, Roland Young, Ruth Hussey, Virginia Weidler.

Monday, Feb 14th: Take a stroll down Brattle street in Harvard Square to L.A Burdick, Harvard's famous chocolate shop selling Valentines sweets since 1987. Have a seat at one of their quaint tables and enjoy a cup of rich hot chocolate. Or, buy a gift from their Valentine's selection.

Monday, Feb 14th: Bring your special someone on a romantic ice skating adventure on the Boston Commons Frog Pond, just a short T-ride away from the square. Kendall Square Community Ice Rink is also a great option to visit before the weather gets warm.

Monday, Feb 14th: Get tickets for a live performance of *Romeo and Juliette*, the ballet, at 7:15pm at Arts Picturehouse in Cambridge.

Monday, Feb 14th: BeanPot Finals and Consolation matches! The games start at 4:30pm at the TD garden. Harvard vs Boston College in the consolation and Boston University vs Northeastern for the final.

Monday, Feb 14th: Take your date to a movie. Why not? It's cold! Head to Boston Movie Theaters.

Tuesday, Feb 15 @ 8:30: Neil Frances performs at The Sinclair. Doors open: 7:30 pm. Door price: \$20.00.

Friday, Feb 18th: Dua Lipa plays at TD Garden!

Sunday, Feb 20th: Billie Eilish plays at TD Garden!

Monday, Feb 21st: President's day—no class!

Wednesday, Feb 23rd–27th: Disney on Ice performs at the TD Garden everyday at various times.

Feb 24th–March 13th: Visit the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) in Cambridge and watch "Ocean Filibuster," described as "a genre-crashing music theater experience that fuses myth, song, video, stand-up, and science to explore the vast depths crucial to our daily survival." (Loeb Drama Center at 64 Brattle Street)

Saturday, February 26th: Want the Mardi Gras experience without the flight to New Orleans? Have an unforgettable day you won't remember with Bar Crawl Live, making stops at Hong Kong and Wild Rover from 2-10 pm. Tickets are \$9.

Saturday, February 26th: Farmers market vibes but for clothes, accessories and art with fun people and fun music? Sign me up. Visit the Harvard Advocate from 2-5pm to get some handmade goodies and perhaps a vintage scarf.



Graphic by Kate Tunnell '24

Finding True Love at Harvard

An investigation into the romantic lives of Harvard athletes

by Sebastian Mandell '24

True love. Whether or not we see ourselves as romantic types, it's worth thinking about. Why? Well Valentine's Day is here for one, but regardless, love just might be the most powerful force in our lives. Take beauty for example. Beauty brings untold opportunity and prestige. Yet gorgeous people are utterly devastated, left bitter by failing to handle love. As are the wealthy and the strong. Love seems capable of breaking anyone who doesn't take the time to understand it. Now, I don't think love is a curse, more like electricity or fire: get careless or take things for granted and *poof*—disaster. Ignore it completely? Enjoy a cold and dark life. Harvard might offer endless resources to study physics, launch a new start-up, or make it on Wall Street, but how do the students here navigate the numinous world of love?

Harvard students are all about innovation and optimization, and one popular tool is Datamatch. Sky Jung '25 works on the Algorithm Team for Datamatch, and while the algorithm is "very complex and a secret," she was willing to share some insights about the Harvard romance scene. Last year, two-thirds of undergraduates used Datamatch. "There's a really good balance in the dating scene," Jung said. Based on



Datamatch's submissions, lots of people are into hook-up culture, lots of people are looking for something a little personal, and some are looking for something serious. "There's really no one category that stands out more than others from what I've seen," said Jung. The data seems to be reasonable because everyone I interviewed this week shared this observation.

Technology can only do so much. Jung notes that Datamatch receives many positive testimonials, but many people who try Datamatch have different intentions other than finding a relationship. "If you receive a perfect match in your inbox, nothing will come of it if you aren't ready to spend the time and energy to get to know someone new," said Sky. This highlights a Harvard-specific problem for students who are interested in finding love: investing time in the process. Cass Bargell '22 vocalized a common critique of Harvard's workaholic environment. "Everyone here is really focused on themselves, they just don't have time for it. It's not people's main priority," she said. So where can someone find love at Harvard? "Section," said Bargell. "Things are hard enough, so if it's easy, don't overcomplicate it. Enjoy it while you have it."

I don't usually feel attractive in classrooms, but it's a good point. Students are busy, and it's tempting to aim for relationships that are as convenient as possible. Keeping it simple and not obsessing over outcomes might be the best way to find that middle ground between hook-ups and serious relationships. Maybe grabbing coffee or lunch with a section-mate is a great place to start, especially for spending time with someone you might have a little interest in without overthinking the implications. However, specifically holding onto convenience as a marker for relationships can spell serious trouble in the future. "Convenience" may be a bad word to use when it comes to love. Technology might be hurting us by directing us towards the path of least romantic resistance. "Using apps like Tinder or Instagram has a trade-off," said Jung. "We have ten times as many half-hearted

acquaintances and very few good connections. Meeting naturally requires you to care more, and that's a skill we don't have. The moment things feel inconvenient we drop it, so we don't have the patience to build relationships anymore." Josh Archibald '22 believes that true love is nothing like romance movies. He finds that pop-culture warps expectations. "True

love is something you build; it doesn't just happen at first sight. It's the result of work, not magic," said Archibald. Personally, I couldn't agree more. A little excitement goes a long way... for about 15 minutes. Maybe a week if you're busy and drinking whenever you get some precious free time. After that you're still confronted with the reality of a situation. You can't will love into existence by just wanting it. You have to decide someone is interesting or stimu-

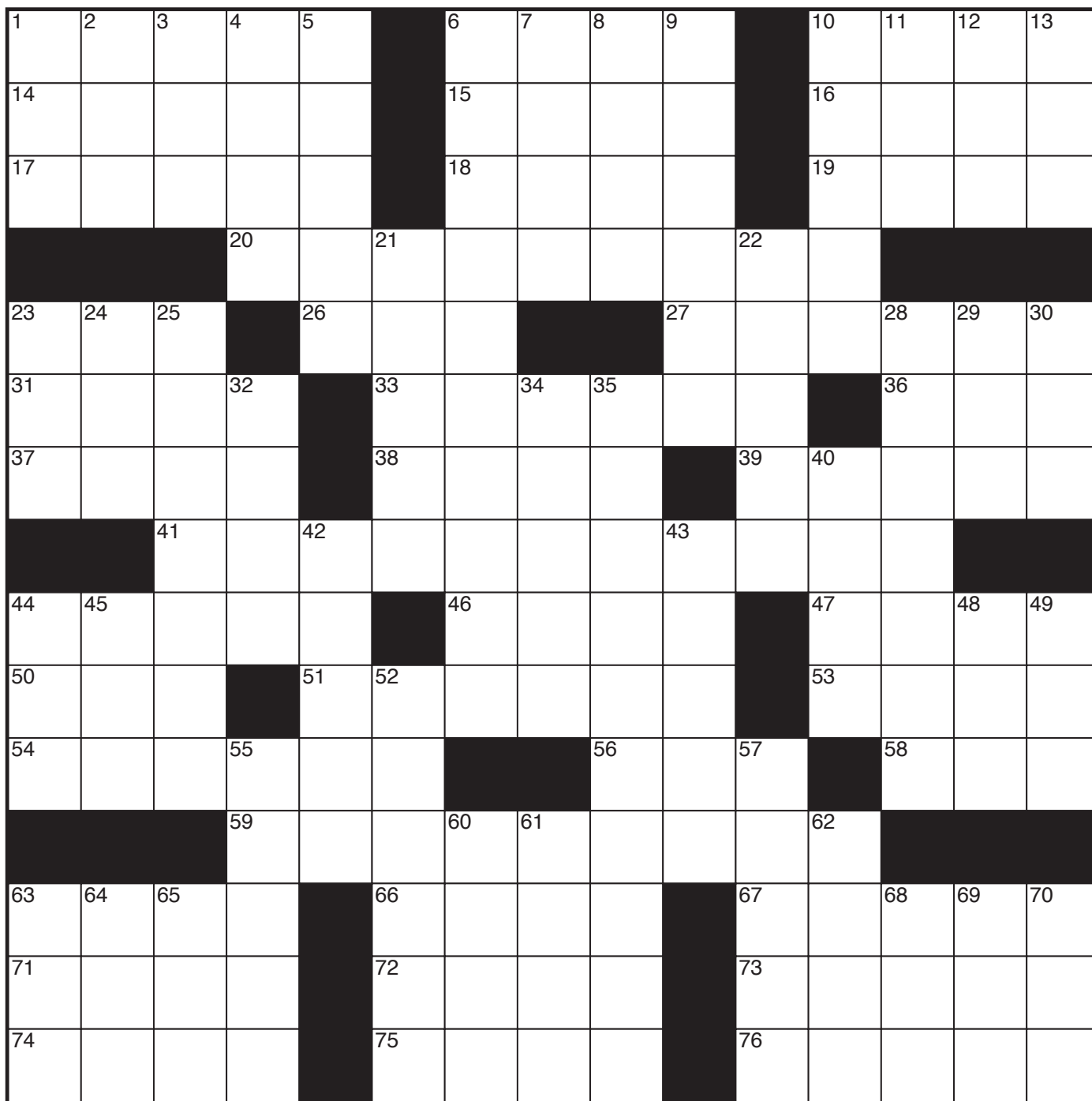


lating enough to put the time into seeing what happens when you both throw your crazy, sane, depraved, and square lots together, even if only for a few moments. My opinion orbits closest to Archibald's and a little bit towards Jung's. I think that love is a skill, an instinct that gets stronger after years of relationships, friendships, and raising children. Sooner, if you intentionally cultivate it. From there, the love in each relationship is something that grows over time, with each memory, each shared experience. But that's easier said than done. Love requires vulnerability, which means that deeply loving others gives them an advantage over you. The more closed off you are, the harder it is to experience it at all. It takes courage. Lots of courage and sharp eyes so you know when to protect yourself and when to be vulnerable. So how do you find true love at Harvard (other than in section of course)? You start building it!

Sebastian Mandell '24 (sebastian_mandell@college.harvard.edu) is your local workaholic of the heart.

At First Sight

by Peter Laskin '23



- 12 ____/her pronouns
- 13 Knob opposite 63-Down
- 21 Common Southeast lizard
- 22 Bassist Carl
- 23 Only sushi fish usually not served raw
- 24 Short way to go?
- 25 Workshop
- 28 Hard to pin down
- 29 Lice treatment brand
- 30 Carrier to Stockholm
- 32 Greek deity of 10-Across
- 34 Substance seen on a cold day... or a hot night
- 35 ____ lead (gasoline additive banned by the EPA)
- 40 Willie who broke the color barrier in hockey
- 42 Appreciate, or something that appreciates
- 43 Soeur de mère
- 44 Book between Exod. and Num.
- 45 Instrument for Iz Kamakawiwo'ole
- 48 Homer's nemesis
- 49 The Family Stone frontman
- 52 "Heavenly" man's name
- 55 Bottom-tier, as a celeb
- 57 Reproduce, like a glacier or a cow
- 60 Tel extension?
- 61 In ____ land
- 62 Sound of pain or pleasure
- 63 Knob opposite 13-Down
- 64 Olympic figure skater Midori
- 65 Insult, slangily
- 68 Syllable for a frog in a 1995 Super Bowl ad
- 69 Opry descriptor
- 70 Norm: Abbr.

ACROSS

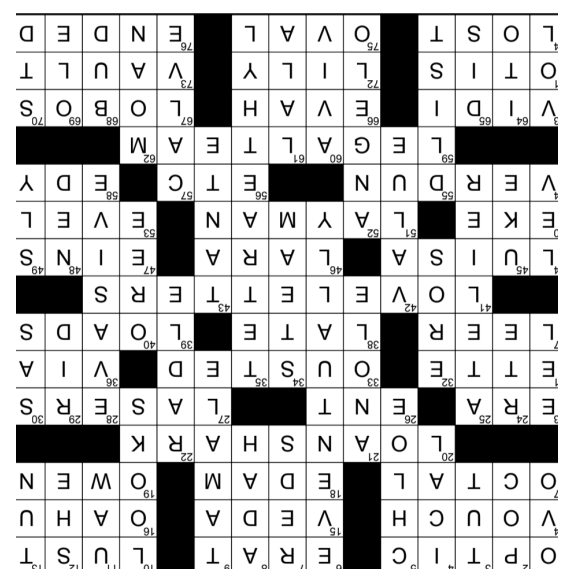
- 1 Some nerve?
- 6 Middle of a mathematician's boast
- 10 Feeling associated with 32-Down
- 14 ____ for (attest to)
- 15 One-fourth of the oldest text in Hinduism
- 16 Diamond Head island
- 17 Like a counting system designed by an arachnid
- 18 Big cheese in the Netherlands
- 19 Actor Wilson famous for saying "wow"
- 20 One generating a lot of interest
- 23 Pitcher's stat
- 26 Dr. found twice in "oxygen tent"
- 27 National Ignition Facility devices
- 31 Suffix with kitchen or towel
- 33 Gave the boot
- 36 By way of
- 37 Unwelcome gaze

- 38 Deceased, or delayed
- 39 Large amount of laundry
- 41 What many crossword solvers do... or what the horizontal entries in this puzzle start with
- 44 Super-strong Encanto character
- 46 Yuri's lover in Doctor Zhivago
- 47 One in Germany
- 50 Squeeze (out)
- 51 Audience for a simplification
- 53 Stuntman Knievel
- 54 "Ils n'ont pas passe" battle
- 56 And then some: Abbr.
- 58 Freezer aisle eponym
- 59 Group (aptly) found in a court
- 63 Middle of an emperor's boast
- 66 At any time, in Boston
- 67 UNM team name
- 71 Soul great Redding

- 72 ____-of-the-valley (plant that isn't actually a ____)
- 73 Scrooge McDuck's swimming pool
- 74 Mislaid
- 75 Field for cricket
- 76 Like a relationship with one's ex

DOWN

- 1 Lacto-__ vegetarian
- 2 Grp. historically underrepresented in crosswords
- 3 Egypt's "boy king"
- 4 Agenda application on an old iPhone
- 5 Two-time gold medalist Kim
- 6 "I'll get around to it ____"
- 7 Queen City ballplayers
- 8 Actress and writer Isaacs Menken
- 9 "Hot" dish
- 10 They can be deceiving
- 11 HGSU's national affiliate



COVER GRAPHICS
BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24
LAYOUT BY PIPER TINGLEAF
AND ARSH DHILLON '23



WE BELONG
TO NO ONE
BUT
OURSELVES

THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT PUBLISHES EVERY FEW WEEKS DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR BY THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT, INC., 2 GARDEN STREET CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

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