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# SIAMA: THE SINGAPORE-INDONESIA-AND-MALAYSIA-ASSOCIATION

*A home away from home.*

by Nathanael Gjandra '26

The Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia Association (SIAMA) is an organization on campus dedicated to promoting community for Harvard students from Southeast-Asia. With a relatively small number of Harvard students hailing from these three countries, SIAMA has worked to preserve Singaporean, Indonesian, and Malaysian culture on Harvard campus through organizing events to raise awareness and building a community.

In an interview with the *Harvard Independent*, co-president Megan Yeo '25 described her vision of SIAMA as a place to not only “try to provide a network and community of Singaporeans, Indonesians, and Malaysians,” but also as “a space for anyone who is interested in the cultures of our countries” to learn more about it. Yeo has been an active member of SIAMA for the past two years, where she has helped organize cultural events that provide cuisine from the three countries.

Co-president Jarell Cheong '25 noted Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore’s substantial distance from Harvard, as countries in time zones 12 hours away. Yet despite this sense of geographic detachment, both Yeo and Cheong described SIAMA as their “home away from home.”

Hailing from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Cheong noted that for many international students, despite enjoying many organizations on campus, “at the back of your head you always realize you are foreign,” further intensifying the feeling that international students have to adapt to American culture. Yet at SIAMA events, Cheong describes the environment as one where international students can “let loose and not think about it.” Yeo echoed this sense of inclusion, describing the community as “a very wholesome and welcoming environment.”

Both co-presidents indicated the

importance of having spaces on campus that focus on communities based on geographical regions, especially those of underrepresented student identities. Yeo mentioned that, for many people, college is the first time living such a great distance away from home. With a number of American customs to adapt to, including filing taxes, converting international driver’s licenses, learning American semantics, and adapting to language barriers, Yeo described how coming to a new country for the first time can be very overwhelming.

**“You feel you are in a very different place, and it is very important to know there are people around you feeling the same way”**

Talking to seniors who have been through the same process, which SIAMA provides a space for, can be helpful. Having affinity groups focused on bringing parts of international culture to campus both produces a sense of familiarity and home and increases awareness of these cultures to other students on campus.

“You feel you are in a very different place, and it is very important to know there are people around you feeling the same way,” Cheong continued, in regard to his experience away from home.

Yeo described how “eating food from home is very nice,” especially considering the difference in cuisine between the United States and South-

east-Asia. For example, a SIAMA “food event” may provide the spicy beef cuisine *rendang*, which originated from West Sumatra, Indonesia, and is now also common in neighboring Malaysia and Singapore. Satay (Indonesian pronunciation *sate*) is also a “food from home” SIAMA has in its events. Originating from the Indonesian island of Java, it is now a popular food throughout Southeast-Asia, one example of many Southeast-Asian foods SIAMA tries to introduce to the wider Harvard community. During the Cultural Rhythms Food Festival in Harvard Yard, SIAMA provided *popiah*, a Chinese

Teochew-style cuisine very popular in Singapore and surrounding countries.

As co-president, Yeo tries to ensure that everyone in the organization feels included and represented, regardless of which country they come from. With such a small population of Southeast-Asian students, Cheong noted how the club’s organizational structure could also be improved, with more students putting more efforts to SIAMA’s cause. He hopes that in the future Harvard will admit more students from the region to further strengthen the communities of Southeast-Asian students on campus.

Having a community to connect and relate with is important, especially for students who are far away from home. While feeling underrepresented can present its challenges, spaces such as SIAMA allow the transition to become easier, whether that be through raising cultural awareness through events on campus, or coming together to celebrate and continue traditions. SIAMA, like other cultural organizations at Harvard, is truly a *home away from home*.

Nathanael Gjandra '26 ([nathanaeltjandra@college.harvard.edu](mailto:nathanaeltjandra@college.harvard.edu)) writes *News for the Independent*.

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS A NUCLEAR WEAPON

*Bill de Blasio warns Harvard affiliates about the consequences of letting AI remain unregulated.*

by Abril Rodriguez Diaz '26

“The parallel [to nuclear weapons] is striking. Can you imagine the creators of nuclear weapons deciding they wanted to open source what they had done?”

On Tuesday, March 28th, Harvard Program of Science, Technology, and Society welcomed former Mayor of New York City Bill de Blasio for a discussion of AI for Cities or Cities for AI: Who Should Decide?, exploring the rising dangers of the development of artificial intelligence. Ultimately warning listeners of society’s lack of agency in AI development, de Blasio discussed the complexity of AI as a topic, more immediate issues taking the stage in political discourse, and a general “feeling of inevitability” around AI development.

With the creation and improvement of new technologies, AI companies and the federal government are failing to keep up with corresponding regulations by excluding citizens from public input. De Blasio referenced the war in Ukraine as an example of an issue that will always be prioritized over AI, despite AI’s imminent dangers.

He also explained that decisions regarding AI safety and regulation prioritize economic efficiency over job loss. “Along come these, I think well-meaning technocrats, and they present an idea that inherently is meant to put people out of work. And

it was not a part of the discussion.” Although, de Blasio argued, AI can (and

does) contribute to increased efficiency, it does so at the expense of putting millions of people out of work. “It is interesting when cost can be seen in terms of currency but not in terms of humanity,” he added.

To prove his point about the exclusion of public discourse and input, de Blasio told the audience, “If you feel that you have been consulted by your government [regarding AI regulation], raise your hands.” Not a single audience member did. De Blasio made it a point to differentiate between the federal and state governments, saying that, as mayor of New York, even he was never consulted in regard to open-sourcing, safety, and regulations.

De Blasio then moved on from the loss of jobs to discuss more imminent dangers. The dangers of artificial intelligence extend far beyond asking Chat GPT for help on an essay or problem sets. He called the lack of awareness and regulations around AI a “lack of critical thinking” and a cause of “blind faith.”

De Blasio went on to sum up Eliezer Yudkowsky’s paper, AGI Ruin: A List of Lethalities, which describes the dangers of AI, touching on everything from deepfakes to criminal activity. He stressed the fact that AI—in his mind, as dangerous as nuclear weapons—is being open-sourced and released freely to the public. “If you were working on something and you feared it might kill us all, one would argue you might stop. Or change your approach. But I certainly don’t think that you would take what you found and *open source it*,”

de Blasio said.

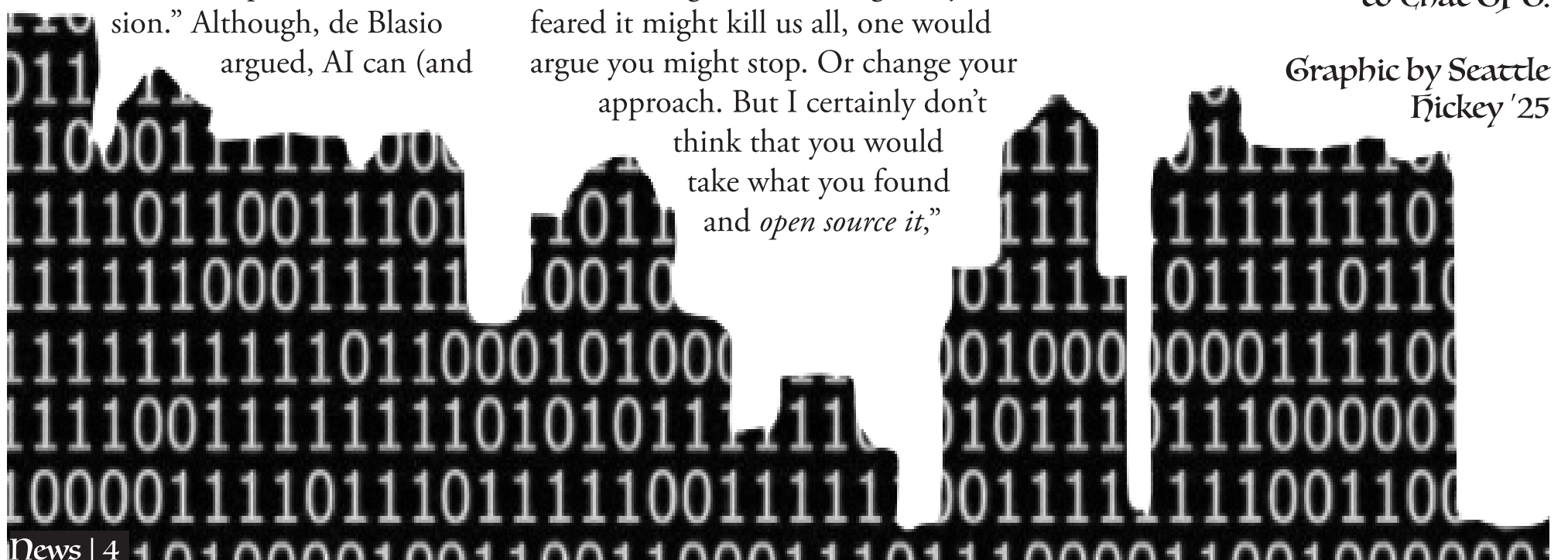
De Blasio dedicated the second half of his talk to a discussion about how the Harvard community can make an impact on AI regulations. According to de Blasio, Harvard students and faculty have a greater impact on public issues than the standard American citizen. He used this as a call to action.

So, what *can* we do? More than anything, de Blasio emphasized a push for a “democratic methodology” for addressing AI. That is, the best thing we can do as Harvard students is to use our indubitably powerful voices to raise statements to our governments about the importance of democratic processes for AI development.

De Blasio told the audience that we can do more than “passive acceptance.” At the end of his talk, he asked us once again to raise our hands if we promised to become involved in the movement to democratize AI legislation. Everyone in the crowd raised their hands. If the perils of AI are truly as terrifying as de Blasio made them out to be, it would be in our best interest to at the very least, become educated about the things that AI can do and the potential dangers it can pose to our safety.

Abril Rodriguez Diaz '26 ([abrilrodriguezdiaz@college.harvard.edu](mailto:abrilrodriguezdiaz@college.harvard.edu)) is now scared to jokingly type insults to Chat GPT.

Graphic by Seattle Hickey '25



# WHO IS FEZ?

*A profile on the man behind the game.*

by Ilana Feder '26

To put it simply, Fez Zafar is both a jack of all trades, and a man with a lot of phone numbers. A junior at Harvard College who prides himself in his ability to use humor to bring people together on campus, Zafar has spearheaded on-campus initiatives from junior assassins, On Harvard Time, and unique start-ups, leaving a long-lasting impact on Harvard students.

This March, Zafar single-handedly organized an immense game of assassins for the class of 2024—and it is still going strong. He attributes his idea for this well-liked activity back to his freshman year when he joined the South Asian Association. Last year, Zafar was co-social chair of SAA and helped plan out a game of assassins, of which he found himself playing and planning yet again as Dunster set up their own this past February. It was clear to Zafar that the game of assassins brought people together and helped introduce students to one another, something that the junior class needed the most after their first year entirely on Zoom.

“There weren’t many opportunities for our grade to come together in the way that a lot of freshman classes usually do,” Zafar explained. “So because we didn’t have that kind of socialization, we’re in kind of this weird situation. A lot of us know of each other because of GroupMe and Zoom, but we’ve never met [in real life].”

Zafar’s original goal was to get a minimum 150 people in on the game, with 350 as his maximum. But after sending 1200

emails to the junior class, a staggering 632 students ended up joining—from students both in the academic and social class of 2024. To assign everyone their targets, Zafar took it upon himself to individually text every player.

“I don’t have classes on Friday. So it took probably like four hours, but I spread it out over the course of the day,” Zafar said.

Yet Zafar doesn’t attribute the biggest accomplishment of assassins to his large quantifiable reach, but rather the immense community building and new connections between students that it revealed. He noted how foreign exchange students have especially felt more integrated into the community through the game; a lot of them are victorious due to their off-campus (and subsequently better hiding) housing.

“My favorite story is one guy had a girl who was his target. They didn’t know each other. He got her out and within two or three days they went on a date,” Zafar shared.

In addition to Zafar’s success in organizing hundreds of students to “assassinate,” or tap each other with spoons, he’s also brought laughter to the Harvard community through his involvement with On Harvard Time, a comedy video series on YouTube.

On Harvard Time has provided Harvard with satirical news and funny creative sketches. The most popular type of videos created are “the-man-on-the-street,” which involve an individual going around campus interviewing strangers they run into.

“It’s a great time because in the span

of three or four hours in an afternoon, you’re really going all over campus talking to all different kinds of people,” Zafar said. When asked what type of new content he’s looking to create, Zafar explained, “This year and next year, we want to make more videos with sports teams. There’s kind of a disconnect between athletes and non-athletes and I think it would be fun to show that perspective in a lighthearted way.”

One of Zafar’s favorite videos that he made was returning to campus after a Covid-induced shortened fall semester, with the entire student body finally back on campus. “We spent two or three days filming and we went everywhere. It was fun to capture the excitement people had for finally being back,” Zafar said.

Zafar’s passion for innovation and bringing people together encouraged his involvement with Zesti beginning in May 2021. This Data-Match inspired start-up allowed groups of students to meet other groups of students looking for either friendship or love. Zafar led the partnerships and marketing of Zesti. The app launched last April and was used throughout the rest of the semester. Zafar put his film-making skills to use and produced fun Instagram videos that featured recognizable students on campus in order to get the word out. While Zafar and his team members agreed to move on from Zesti, Zafar explained, “All that experience was tremendously helpful, we all learned so much.”

Although Zafar isn’t sure of what’s next for him, he knows that he will continue to meet new people and explore his different interests.

“I always enjoy meeting students because a lot of people are building things right here. So it’s always fascinating to hear about their experiences, their insights, and what they think about different industries,” said Zafar.

So, if you’re looking for some advice on entrepreneurship here at Harvard or even just how to run a 600-person game of assassin, Fez Zafar is your guy.

Ilana Feder '26 (ilanafeder@college.harvard.edu) writes *Forum* for the *Independent*.

To the left: Fez Zafar performing in *Ghungroo 2023*

Photo Credits: Dylan Goodman Photography

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# BROKEN BEAUTY: TRAUMA AND CREATIVITY

## *A Fireside Chat with Rockstar Mikel Jollett.*

by Alice Khayami '25

On Monday, April 4th, Mikel Jollett joined Professor of Pediatrics and Neuroscience Charles A. Nelson III for an informal fireside chat on “Trauma and Creativity.” With the presence of a rockstar, the wisdom of an academic, and the caution of a survivor, Jollett shared his story. With every word he spoke, he was strikingly honest—and at times, haunting.

Born into Synanon, a commune based out of Santa Monica, California, Jollett was raised in a reality entirely different from what most Americans experience—a childhood he describes as a mystery. Brought up in “the school,” the central space for raising children in Synanon, Jollett failed to experience many parts of childhood, including what it felt like to have a true mother. Instead of being raised by his mother, he was raised by the cult as a “child of the universe.” Explaining his feeling after escaping Synanon, witnessing alcoholism, drug addiction and violence, Jollett shared that it “seemed like nothing was ever going to be good ever again”—all at the tender age of five. Jollett recalls his brother and him being “treated as these ancillary things that had nothing to do with [his parents] story.” Despite being raised in what he described as the “wreckage of a cult,” Jollett later went on to graduate with Honors from Stanford before becoming a professional musician, as frontman for band The Airborne Toxic Event.

Jollett seemed both pained and accepting in his discussion of such profound and poignant topics. He smiled and laughed through our discussion of his rather traumatic childhood—perhaps, and as Jollett admitted, another form of coping mechanism. This normalized his trauma, and made it seem approachable, mundane even. Today, Jollett actively expresses his emotions through his art, describing music as the only vehicle to accurately convey his feelings. Trauma “creates something inexpressible, an alienation from the rest of the world,” Jollett said, asserting that there is no veritable language for certain inexplicable emotions. These “wounds ... require a language that doesn't exist,” Jollett continued. Music, Jollett described, is something “primal to who we are, beginning back from when we told each other stories around fires without the benefit of eighty-page novellas.”

For Jollett, the most powerful songs are those that can consolidate an eighty-page novella into a four-minute song. Listening to him, it became apparent that his storytelling could be condensed into a single word: loneliness. Despite having a nontraditional lifetime trajectory, the

common theme Jollett's trauma is rooted in loneliness — a sentiment felt by everyone. Although he is now in the rock band The Airborne Toxic Event, Jollett did not begin publishing music until the age of thirty. Before that, his music was something strictly personal; a way to acknowledge the parts of himself that were hidden both from the world and from himself.

“I think for me, it was just like I'd sit down and write, and I would start to play a melody and I'd be like, oh, that's how I'm feeling right now,” Jollett said. “And then it felt like a relief and I'd start to sing about it. And something about the process of singing. And a lot of them were sad songs, which made the sadness feel a little bit better.” Music and melody allowed Jollett to truly process emotion and joining a rock band satiated the part of him that craved performance. Describing himself as “always loquacious”, Jollett admitted that he learned to become a performer at a young age, constantly competing for the love of adults. The feeling that there was only a “finite scrap of love in the world” urged him to become a “super child,” pursuing the status of a poster child — obtaining straight A's, competing as a track star, and becoming an active community member.

Jollett conveyed a feeling he has had his whole life, and one that many Harvard students can resonate with: bouncing between the persona of someone “incredible” and someone who is “an absolute piece of garbage.”

It was fascinating to hear Jollett describe how he viewed himself, fabricating an identity from one out of his control to a version of himself he wanted the world to see. Identity today does not just mean who or what one physically sees themselves as, but also who they are to the entire virtual

world that exists across social media. Jollett called Instagram the “magazine of our lives,” constantly displaying only a select version of our authentic identities. And no matter how hard we try, it will be scrutinized and interpreted beyond our capabilities.

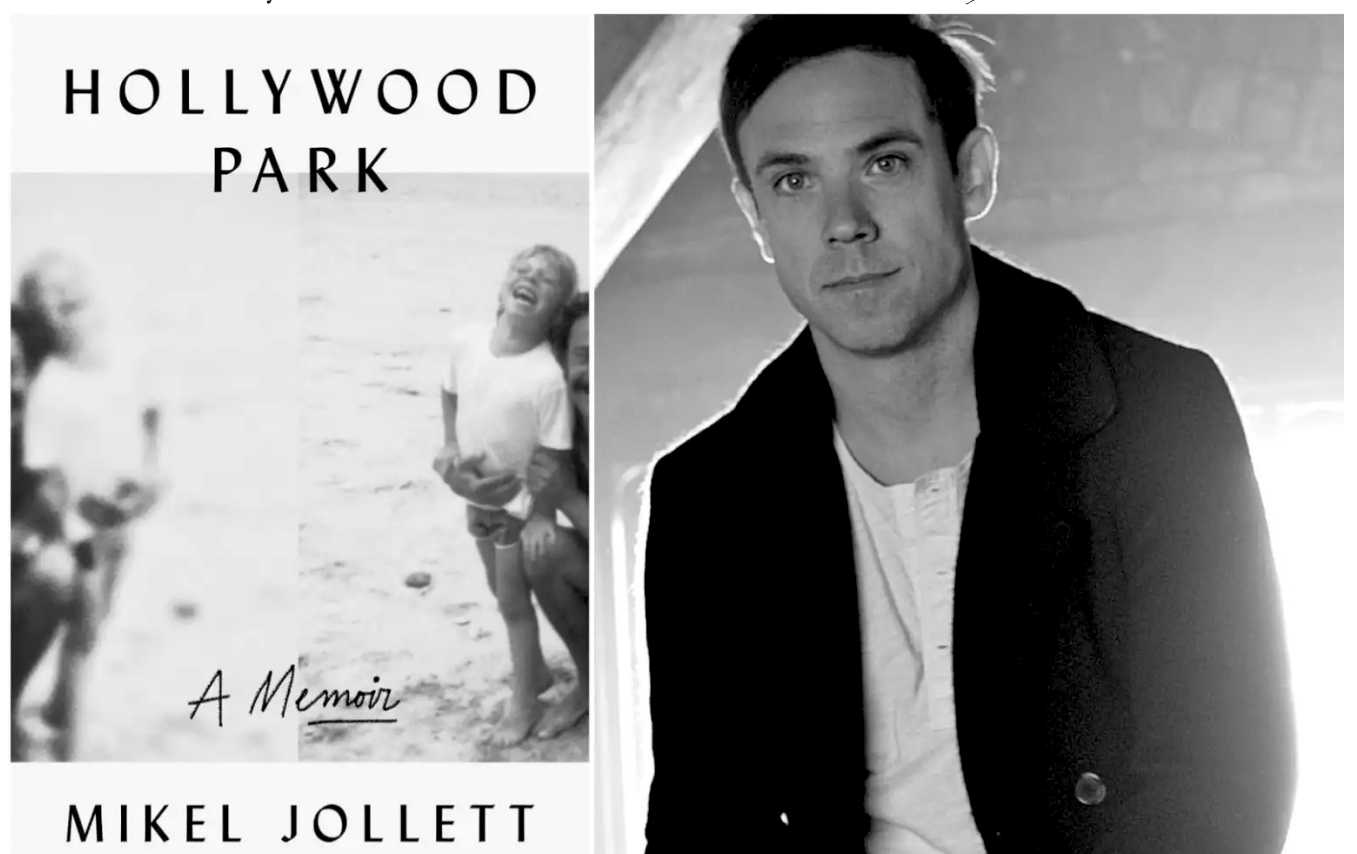
He continued by blaming social media as the core driver of today's generation's anxiety, depression, and discontent. When asked for advice on how we can channel emotion like he did and improve our relationship with the trauma we face, Jollett expressed his belief in the importance of “listening to your own voice, following your own instinct.”

Jollett left the audience with poetic words, fitting for a musician. “If you are broken and you have a crack, you can see the beauty of the world. But people without a crack can't see the beauty because they didn't need to appreciate it the way you did.”

Jollett made the world seem so daunting and so approachable at the same time. Jollett moved the audience in Gutman Hall—a mix of Mind, Behavior & Brain students, parents, and adults both young and old. Jollett moved me. It was clear that through his brute honesty, he was able to create a connection with every person in the room by making such extraordinary trauma so universal. Trauma and creativity, as Mikel Jollett demonstrated, not only exist together, but are necessary for one another.

Alice Khayami '25 (alicekhayami@college.harvard.edu), can't stop reading *Hollywood Park*.

Left: The cover of Mikel Jollett's memoir, *Hollywood Park*. Photo courtesy of Celadon Books. Right: Mikel Jollett, indie rocker and author of *Hollywood Park*. Photo credit to Dove Shore.



# RACISM IN WRITING

*How textbooks and publications skew our perception of race, slavery, and white supremacy.*

by Layla Chaaraoui '26

Donald Yacovone's research has led him to argue an unconventional conclusion: the northern part of the United States, not the south, has had a larger role in keeping alive racist ideologies and producing texts which perpetuate racism. "The most damaging volumes were written by northerners," he said.

Yacovone, author of "Teaching White Supremacy: America's Democratic Ordeal and the Forging of Our National Identity," spoke at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Gutman Book Talk, hosted at the Gutman Conference Center on Monday, April 3rd. Yacovone's speech explained the research he has done into textbooks and educators which encompass racist ideologies and falsified statements regarding African Americans and slavery.

"Traditionally, both scholarship and popular thought have blamed the legacy of southern slavery for the distressing persistence of racial inequality, and of course, southern slave owners and their descendants do possess a unique, and lethal responsibility for civil war and racial oppression," Yacovone explained.

"But even if slaves had never existed in the south, northern white religious leaders, intellectuals, writers, politicians, scientists, educators, and lawyers would have invented a lesser race, which is exactly what happened, to build white democratic solidarity."

"Overcoming the past is hard... Teaching white supremacy offers us a choice and demands that we choose," said Yacovone, researcher, writer, and an associate at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research.

David Harris, former director of the Charles Hamilton Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, spoke passionately when citing a quote from Yacovone. "Donald has an abiding belief that history may not set us free, but it can be the basis of change. That if the truth of the past is placed before us, we can find our way out of the darkness," Harris said.

"I had no idea what I was getting myself into," stated Yacovone, discussing his venture into his project. "My encounter with the astounding selection of 3,000 history textbooks here at the Gutman Library, compelled [and] forced me to change and threw me into the unknown. Quite unexpectedly what resulted is not a book about a bunch of bad books, but rather an exploration of the origins, development, and perpetuation of the idea of American national identity as white."

Throughout his talk, Yacovone cited multiple authors, educators, creators, and philosophers who created textbooks or published pieces of writing to be shared within schools and the public that contained racist sentiments and ideals. Yacovone said, "Indeed, several of

the most famous and influential American historians of the first half of the 20th century, nearly all trained in northern colleges and universities like Harvard, produced some of the most racist texts I had the displeasure to read."

Educators who played a role in spewing racist viewpoints have left a lasting impression on their students, according to Yacovone. "Few could match the popularity of or the damage done by the University of California's John D. Hicks... He taught students that anything beyond vocational training for African Americans was a waste of time... He mocked African Americans, what he called a "pathetic eagerness" for education, asserting that they showed "no great proficiency." Yacovone pointed out that today, the University of California Berkeley's archive still recalls Hicks' "enormous influence." Additionally, Yacovone included an anecdote regarding Harvard's complicity in sharing harmful rhetoric. "In 2020, the residents at a Duke University survey remain convinced that African Americans have thicker skin and less sensitive nerve endings, the same vile garbage that Harvard's

**"History may not set us free, but it can be the basis of change. That if the truth of the past is placed before us, we can find our way out of the darkness"**

biologists spewed across the United States in the 19th century."

Yacovone included multiple northerners who have left a detrimental impression on the information and ideas spread regarding slavery and racism, including Physician and slavery defender John H. Van Evrie of New York, who Yacovone compared to as "a toxic combination of Steve Bannon and Rupert Murdoch."

"[Van Evrie] is the embodiment of the northern white foundations of American democracy. He was a genius for marketing to promote white supremacist ideals into American political discourse, north and south," Yacovone explained. "His venomous views played an enormous role in the assault of what we will now consider to be our modern civil rights and struggled to emerge after the civil war. By ignoring him, we have intensely ignored northern white supremacy both before and after the civil war."

Yacovone continued, disclosing how Van Evrie's sentiments also influenced the law. "Moreover, his ideas resounded in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures in the north in defense of white man's government. To convince others of what he labeled as the 'gross encompassities' of African Americans."

Yacovone also mentioned authors Arthur C. Perry and Gertrude Price, whose 1940 textbook *American History* displayed colorful images of slavery, presenting it as what Yacovone described as a "summer camp." The intentions of Perry and Price were to make slavery seem as if it was an appealing and easy-going lifestyle, teaching children that slavery was a "rollicking good time." Perry and Price, to confirm Yacovone's theory, hailed from the north.

Yacovone explained that northern publishing houses are largely responsible for creating this phenomenon. "[The textbooks and publications] that stained the minds of students were produced almost entirely by northern publishing houses. [They were] situated mostly in Boston, New York, and Chicago and crafted by northern trained scholars and education specialists," Yacovone said. "Northern presses had the resources and distribution networks that many did not have."

This racism and ostracization of Black students continues today. In states such as Vermont and Ohio, Yacovone shared, "Black students have been compelled to stand in front of their white classmates as slaves, to be auctioned off to the highest bidder." He also

cited another example in Watertown, New York, in which Black students were "ordered a Black boy and girl to stand in front of their white classmates with their hands behind their backs, 'just as in slave times,'" and could not escape.

He cited numerous other examples, including elementary school students in Minnesota learning from a 1920s lesson plan that African Americans regretted the end of slavery because, "the enslavers took care of them, and gave them food and clothing." Yacovone revealed that Rhode Island students commonly receive little to no exposure to the study of slavery until high school, and until 2019, Texas textbooks not only characterized slaves as imported workers, but also blamed the Civil War on succession, rather than slavery.

Looking toward the future, Yacovone emphasized an obligation to call out injustices. "It is our responsibility as educators to fight back. To resist." He also highlighted the importance of education and knowledge in shaping our understanding and merit, emphasizing the specific significance of textbooks.

"While the worst features of the history of our textbooks may be gone, the themes, the facts, and attitudes of supremacist ideologies are deeply embedded in our national identity. In what we teach, and how we teach it."

Layla Chaaraoui '26 ([laylachaaraoui@college.harvard.edu](mailto:laylachaaraoui@college.harvard.edu)) writes *News for the Independent*.

# UKRAINE: ONE YEAR LATER

*How Harvard and the world continue to grapple with Putin's War.*

by Kendall Carll '26

**R**oughly one year ago, Putin announced an impending “special military operation.” The 5am declaration warned that Moscow would soon invade, fracturing the post-World War Two European peace and undermining the liberal international order. Just over a year after Russia’s unprovoked and illegitimate invasion, the Kremlin has perpetuated the bloodiest conflict in Europe since WW2. The Ukrainians, led by President Zelensky, have come to represent the fight for democracy across the globe, as they fend off the Russian onslaught.

But at Harvard, Ukrainian students expressed disappointment at the administration’s immediate response to the crisis. While President Bacow issued a February 28 statement condemning the “deplorable actions of Vladimir Putin,” a plurality of students demanded more action from the university—including the recognition and termination of any financial ties to Russian oligarchs and companies. At the same time, onlookers thought even Bacow’s statement was a step too far, calling it “antithetical to the mission of a university” to express a position on the war.

Nevertheless, Harvard has become a forum for discussing the invasions, its implications, and the prospects of peace. Last fall, President Zelensky delivered a virtual speech to students and staff at the Harvard IOP, calling on the West’s enduring support and aid. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba gave an inspiring talk at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and the JFK Jr. Forum recently hosted an event documenting war crimes in Ukraine.

One year after the initial invasion, Harvard has taken some steps to answer concerns regarding the university’s response, though certain swaths of the student population are undoubtedly still disappointed. Harvard University’s spokesperson Jason A. Newton issued a statement last March saying the university had no direct investments in Russia and claimed to “believe” it had no indirect holdings, though student organizations continued to call for more transparency. On the student level, Harvard has allocated resources to help students navigate the crisis, including promoting fellowships and scholars-at-risk programs to aid those fleeing the conflict, providing school-specific accommodations for affected students, and offering legal support for navigating immigration and refugee systems.

Far from Cambridge, on the front lines of the conflict, the Ukrainian armed forces have presented a “stiffer-than-ex-

pected” resistance, frustrating Russian military leaders and damaging Putin’s image. Offensive movements by Ukrainian forces in fall of 2022 began turning the tide, as Russia was forced to retreat from vast swaths of territory. Many such advances have been enabled by an outpouring of support from the international community. NATO unified to rally behind Ukraine, backing Ukrainian defense and bolstering Eastern European forces; sanctions have been levied by more than 30 countries and are putting the pressure on Putin’s logistical and political ability to carry out his war. Europe has moved away from Russian energy sources, barring crude and coal imports and reducing natural gas flows from Siberia. In February, the EU and U.K. banned imports of diesel and gasoline from Moscow. While gaps in support and resistance undoubtedly exist, the response from the international community has largely been one of unequivocal denial of Putin’s ambitions.

**“For many Harvard students, Putin’s war is more than an academic event or in-class case-study. Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarussian students alike face grief and guilt daily.”**

For many Harvard students, Putin’s war is more than an academic event or in-class case-study. Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarussian students alike face grief and guilt daily. One Harvard College sophomore, who is from Moscow but ethnically  $\frac{3}{4}$  Ukrainian, recounts how life changed when the war began: “I remember I was checking the news like, literally every hour, I couldn’t focus on anything else. I was just monitoring the situation.” With ties to both Russia and Ukraine, this student explains, “It was very hard to live up to the idea that your country that you genuinely love is destroying [another] country that is ... strongly affiliated.”

The conflict has been the impetus for several terrifying developments. In September of 2022, Putin declared his inclination to use “all available means” to end the conflict. Dip-

lomatically, the war in Ukraine has presented Moscow and Beijing greater opportunities to collaborate, including on promoting non-Western financial systems to circumvent international sanctions. In Xi Jinping’s recent trip to Moscow, Beijing worked to position itself as an “honest broker,” between the Russians and Ukrainians, an ambitious position as the mediator for a conflict started by its “no limits” partner. Perhaps most obviously, the conflict has created a mass humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Nearly one-third of Ukraine’s population has been forcibly displaced since the beginning of the conflict, and 17.6 million are in urgent need of assistance and protection.

The international crisis has noticeably seeped into local spaces, specifically impacting the relationship between Russian and Ukrainian students on campus. That same Russian student recalled “[Ukrainian students] talking bad things about Russians ... on campus, including ... to my face, for no strong reason.”

As the conflict rages on in Eastern Europe, domestic patience for the conflict is dwindling—particularly on the American right. The GOP is split on supporting Ukraine, 41% satisfied or calling for more aid, and 40% advocating for reduced assistance.

Thus far, the anti-aid cohort has taken the legislative lead. Eleven House Republicans have introduced a bill to immediately halt U.S. aid to Ukraine. There are a lot of ways this conflict could end, but a scenario in which Washington’s unilateral retraction of support leads to the defeat of Ukrainian resistance had dire consequences, jeopardizing America’s seat at the head of the global table. This would set back democracy across the world and usher in an era of conflict and instability.

We are one year into a new geopolitical reality. The forces of autocracy—the same ones that drove Putin’s invasion—will not soon subside. Abroad, Washington must remain a beacon of light for democracy, support democratic oppositional movements, and stand up when democracy is challenged. At home, we must defend our own democracy from the threats of partisanship and populism, engage genuinely with the political system, and recognize our shared values. And at Harvard, we must promote meaningful discourse, support our affected peers, and use our four years here to begin crafting a better tomorrow.

Kendall Carll '26 (kcarll@college.harvard.edu) writes *Forum for the Independent*.



# FINDING MEANING IN DISAPPOINTMENT

*A freshman's perspective on losing the Harvard enchantment.*

by Santiago Salazar '26

In those first weeks of freshman fall, Harvard's name felt exhilarating coming out of my mouth. With every new friend made over a meal in Annenberg and each discovery of a secret corner on campus, I felt like an enthusiastic visitor to a place I now got to call my new home. Yet with each passing day, my life here got a little less memorable and a little more routinary. The sights that once stopped me in my tracks now blended in a red haze as I made my way to class. The people I had spent late nights with talking about everything—and nothing—now only awkwardly waved, as the freshness of orientation week could not bind us together anymore. Slowly, that feeling of wonder got replaced by a nothingness created by assignments, classes, and deadlines.

It is now more than seven months since I came here, and I cannot help but wonder why the reactions of strangers saying, "You go to Harvard?" do not generate the same kind of pride; why the posters and pennants on my wall remind me more of the responsibility I feel towards friends and family than to a genuine belonging at this school. Why did the place that once brought me so much joy become uninspiring so quickly? For me and many other students, this loss of excitement is not necessarily attributed to the mere passage of time, but instead to the underlying issues that govern Harvard as an institution.

"Harvard felt like a magical place the first time I came here," said Sean Gallagher '26. "However, as time progressed, it became a space that I felt I needed to survive in. With all the pressure that exists to partake in events and extracurriculars, compounded with having to work to pay my tuition and my day-to-day necessities, I sometimes feel the need to escape campus, at least for a little bit."

Throughout my time here, I have heard peers openly admit they chose Harvard solely based on prestige, which is seen as a possible advantage when accessing career opportunities later on. It is no coincidence then that Harvard's pre-professional culture permeates a large portion of student life, as the preoccupation

with achievement and success is everywhere. There is an overwhelming pressure, for example, to partake in student organizations which are often seen as networking opportunities. We are told that if we do not take advantage of them then we are missing out. This phenomenon creates a climate in which students feel constant pressure to overcommit themselves or join clubs with a post-college motive, even when their circumstances prevent them from following through with their plans.

Even though students feel this way, seeking counseling when faced with anxiety or depression is intimidating due to the apathetic policies at Harvard-provided services, such as Counseling and Mental Health Services (CAMHS). For instance, students who are deemed unfit by Harvard University Health Services may be put on an involuntary leave of absence, from which the process of appealing is an additional burden to the student's well-being.

"If I am struggling mentally, I do not want to compound that with the fear that I am gonna be kicked out of this campus," exclaimed Ben Langman '26. "It seems at times as if this school cares more about its reputation—the outside superficial features—

rather than the students themselves."

Langman's beliefs remain especially relevant today, considering the controversy surrounding the allegations of sexual misconduct by members of the Anthropology department, most notably professor John Comaroff. Comaroff was placed on an unpaid leave of absence in the spring of 2022 due to the accusations but has since returned to teaching. Campus groups such as Our Harvard Can Do Better continue to openly criticize the passive stance that Harvard has taken in terms of administrative action and call for Comaroff's resignation.

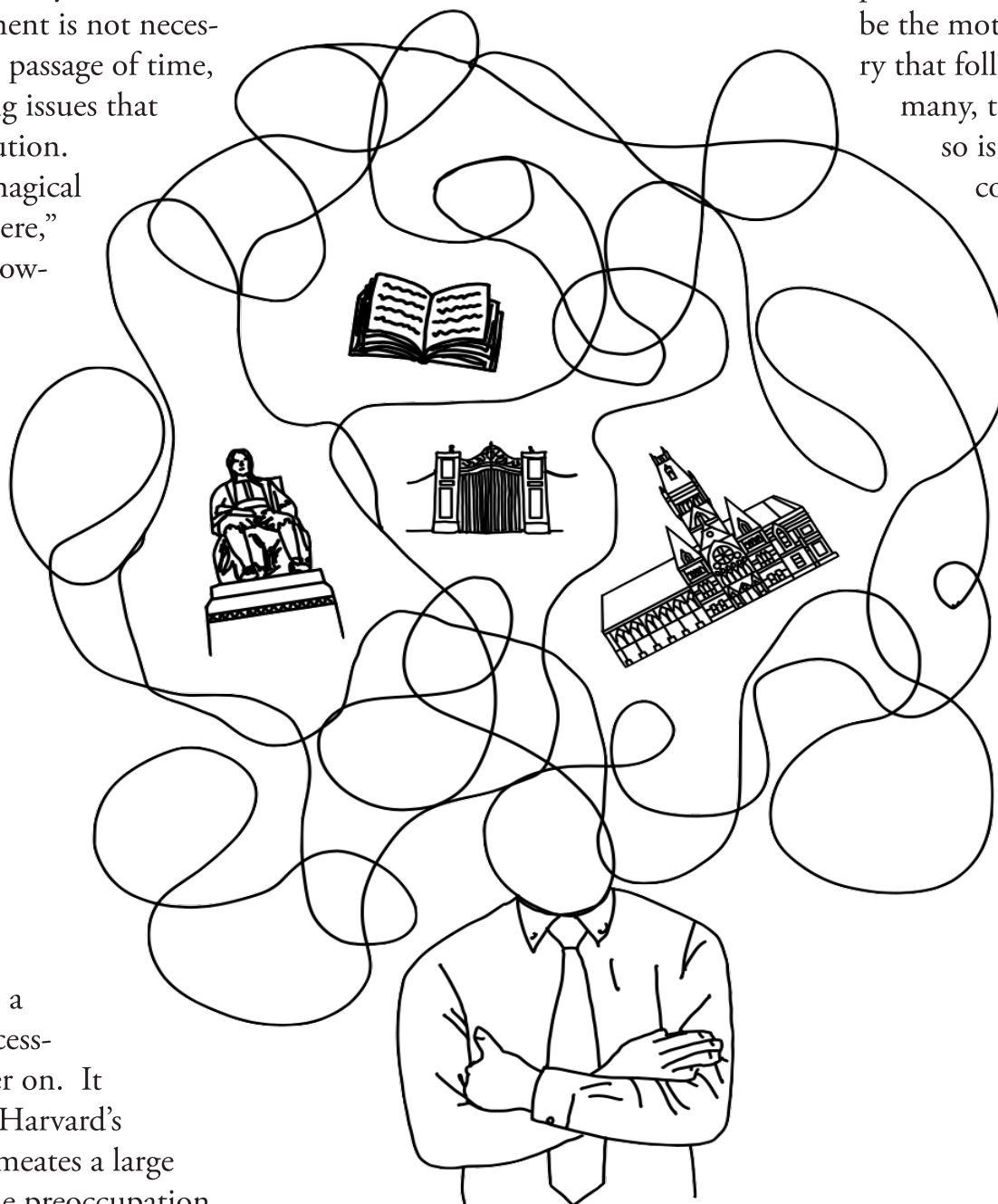
Throughout my time as a student here, I am both grateful and frustrated, overjoyed and underwhelmed both by Harvard's resources and lack of using them. I directly oppose the cold attitude that Harvard has taken towards many of its critical issues, but still remember the warmth in which it has welcomed me.

To be a student here means being disappointed by many of the flaws that exist within these iron gates while hoping that one day, things will be better. Because the beauty of brick walls and towering trees represent a choice—to see them as inspiring reminders of the prestige, the luxury, the power that the Harvard name holds, or to be the motivation to uncover a cruel history that follows Harvard like a shadow. For many, the former is enough. But to do so is to ignore all of the suffering that comes along for this privilege to exist.

I am not sure I will ever get back the feeling of wonder that I experienced in those first few weeks. Even if things change—if Harvard fills up its cracks by expanding its estate or making a new building—the remnants of what was there will always be a part of its foundation. When the name Harvard comes out of my mouth, I do not think of magic; rather, I think of a place that only has the potential for it.

Santiago Salazar '26 ([santiagosalazar@college.harvard.edu](mailto:santiagosalazar@college.harvard.edu)) writes *Forum for the Independent*.

Graphic by Lucy Hurlbut '25



# VISITAS FOR DUMMIES

*The not-so-definitive guide to giving your visiting pre-frosh a very authentic Harvard experience.*

by Katy Lin '26 and Sophia Mora-Ortega '26

At Harvard, the social dynamic between first-years and upperclassmen is stark. Compared to other universities, this culture of first-year-isolation is deeply embedded—first-years all live together in the yard and eat every meal in the same dining hall, upperclassmen are seldom found at majority first-year parties, and most organization structures strictly separate new comers from staff (except the Indy, of course). As a result, the pipeline for genuine advice filtered from upperclassmen to first-years is scant.

Don't you wish you had a guiding figure to give you the tough, unpolished lessons you needed to properly survive Harvard? Luckily, there is one fateful weekend in which Harvard upperclassmen and first-years alike can reach out to the younger students: Visitas. For just a few days, all admitted students are invited to stay with current Harvard students as they participate in event programming to learn more about the school.

As a host, the power is overwhelmingly in your hands to shape your pre-frosh's first impression of Harvard. You have the unique opportunity to either glamorize the University or prepare students for the less attractive parts. Visitas is quickly approaching on the weekend of April 23rd-April 24th, so do not forget to sign up to host an incoming student and implement the following tips and tricks for your pre-frosh!

## 1. In the event of a rat...

Particularly if you live in Canaday, Kirkland, or Eliot, rodent sightings are not unusual. If a furry friend decides to stop-in just in time for Visitas, fear not! Here is what to do:

First, tell the clueless pre-frosh that Yale's rats are bigger, especially if you know they are also attending Bulldog Days, Yale's Visitas equivalent. If that doesn't seem to soothe their worries, send them the Harvard Mice FAQ and highlight the quote explaining how living with mice can help "in appreciating nature and in responding to life's little challenges." Third, and mandatory regardless of the success of the first or second steps, make your pre-frosh call Yard-Ops for rodent traps.

Pros: The experience builds rapport with the staff early on. So, as future first-years, they eventually lose their room key, they'll already be well-acquainted with a few friendly faces (and rodents!)

Cons: The forced responsibility and culture of normalcy surrounding the rodents may perturb those not yet committed to Harvard. But if a student isn't even hardened enough to handle an innocuous critter, how can we expect them to face this school's other challenges? To fight for a spot in the Widener Reading Room during reading week? To wait in Jefe's 2 AM line? To rally for Harvard vs. Yale? The incoming class must be prepared and battle-ready.

## 2. Real directions don't exist.

When your pre-frosh asks for directions to your dorm, do not give them a real address. As far

either do not exist or you never bothered to check what yours was. If they continue to press, give them obscure directions consisting of no more detail than to "turn left at the red brick building." When they've completed enough laps through the yard to identify every major building, finally give them your address. They will have earned it by then.

Pros: This practice undoubtedly instills self-sufficiency and resilience in the new class. Close attention to direction detail is undeniably useful for navigating campus and classroom buildings: They're less likely to confuse Lowell House and Lowell Lecture Hall and they'll know exactly how long it takes to get to Annenberg (particularly useful when running late to dinner). Most importantly, after growing well-acquainted with campus because of their little adventure, an official tour will no longer be necessary!

Cons: They might be a tad annoyed by the time they arrive at your humble abode. Feed them a Truly and a compliment, and they'll be back in tip-top shape in no time. By the time they recover, let them know that Annenberg is by the SOCH.

## 3. There's a Quad Shuttle?

When your little pre-frosh inevitably must find their way to the SOCH for the extracurricular fair, tell them to bring a packed lunch for the hike. Don't outwardly lie to them, but you may consider omitting evidence of the shuttle to teach them crucial life lessons: not only should you not take everyone's advice on face value, but also do not fear a little afternoon walk. Independent exploration is an extremely necessary skill to surviving Harvard, both inwardly, in regard to self growth, and externally, in regard to navigating Harvard's convoluted campus.

Pros: Rather than anger, your pre-frosh will make the discovery very early on that you should only rely on yourself to uncover solutions to Harvard's faults—which is exactly the self-sufficient mindset incoming first-years, many of whom have never lived alone, need to survive. Eventually, they will thank you.

Cons: They might actually enjoy the walk and become a Quad-sympathizer.

## 4. Dress to impress (at Tasty Basty).

Any pre-frosh who plans to have some fun at Harvard must attend a notorious Tasty Basty party, a location known for its absolute ragers, during Visitas. On April 22nd, the *Harvard Independent* will be inviting all current and visiting students to Tasty Burger Basement to celebrate our Weed (4/20) Issue. Crucially, do not forget to inform your pre-frosh of the basement's exceptionally low temperatures and subsequent need to bring multiple layers of their finest attire (a North Face and heat-tech thermals are not just recommended, they are absolutely necessary).

Pros: Directs pre-frosh to the wildest party of the school year. Come on, it'll be hosted by the Indy, after all.

Cons: Sweaty. Really sweaty.

## 5. Most importantly, on a real note, soothe the Harvard fears.

Your pre-frosh will be a mix of nerves, anxiety, and stress. With no knowledge of campus, clubs, or future friends, Visitas is equally daunting as it is exciting. Do your part to alleviate some of your guest's worries. Share your experience as a former first-year student, remind them that not making Visitas friends does not matter at all, and explain that any feelings of embarrassment are equally shared by everyone.

Pros: Offers up a conversation most of us would have very much appreciated coming into Harvard, giving your pre-frosh some much-needed comfort and confidence from a source with experience.

Cons: Absolutely none.

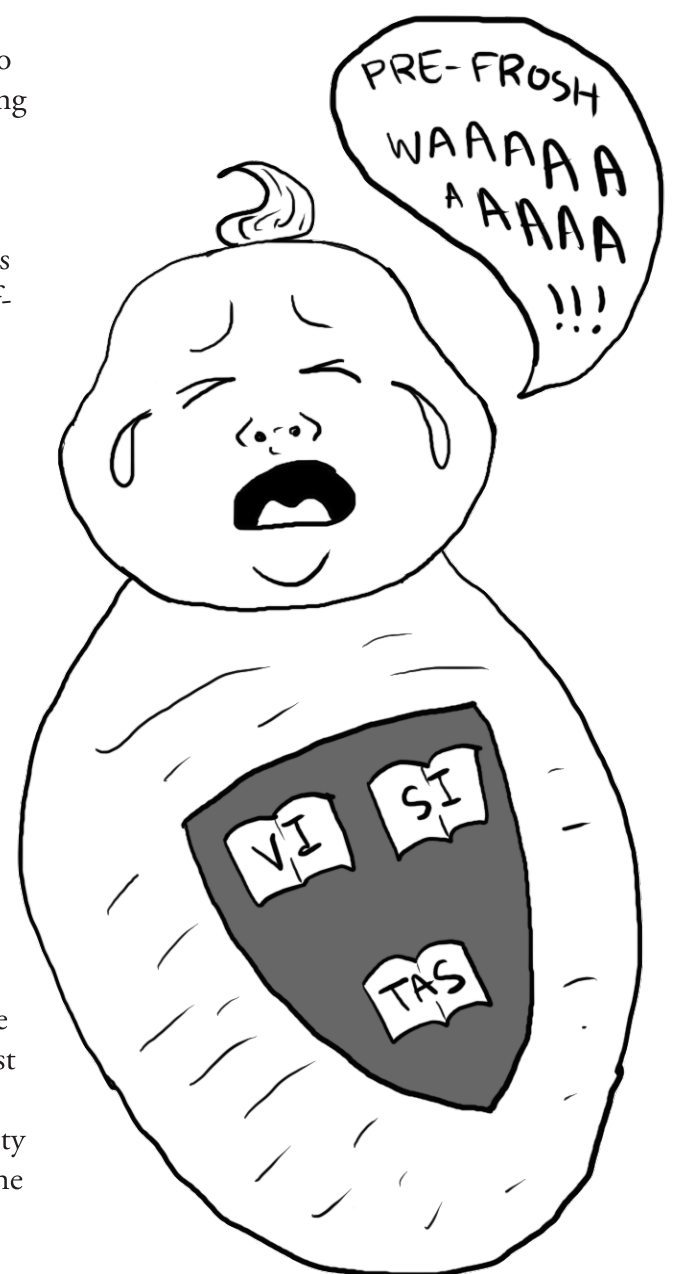
Although, even if you decide not to follow any of these well-elucidated tips and tricks, it may not matter that much. Harvard's yield rate is by far the highest amongst the Ivies at 84.17%. (If you were curious, Yale's is 69.70%.) The point is these kids will probably come here anyways. Why not have a little fun while hosting?

Don't forget to sign up to host a pre-frosh this year!

Katy Lin '26 ([katylin@college.harvard.edu](mailto:katylin@college.harvard.edu)) does not remember anyone she met during Visitas.

Sophia Mora-Ortega '26 ([sophiamoraortega@college.harvard.edu](mailto:sophiamoraortega@college.harvard.edu)) met Katy Lin at Visitas.

Graphic by David Li '25



# BEGINNING (ஆரம்பம்)

*Designer Smriti Somasundaram makes her debut at Andaaz.*

by Amiya Tiwari '26

On March 25, fashion designer Smriti Somasundaram '26 made her debut at Andaaz, Harvard South Asian Association's annual fashion show. Somasundaram is the first student designer to be featured on the Andaaz runway in the event's decade-long history, crafting two pieces especially for the event. Somasundaram titled her line ஆரம்பம், or Arambam, meaning "beginning" in her mother tongue, Tamil, and signifying her debut as a Tamil designer.

Somasundaram modeled her own favorite of the two pieces—a Western fusion outfit featuring tiered-Gujarati style pants inlaid with gold flowers paired with a blush-pink, asymmetrical pleated blouse with white and gold details on the back. Mukta Dharmapurikar '26 modeled Somasundaram's second piece: a traditional ghagra choli, or a two-piece dress broken into a sleeveless top and a skirt. Both pieces were completely hand-sewn by Somasundaram, who began her journey with design during the pandemic.

While Somasundaram began sewing for practical reasons—altering her family's Indian clothing—she eventually chose to employ her skills more creatively. "I told myself, if my first piece actually looked good, I will continue sewing," she said, in regard to trying out sewing her own pieces of clothing. "If not, I'm just going to stick with altering and what I know."

Her first piece, a fitted crimson top with balloon sleeves, would soon become one of her favorite pieces in her wardrobe. She would go on to design her prom dress, creating the maroon piece with a fitted bodice and flared skirt from scratch. Despite progressing in skills as a seamstress and designing more of her own pieces, Somasundaram shied away from designing Indian clothing.

"I could never connect making something in my bedroom in Seattle with the clothes my grandmother would buy me from street markets in India. I was too scared to get into South Asian clothing because it felt unreachable—I thought the designs were too grand for me."

Upon coming to Harvard, however, Somasundaram was exposed to the diversity of Indian fashion. "Seeing all the different styles present in our community motivated me to take a different look at design," she said.

SAA Co-President Shruthi Kumar '24 recognized Somasundaram's unique talents in the fall and immediately invited her to get involved with Andaaz. Although she was nervous, Somasundaram said, "when they asked me to do this, I got super excited because this was the kickstart that I needed to start trying South Asian wear. I said yes immediately."

Somasundaram's primary goal as she began designing the pieces was to spotlight "different cultures within South Asian groups," while also creating designs that fused with Western culture. She created all of her South Asian pieces from Western fabrics, sourcing primarily from Sewfisticated Fabrics in Somerville. Somasundaram said, "I go into the store not knowing what kind of piece I want to make. I choose what sticks out to me, and I work from there." Since coming to Harvard, this fabric store has been one of Somasundaram's safe spaces, providing her with a break from fast-paced school life. "Designing and sewing is my happy place; it's my favorite de-stressor," she said.

After growing more comfortable in her ability to blend her South Asian identity with Western materials, she decided to expand her repertoire with

a Ghagra Choli piece that emulated her South Indian background, and a piece inspired by traditional Gujarati wear. Gujarat is on the northwest side of India, while Somasundaram's family is from Tamil Nadu, a state at the very bottom of the Subcontinent. The differences in cultural norms between the two regions are reflected in fashion, yet Somasundaram fell in love with flowing pants from Gujarat when she saw other students wear them.

"They were one piece I knew I was going to make no matter what. They're my favorite piece out of everything I made," she said.

Deciding on what clothes would complement the pants was more difficult, with Somasundaram ultimately deciding to create a saree-style top. A saree is an Indian fashion staple that consists of a stretch of fabric pleated specially around the wearer's body and draped over the shoulder. The resulting, blush-pink blouse paired with the Gujarati pants was thus pleated carefully by Somasundaram, and to create the look of a draped saree, is one-shouldered.

For the past several months, Somasundaram has been working on these pieces, sewing mostly at the SEC makerspace. Somasundaram said, "they have sewing machines, mannequins, and everything. It's my dream!"

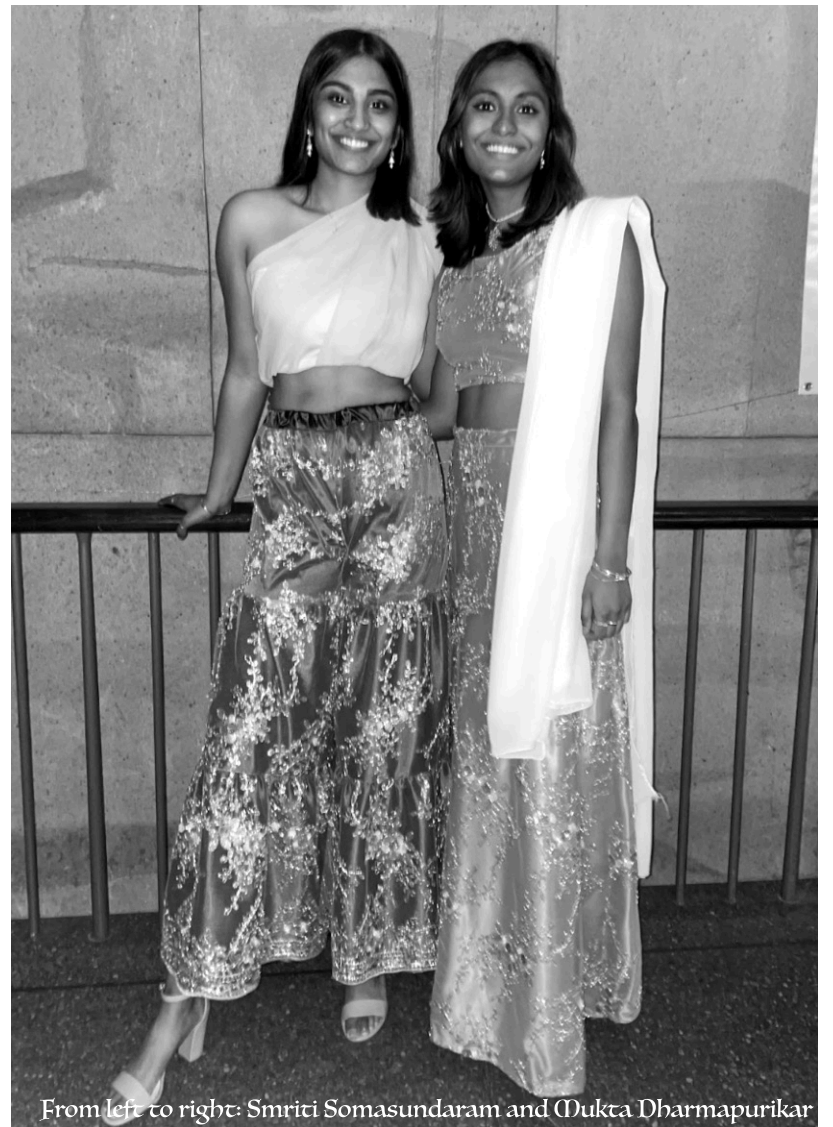
She finished sewing the first outfit over spring break but was much more pressed for time with the creation of the Ghagra Choli. "I had three days to make a blouse and a skirt, and I had school. I was freaking out," she said.

Somasundaram almost gave up because of the high-pressure situation. "After I saw the sun rise while I was working on my pieces, I told myself that maybe I wouldn't do the show. I asked myself, 'should I really be showcasing my pieces? What if they aren't good enough?'" Moreover, by the afternoon before the show, she still did not have a model for her Ghagra Choli. Luckily, Dharmapurikar showed up for Somasundaram in the nick of time.

"[Somasundaram] was stressed, but it really turned out. I truly admire how she was able to replicate traditional Indian styles with Western fabrics," Dharmapurikar recalled. "Even though I have never modeled before, it felt so special to be part of her first experience showcasing her work. To see her get recognition for something she is truly passionate about was amazing. I felt so lucky to have supported her."

Featuring a student designer exemplified the core values of Andaaz—highlighting the beauty of Harvard's South Asian community while prioritizing student agency. According to SAA Co-President Ali Makani '24, "Through providing students with agency to wear whatever they would like in the show, diversity is shown and not imposed. We wanted to create an environment that is conducive to students representing themselves however they see fit. It was wonderful to highlight such talent from our community in Smriti."

In reference to Somasundaram's work, Co-President Kumar said, "I was so proud to see her. It's the first time a student has ever hand-stitched and hand-designed South Asian pieces for our show. Fashion is something that we as South



From left to right: Smriti Somasundaram and Mukta Dharmapurikar

Asians need to explore and strut a lot more, and this is our space to do so. All of us in the South Asian diaspora are beautiful, and it's so important to showcase what beauty looks like aside from the standards set for us by society. I am so happy that Smriti got to contribute to that this year, and I hope that she will continue to do so."

SAA Cultural Chairs Sneha Shenoy '25 and Srija Vem '25 were the masterminds behind Andaaz and meticulously planned the show into a wonderful expression of diversity, cultural fusion, and joy. Regarding Somasundaram, Vem said, "It was really lovely to have someone who is part of our community do something so special. Having Smriti involved truly brought Andaaz's message home."

Shenoy added, "Her work is incredible. Especially considering that this is the first time she has created a South Asian line, that she chose to be part of Andaaz was such a special feeling."

"I truly appreciated all that Ali, Shruthi, Sneha, and Srija did to make my debut a big deal. I felt like I was seen during Andaaz, and I am so thankful to them for highlighting me. It meant so much," Somasundaram said.

Somasundaram hopes to continue designing for Andaaz for the rest of her college career—she has plans to design for other shows on campus and will be creating pieces for the Marine Debris Fashion Show presented by the Harvard University Center for the Environment. Somasundaram will continue to showcase her creativity as a designer through creating a sustainability-focused line for this show, which will be taking place on April 27.

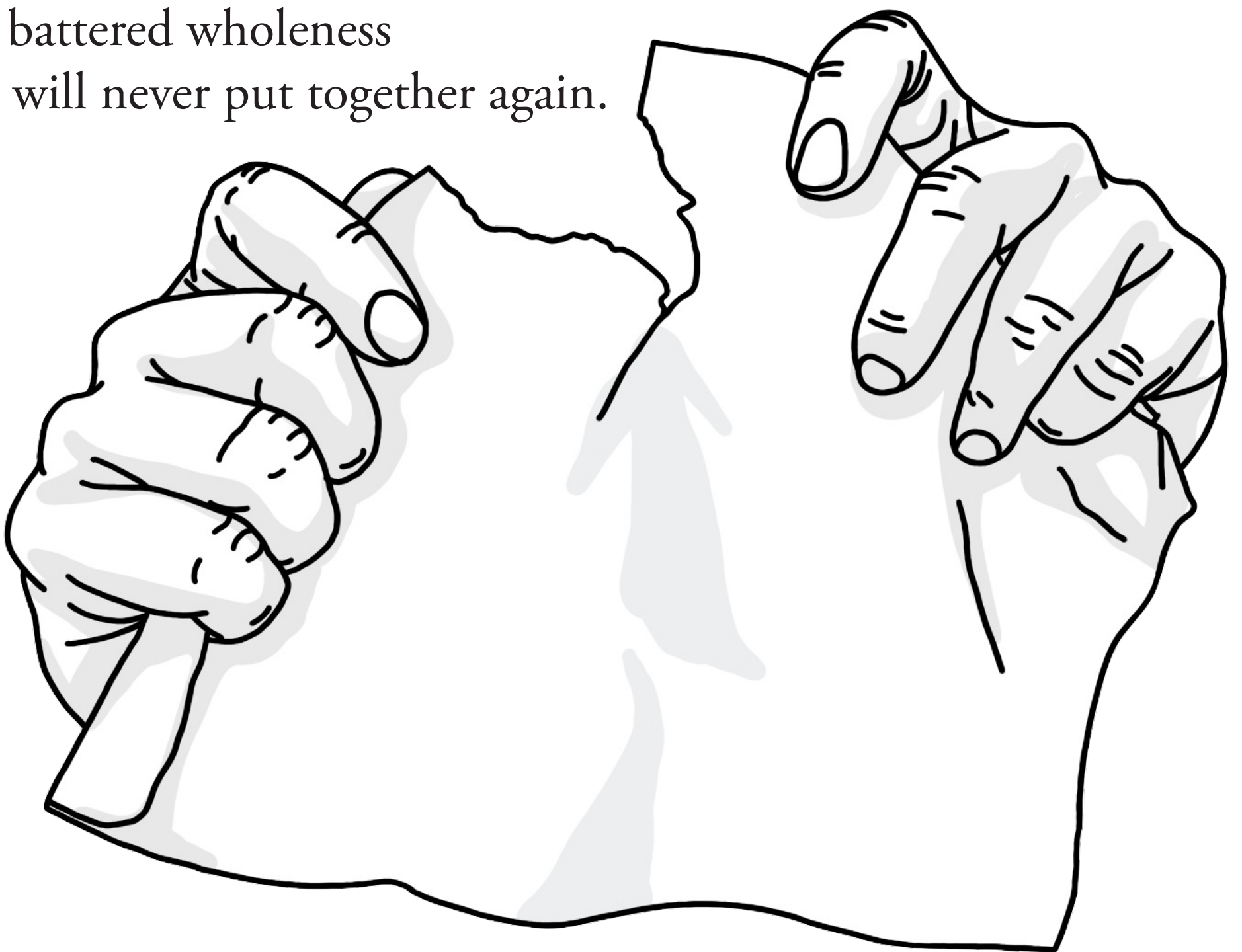
Somasundaram is only beginning her design journey, and she will continue to take the fashion world by storm. We will undoubtedly be seeing more of her work on campus—and potentially beyond—in the coming years.

Amiya Tiwari '26 (amiyatiwari@college.harvard.edu) hopes she will get to model one of Somasundaram's pieces!

# BETTER HALF

*Rip after reading.*  
by Olivia Pasquerella '26

you put me on the floor  
of my childhood room ripping  
same scrap of paper  
over and over  
infinitely—smaller—halves  
shred this not your insides  
stacked stapled collated  
feel the heft of unity defiled  
finger its edges  
every fault, you  
confirm that you can hold  
my battered wholeness  
but will never put together again.

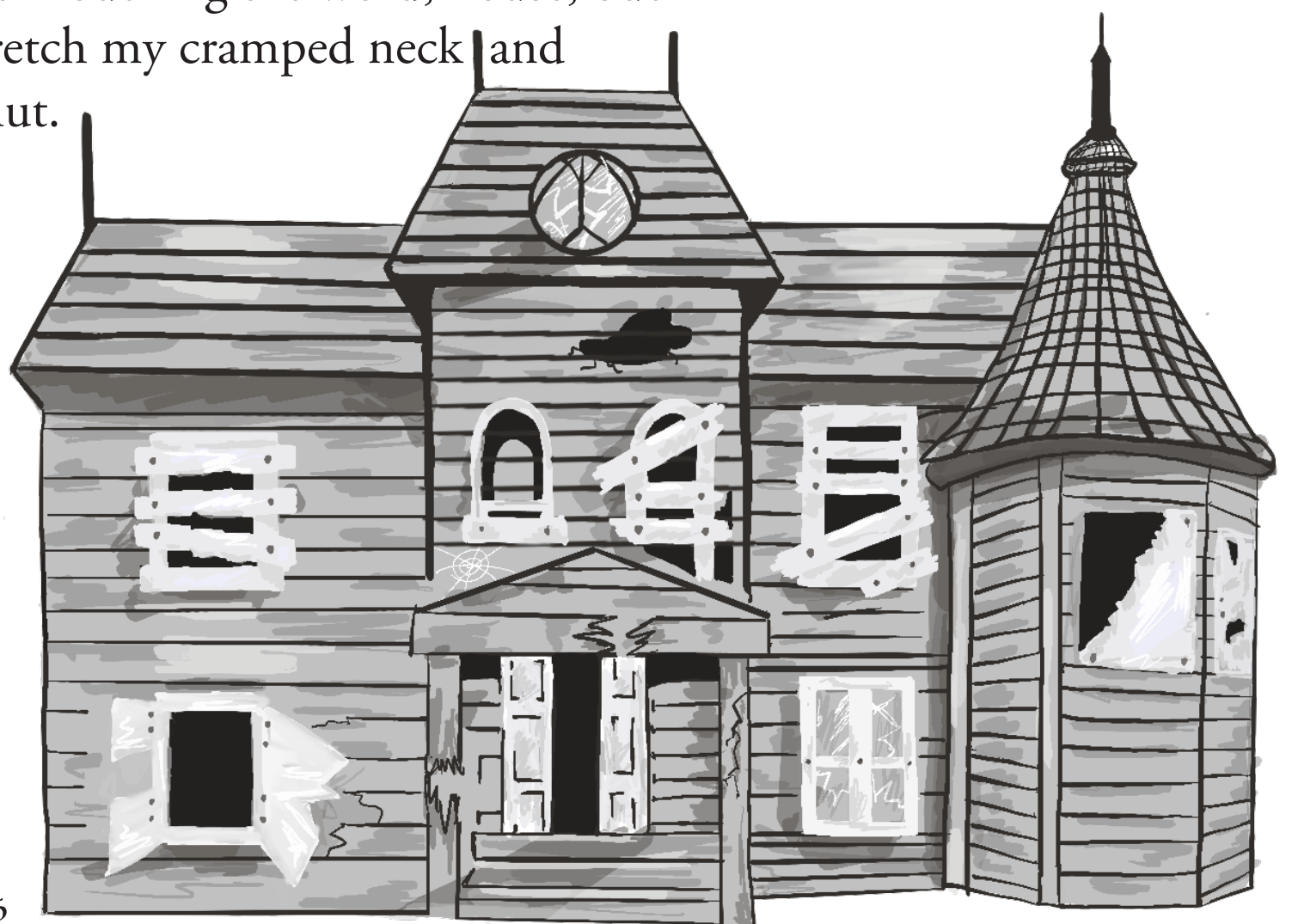


Olivia Pasquerella '26 (oliviapasquerella@college.harvard.edu) is available for hire to shred your tax files.

# In APRIL

by Lea Han '26

Yesterday I thought that I'd take the bus, yet  
I dreaded balancing the two luggage bags, both  
Plastered to my side. After deciding  
To stay, reluctant but certain, I now sit in the simmering  
Elbow of my crumpled bed, neck folded and head  
Hunched. Goblets of sleet line the windowsill.  
There's a woman outside—hair sorted into uncorrelated  
Portions, fraying knots tethered to her scalp. She grasps at her hair,  
Prying her own mouth open—one, two, three—and graying  
Teeth cascade down her apron.  
I'll be honest: I feel guilty when I position  
Myself away from her. She'd assorted a fragile  
Building in the past, fancying herself as a homemaker.  
The house was nestled in the Southeast, small  
Bricks and yellowed stone. Bricks last long,  
Perhaps centuries and more, but the material  
Failed to matter. In the end, the house faltered, and  
The woman scampered across the street, cognizant  
Of her remorse. It was gone. Since then,  
She has been standing across my windowsill.  
My apologies—I'll watch her wriggle amidst the muck and  
Allow her to continue mouthing the word, house, but  
I plan to carelessly stretch my cramped neck and  
Heave the window shut.



Graphic by Annelise Fisher '26

Lea Han '26 (leahan@college.harvard.edu) writes poetry for the *Independent*.

# REVIEW: LANA DEL REY'S *DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A TUNNEL UNDER OCEAN BLVD*

*A song by song analysis of the angelic masterpiece that is Lana's latest and greatest album.*

by Clara Corcoran '25

Captivating audiences with her unique brand of dreamy, vintage-inspired pop music since the release of her debut album in 2010, Lana Del Rey's *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd* is a testament to her growth as an artist and an exploration of new sonic landscapes. With flashy, seductive songs like "Peppers" and haunting, melancholic ballads like "The Grants," Del Rey's ninth studio album emphasizes her range as an artist and her evolving musical identity, while being a commentary on the experience of love, heartbreak, and nostalgia.

The album opens with a beautiful, textured ballad titled "The Grants," an homage to Del Rey's family name. The first half of the song is characterized by a soulful chorus of voices before progressing into deep, rolling chords on the piano, a hallmark within Del Rey's discography. Asking listeners questions like "Do you think about Heaven?" and "Do you think about me?" Del Rey sets a pensive, glittering tone for the album that colors our perception of the self-exploration to follow.

"Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd," the second song and namesake of the album, echoes the yearning and contemplation in "The Grants," but marks a definitive departure from lyrical reflectiveness in the rest of *Ocean Blvd*. The song ostensibly describes the closed Jergins Tunnel in Long Beach, CA. An homage to something intangible that's been lost to time, the track plays with the fear of being forgotten, using the tunnel as a metaphor for Del Rey's desire to be seen as worthy by a lover. And yet, this chase for approval is deemed futile by the end of the song. Stating to "Fuck me to death, love me until I love myself," Del Rey reveals, perhaps intentionally crudely, that the love we look for in others must first come from within ourselves.

"Sweet" is not a standout for me but represents a Lana fans know and love. Repeatedly describing the "stars" in her eyes and her own beauty and sweetness, the song explores self assuredness within a rush of violins and piano. Folk undertones and the inquisitive nature of the track create a vulnerability in the song that reflects Lana's uncertainty about love at this point in the album.

The darker undertones in Del Rey's second track are mirrored in "A&W," an abbreviation for "American whore." A testament to the fragile yet withstanding nature of her character, the seven-minute track begins with soft reflections on her experience in various sexual relationships before a shocking and seductive shift four minutes in. The track's murmuring piano backings originally function to highlight the softness of Lana's vocals before developing into a low, droning baseline in the second half of the song. Del Rey begins "A&W" as someone reflecting on what it means to be deemed a whore before flipping this narrative on its head through a series of sexy trap beats and punchy, seemingly random lyrics like "Jimmy, Jimmy, cocoa puff, Jimmy get me high." Twisting her commodification into empowerment, *A&W* is a sultry masterpiece and testament to Lana's reclamation of male objectification.

Cryptic and aggressive, "Judah Smith Interlude" sits awkwardly amidst the melodic tracks surrounding it and, in my opinion, misses the mark. A recording from controversial Churchome megachurch preacher Judah Smith, it sparked a dispute among Lana's fanbase due to the homophobic and pro-life claims made by the preacher. Considering the track spans nearly five minutes, it's seemingly illogical that Del Rey would choose to highlight such a figure. However,

examined next to tracks like *A&W*, where a woman's power is derived from her sexual liberation, and the sounds of Lana and her friends laughing as the preacher speaks, the track becomes, perhaps, intentionally provocative: a rejection of female oppression and a discussion on condemnation of female desire and lust.

"Candy Necklace" (feat. John Baptiste) and "Jon Baptiste Interlude" follow, providing an intriguing respite following such an interlude. Sweet and ruminatory, both songs speak to Del Rey devoting herself to a lover to a point of self-destruction. With Baptiste's piano creating a somber atmosphere in both pieces, the pieces are melancholic and dreamy to an almost unsettling degree—suggesting how it feels to be intoxicated by the love of another.

The muted piano and angel vocals in "Candy Necklace" continue in Del Rey's eighth track, "Kintsugi," which describes the Japanese art of repairing broken pieces of pottery with gold, a metaphor for Lana's own attempts to heal her soul. Beginning with lines like, "there's a certain point the body can't come back from," the song explores feelings of being swallowed by pain and abandonment. However, motifs like, "That's how the light shines in," show Lana's attempts to heal in spite of this, to repair her soul with gold. A contemplative metaphor on the redefinition of pain, "Kintsugi" is a treasure within the album.

"Fingertips" feels dreamy and mysterious from its onset, layering soft piano with deep, swelling orchestral compositions to highlight the sadness within Del Rey's lyrics. Taking a different approach to her discussion on nostalgia and femininity, "Fingertips" explores the relationship between mother and daughter, asking listeners to imagine themselves as mothers. Asking, "What the fuck's wrong in your head to send me/away never to come back?" Del Rey reveals a deep seated resentment toward her familial relationships in a manner that will choke you up. "Fingertips" is breathtakingly stunning and a haunting slap in the face—cannot be missed!

Though I am biased in my support of *Ocean Blvd* generally, "Paris, Texas (feat. SYML)" is a standout. With soft, peddling piano backings and sparkling, angelic vocals, "Paris, Texas" examines looking toward the future while carrying the weight of one's past. "When you know, you know/It's time, it's time to go" is a heartbreaking motif in the track, yet a testament to a newfound courage within Lana to search for 'home'

"Grandfather please stand on the shoulders of my father while he's deep sea fishing" may be my favorite song in the album. Beginning with ruminations like "I know they think that it took somebody else to make me beautiful," Lana speaks to accusations of inauthenticity surrounding her image and expresses frustration with people who don't recognize her agency in her identity. Del Rey also speaks to the

notion of having a spiritual figure to protect you, the 'grandfather' in the song's title. The slow rise and falls of the track are infectious, and I really can't help but feel intensely inclined to deep sea fish after each listen.

"Let The Light In" (feat. Father John Misty) is a triumph within the melancholic dreamscape that characterizes the album. It continues the sentimental inquiry into the relationship between lover and the self, yet radiates a warm, comforting feeling that many of her other songs do not showcase. Mismatched harmonies and the beautiful resonance between Misty and Del Rey's voices create a bright undertone to the song that's emblematic of growth and self acceptance within Del Rey: a theme the entire album seems to converge to.

"Margaret" (feat. Bleachers) is another stunning composition from Del Rey. Though "Margaret" maintains Del Rey's usage of muted piano and guitar to highlight the soft, grittiness of her vocals, the track recycles the "When you, know you know" from "Paris, Texas" in a way that is entirely changed; Celebratory and confident, the piece flips the sadness in "Paris, Texas" on its head in a way that is all at once elated yet entirely understanding of the weight of the feelings in that track.

"Fishtail" is Del Rey's "Tulsa Jesus Freak" repackaged, and I could not be happier. Intentionally synthetic and edited to sound mysterious and otherworldly, the track is a cinematic, synth treasure. It's fundamentally sad, yet sensual and, once again, infectious.

"Peppers" (feat. Tommy Genesis) offers a tangible departure from Lana's typical reflective style. Upbeat and sultry, the piece is instantly both catchy and unique, repeating "Hands on your knees, I'm Angelina Jolie" over and over.

Perhaps the greatest shock of the entire album is the resurrection of "Venice Bitch" from Lana's 2019 studio album *Norman Fucking Rockwell!* Indeed, "Taco Truck x VB" is a *masterpiece* and an homage to Del Rey's continued pursuit of building on her past self. The "Lanita" in this song is an enigmatic version of Lana, one who, like "Venice Bitch" and the Jergins Tunnel, will not be forgotten. "Taco Truck x VB" demonstrates Lana's evolution through *Ocean Blvd* from scared of being forgotten to confident and commanding: she revels in her femininity in "Taco Truck x VB," and that feeling is contagious. The lyrical rollercoaster that is *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd* is one that I wish with my entire heart that I could ride again for the first time.

Clara Corcoran '25 (claracorcoran@college.harvard.edu) recommends a good cry to all listeners!

Graphic by Candace Gardner '25



# LIFE'S A JUMP BALL

*Rising Above the Rim with McKenzie Forbes.*

by Aissatou Diallo '25

Thirteen years ago, McKenzie Forbes '23 joined the Folsom Force, a tornado of tiny sneakers, flailing limbs, and wild enthusiasm. This third-grade basketball team, coached by their mom Sasha, was one of many vibrant communities that formed the player and person Forbes is today. As we marvel at the transformation of Harvard Women's Basketball this season, with Carrie Moore's coaching and the team's near-perfect harmony, we can use Forbes' insights as reason for the team's success.

Forbes is not new to the rhythm of the game. Her love for basketball started at a young age. With a grandfather who was drafted by the Lakers, a father who played for the Harlem Globetrotters, and three older brothers who shared the same passion, it was only natural for Forbes to follow in their footsteps. She played on male teams until 8th grade. In high school, Forbes faced a new challenge: a historically unsuccessful team that lacked support from the community. By her senior year, the Folsom Force won the league, and their hard work was recognized by a dedicated community from once-empty stands.

This momentum persisted during Forbes' college basketball journey, which began at UC Berkeley's well-established NCAA Division I team, the California Golden Bears. As the only recruit in her class, Forbes relied on seniors for guidance, leadership, and precedent to follow. Despite being the 6th or 7th ranked player and playing for only 20 minutes a game, the team left a lasting impact on Forbes' athletic career. "They shaped a lot of the player I am here now," she recalled. "Leadership-wise, they taught me how to handle myself with media and with coaches that I otherwise wouldn't know how to do. They taught me how to act."

The California Golden Bears' journey did not come without challenges. When their head coach, Lindsay Gottlieb, left for the NBA in 2019, the team faced the loss of immense talent and assets, including the graduation of five seniors and the transfer of its last starter. Forbes described the situation as "a sinking ship." Considering Berkeley's losses, Forbes began the arduous process of transferring to Harvard. Having to take a gap

year, Forbes kept herself busy by taking classes at a community college and coaching a basketball team of 7th and 8th graders with her oldest brother. Forbes noted, "They kept me sane during my time off. I wasn't on a team but I could still be around one."

When Forbes finally got accepted, Covid hit, shattering any possibility of a sophomore season. Taking classes online offered no perks or proper introduction to Harvard's culture, and there was no team to turn to. When junior year rolled around, Forbes was essentially a first-year upperclassman, expected to understand Harvard customs whilst never having experienced them before. "I didn't know where anything was, I didn't know anything that juniors should know."

As is the case with most student-athletes, Forbes emphasized that the team welcomed her with open arms. While each practice and game brought them closer, Forbes felt most united by the retirement of Coach Kathy Delaney-Smith, who served the team for 40 years. New to the team themselves, Forbes welcomed new coach Carrie Moore and encouraged the rest of the team to "buy into" the change. "Moore put so much time in," Forbes recalled. "We were doing bonding activities nonstop, so the team was bound to get close."

Forbes felt Moore's energy and confidence exude over the team. She resonated with Moore's challenging leadership style, but she also saw herself reflected in the no-nonsense coaching style. "Playing with someone who you have shared identities with, who is so open, made me feel more comfortable being authentically myself," Forbes said. "That was huge for me and a lot of my teammates." By her senior year, Forbes came completely out of her shell and formed close bonds with her teammates. She recounts Covid as feeling like a fever dream; and after her successful career on the Women's Basketball Team, found her unique place in a talented group of athletes.

"There's a whole new energy and respect for the program," said Forbes, in regard to the team under Moore's guidance. This year, the Crimson has advanced to the fourth round of the Women's National Invitation Tournament for

the first time in Harvard history. The Ivy season for the team began on December 31 with a 67-59 win against Princeton, followed by another league victory on January 6, where they defeated Brown with a significant 30-point lead of 89-59. Two losses to Yale and Columbia were followed by a five game-winning streak against Dartmouth, Cornell, UPenn, Yale, and Brown. Fans even got to witness an epic overtime win against Columbia, where Forbes scored three points with 45 seconds left to steal the game. Their historic season (20-12, 9-5 Ivy) ended with a close battle against Columbia (27-5, 12-2 Ivy) in the WNIT Great 8, 77-71.

Coach Moore did more than make her players better athletes. Her catchphrase, "believe it," extended beyond the athletes' belief in themselves. Forbes said, "Moore wouldn't just let us be satisfied with how good we [were at the time]. She can call you out and also be there for you as a person." Her motto was not only a belief in the possibility of success, or even a belief that they would succeed, but a belief in the struggles and process of competition. The team's work ethic, discipline, and chemistry combined with an expectation of success. Despite what fans may think, the team visualized themselves getting into the WNIT tournament. "We talked about believing it all year. To not have done well this year would have been a surprise for us," said Forbes.

Forbes' story fits the image of a well-rounded athlete we should all praise; her success on the court translates to her social and academic life. The key to Forbes' success stems from her ability to adapt to change: her transitions from a budding career as a Pac-12 player to the uncertainty of a transfer student; from a shy teammate to an advocate for the program; and from a junior coach to a successful D1 player demonstrate this malleability.

This ability to navigate the fast-paced environment of basketball translates to life seamlessly, as the most successful plays do not rely on the luck of a jump ball but on the strategy and persistence of the team. Basketball requires the same trust in unpredictability as having the courage to rebrand your image, buy into a new program, and work with an entirely new coach and team.

"There are kids that come to the games that I can recognize now. I know them by name. This year I know that Harvard is my alma mater, and when I come back I have a place in it." Forbes has watched the program develop; she and her teammates have a hand in how it was remodeled, and thus in how it can be revisited and learned from in years to come.

Aissatou Diallo '25 (adiallo@college.harvard.edu) wishes she played sports in high school.

Photo Credits: Ivy League Media



# LET'S GO... MAGENTA?

*Thirty-eight things you didn't know about the Harvard Football Team.*

by Carly Brail '26

**A**s the Harvard Football Team celebrates 150 years, let's look back on their history!

1. The Harvard Football Team was founded in 1873, amidst a nationwide debate over what set of rules players would adhere to. The Crimson embraced "Boston Rules," as the majority of students came from Boston prep schools playing this game.
2. Before the team was founded, there used to be an annual football game between the Freshman and Sophomore classes called "The Battle of The Delta," which took place on the land Memorial Hall now sits on, previously called "The Delta."
3. When the faculty outlawed this violent game in 1860, the students held a funeral, delivering a eulogy of the sport and burying a pigskin.
4. When the Harvard University Football Club was formed in December 1872, they played on the Cambridge Common, away from University oversight.
5. Their first official match was against McGill University in 1874.
6. In their first matchup, Harvard decidedly beat Yale in 1875.
7. The next year, Yale won.
8. The 1894 Game, known as the "Hamden Park Bloodbath" or "Springfield Massacre" ended with nine players being removed from the pitch due to extreme violence or injury, and resulted in no games for the next two years.
9. In 1894, the term "The Game" was officially coined to describe this annual meeting.
10. As of Fall 2022, Yale leads 68-61 in wins, with the teams tying eight times.
11. During the 1968 Game, Harvard came back from a 22-0 deficit to tie the game, leading The Crimson to pronounce "Harvard Beats Yale 29-29" the next day.
12. Actor Tommy Lee Jones played offensive lineman during that game.
13. Three Harvard Football players have won the Super Bowl:
14. John Dockery '66 for the New York Jets in Super Bowl III
15. Matt Birk '98 for the Baltimore Ravens in Super Bowl XLVII
16. And most recently, Cameron Brate '14 for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Super Bowl LV
17. The football coaching staff totals 14

low Eric Nelson, who is the Robert M. Beren Professor of Government.

18. The Crimson coach is Tim Murphy, who has held his position since 1994.
19. Murphy holds the position "The Thomas Stephenson Family Head Coach for Harvard Football," endowed by Thomas Stephenson in 1994.
20. Stephenson played on the team, graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Business School, and also served as the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal from 2007-2009.
21. The Crimson were not always the Crimson—the original school color was Magenta. In 1858, the Harvard Crew team began wearing magenta handkerchiefs to distinguish themselves from competitors during regattas.
22. In 1875, the crew team was set to race Union College, but both schools wore magenta. This led Harvard to have a town hall meeting, ultimately deciding that the school's color would be Crimson.
23. Harvard Stadium, built in 1903, pioneered the use of reinforced concrete.
24. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987.
25. The Boston Patriots played their 1970 season in The Stadium, before moving to Foxborough and becoming the New England Patriots the following year.
26. Harvard Stadium was used to host soccer games during the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

27. During the short-lived Boston bid to host the 2024 Summer Olympics, Harvard Stadium was slated to host many events.
28. Harvard has technically won 12 national championships, but they only officially claim seven:
29. 1890, beating Yale.
30. 1898, tying with Princeton.
31. 1899, again tying with Princeton.
32. 1910, the first season the forward pass was allowed and the position of the Quarterback created.
33. 1912, beating Penn State.
34. 1913, tying with Auburn and the University of Chicago.
35. 1919, beating Oregon in the 1920 Rose Bowl.
36. In 1874, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton shared the title, with only Yale and Princeton claiming their victories. Harvard's other unclaimed years are 1875, 1901, 1908, and 1920.
37. Harvard has won the Ivy League Championship 17 times, second to Dartmouth's and Penn's leading records.
38. The term "Ivy League" allegedly comes from a meeting between Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia to determine the rules for their football games. The meeting of the four, written in roman numerals as IV, was soon called "Ivy."

Carly Brail '26 ([carlybrail@college.harvard.edu](mailto:carlybrail@college.harvard.edu)) went to her first Harvard Football game wearing a pin that read "Penn Rules Harvard Sucks."





# THE "FAVORABLE" PHYSIQUE

*The pressure to simultaneously meet societal and athletic body standards.*

by Kate Oliver '26 and Annelise Fisher '26

“We have reached a point where it is unrealistic and unhealthy to have a standard for what the ... body is supposed to look like.”

Modern standards for size and body types have overarching negative effects on body image throughout society at large. Certain beauty standards disproportionately affect different populations; one demographic affected in a unique way is young athletes.

High-performance varsity athletes at Harvard are forced to make many sacrifices, including socialization, sleep, and self-determination. They are often required to balance compromises for performance and personal well-being, and when it comes to personal fitness, each athlete is subject to their sport's respective demands.

It is generally accepted in athletics that each sport favors certain optimal body types and traits, according to which muscles and parts of the body are most fit for the required movements. Some sports require long-term endurance, while others call for brute strength and explosive energy. Height, center of gravity, wingspan, and body fat percentage are just a handful of the numerous characteristics that are prioritized in different sports, many of which are both genetic and out of an athlete's control. The physical demands that sports place on athletes may often conflict with their personal goals and overall health.

“I feel internal pressure to achieve [a certain] build because a tiny voice in my head says that I will only reach peak performance if my body mirrors this slighter build. But I also know myself, and always striving for this form of perfection is unsustainable, unhealthy, and could result in damaging eating habits,” said one anonymous female athlete.

Every varsity sports team at Harvard has a strength training program that aims to strengthen crucial muscles in order to prevent injury and promote high performance. These sport-specific training programs often differ drastically from cardio-intensive workouts popularized by social media today. Sport-specific training is also radically different from strength and mobility training for functional fitness. One focuses on optimizing athletic success, while the other focuses on supporting a healthy day-to-day lifestyle. A 2011 study by *The Sport Journal* found that 24.2% of Division I female athletes and 30.7% of Division III female athletes were unhappy with their overall appearance. Another study found that at least a third of NCAA Division I female athletes were at-risk for anorexia nervosa. These findings may be caused by unrealistic standards for the idealized body types perpetuated by popular and athletic cultures.

Amidst grappling with societal expectations, it can be challenging to maintain confidence in one's athletic physique. This conflict is compounded by societal perceptions of what it looks like to be “healthy,” “an athlete,” or even “attractive” under Western body type standards.

“On one hand, I feel an extreme pressure to meet society's expectations [for my body],” said one anonymous first-year female athlete. “This elusive

body type is completely irrelevant to the function of my body for sport, yet I can't escape the constant reminders of what I'm supposed to look like.”

The function of an athletic build is to increase performance with the intent of athletic achievement. Yet it can simultaneously produce negative emotional effects in athlete's attempts to fulfill conflicting and often harmful body standards. “I feel like I am never doing the right thing to achieve the perfect body because my ideal body type inconsistently changes from a societal expectation and social media phenomenon to a sport ideal,” reflected a female athlete on the Varsity Skiing team.

“I always feel isolated when getting ready with my friends because I know I won't be able to fit their clothing if I want to change my outfit,” said one athlete on the Varsity Field Hockey team, echoing the sentiment of the conflicting nature of sport and societal demands. She went on to attribute

***“You can be strong, you can be fast, but if you don't feel that you look that way, you definitely develop a self-consciousness that can erode your confidence, not only in an athletic setting, but also in a social setting.”***

these issues of self-confidence to the expectation as a field hockey player to have “far more muscular legs” than those of her friends who did not play a sport. Society can create seemingly unattainable expectations for athletes because they might not be able to achieve their own physical standards without sacrificing their own athletic performance. Importantly, any individual maintaining physical standards based on aesthetics is influenced by the perception of others and what society deems to be attractive.

Another female athlete said that, in addition to the pressure to have the right body type to excel in her sport, she feels, “an extreme pressure to meet society's expectations of an attractive female body, and to satisfy the male gaze, which is currently centered around wide hips and a small waist.”

From a dietary standpoint, proper athletic nutrition also differs drastically from ideals that are often set for non-athletes. Typical attempts at eating healthy, including reducing caloric intake, seldom provide the sufficient combinations of carbs, proteins, and fats to provide quick energy and promote recovery required for post-workout nutrition. “I know that if I changed how I ate, I could be disciplined enough to lose weight, but then I wouldn't be as successful on the field during practice and competition,” another female first-year athlete said.

“It's also really hard to always be in situations where I am eating more than my friends because I have different energy needs.”

Popular culture and social media constantly perpetuate dietary standards that are frequently impossible for high-performance athletes to meet—promoting calorie restriction and excessive cardiovascular exercise. The high demands that varsity sports place on athletes' bodies, including muscle and energy overexertion, require treatment that does not correspond to what diet culture promotes.

Male sports also place compromising standards on athletes' bodies. “The taller people in the sport definitely have to be cognizant about what they are doing with their body,” one male member of the Varsity Sailing team said. “Some people...feel the pressure of trying to become the body type that fits their boat.”

Another male athlete, on the Varsity Swim team commented on the extent to which body image issues can influence one's overall self-perception. “You can be strong, you can be fast, but if you don't feel that you look that way, you definitely develop a self-consciousness that can erode your confidence, not only in an athletic setting, but also in a social setting.”

Certain sports, such as rowing and sailing, incorporate the external factor of a boat's optimal weight into the standards set for an ideal body type. This is true of weight classes in wrestling as well. The pressure on these athletes to conform for the sake of performance, one that is dependent on the physics of an external vehicle or the integrity of competition, further strains their ability to fulfill certain expectations of society.

Research is still ongoing as to whether certain physical traits leading to athletic success are inherited or developed, and there are counterintuitive findings in certain sports, like swimming, in which the speed-endurance tradeoff is less clear. It is also important to note that not all high-performing athletes conform to the builds hypothesized to be best for their sport. Yet ultimately, athletes of all sports can frequently experience a body dysmorphia that is complicated by their love of competition. The impact of this conflicting trade-off is widespread, and it is necessary to welcome conversations around athletic physical standards in order to dispel body standards of all types.

“Generally we have a standard on our team that is to do whatever is best for your body and mind,” said one female athlete. “I personally think this is the right standard. There is no one body image that is the right one for you. It is very important to know that {health} looks different for everyone.”

Kate Oliver '26 ([koliver@college.harvard.edu](mailto:koliver@college.harvard.edu)) loves being a Harvard student-athlete.

Annelise Fisher '26 ([annelisefisher@college.harvard.edu](mailto:annelisefisher@college.harvard.edu)) is not, in fact, a Harvard student-athlete.

# INDY SPORTSBOOK: BETTING ON BOSTON

*Previewing the best bets to make come playoff time.*

by Andrew Christie '26

Last time I took to this column, I was discussing the ins and outs of March Madness, the annual NCAA basketball tournament. While I did correctly guess several outcomes of various games, the tournament is largely unpredictable due to its one-game nature. This contrasts with the playoff structure of professional sports, which are played in series. Coming up soon, we have the pleasure of being able to enjoy both the NBA and NHL playoffs, which begin on April 11th and April 17th respectively. We at *Indy Sportsbook* are waiting eagerly for them to begin, so here we will cover everything to consider when making your bets.

A team outside the top three seeds in either conference has only won twice in the history of the NBA, most recently in 1995. Keep this in mind if you are betting on a team to win the championship. Anything can happen, however, as evidenced by this historical March Madness tournament. With all of this considered, here are a couple teams who could be crowned come the NBA finals in June.

**Celtics (+330):** The Celtics are regaining their momentum at just the right time. At the beginning of the season, they appeared to be the runaway #1 seed and favorites to win the NBA Finals. However, a mid-season falter in form led the Celtics to drop the conference lead, and they now seem destined for the #2 seed. This could be a blessing in disguise, however, as this would cause them to miss a second-round matchup with either the Cavaliers or Knicks—two teams that have caused Boston difficulty all year.

**Bucks (+240):** While I personally do not have any belief in the Bucks winning the NBA (a little Boston bias, but also shown by their 41-point blowout loss at home to the Celtics), they do in fact have the best record in the NBA and are the odds-on favorite to win the championship. Giannis Antetokounmpo is having another dominant season (averaging 31.1 points, 11.8 rebounds, and 5.6 assists per game), but what really makes them the favorites is his surrounding cast. Khris Middleton is healthy, Jrue Holiday is on fire recently, and Defensive Player of the Year favorite Brook Lopez has put on an exhibition all year long. They have all the ingredients to win a championship and should be a team you consider when placing your bets.

**Suns (+650):** The Phoenix Suns failed to replicate their 2021 playoff success last year, but with the addition of Perennial All-Star Kevin

Durant they look poised to make a deep run. I did state earlier that a non-top three seed has a very low likelihood of winning, but Devin Booker is in All-NBA form. With him and KD leading the charge, not many teams can say they have a better chance at the title. On top of all this, they face a potential first round matchup with Golden State, who have only won 9 out of 39 away games this season, which should only add to the confidence of Phoenix betters.

**Nuggets (+750):** The Denver Nuggets head into the NBA playoffs as the #1 seed in the west. Nikola Jokic is the MVP favorite and that does not come by chance. He leads the NBA in plus/minus (a stat that measures how teams fare when a player is on the court) showing that when he is on the court, the Nuggets are outscoring their opponents and winning games. With several different scorers on the roster, Denver could be looking at a real chance to hang their first NBA Championship banner.

While those are several teams that could win, nobody ever knows what will happen, so it is always fun to place a couple bucks on your favorite team and cheer them on to playoff victory.

Now, we would be remiss in forgetting to mention another sport with playoffs coming up. While I know quite little about hockey, with all the talent in the league right now the NHL playoffs should be one to watch.

**Bruins (+380):** The Boston Bruins have put on a show this year. The Bruins are on track to break the record for the most regular season wins and seem destined for a deep playoff run. However, the President's

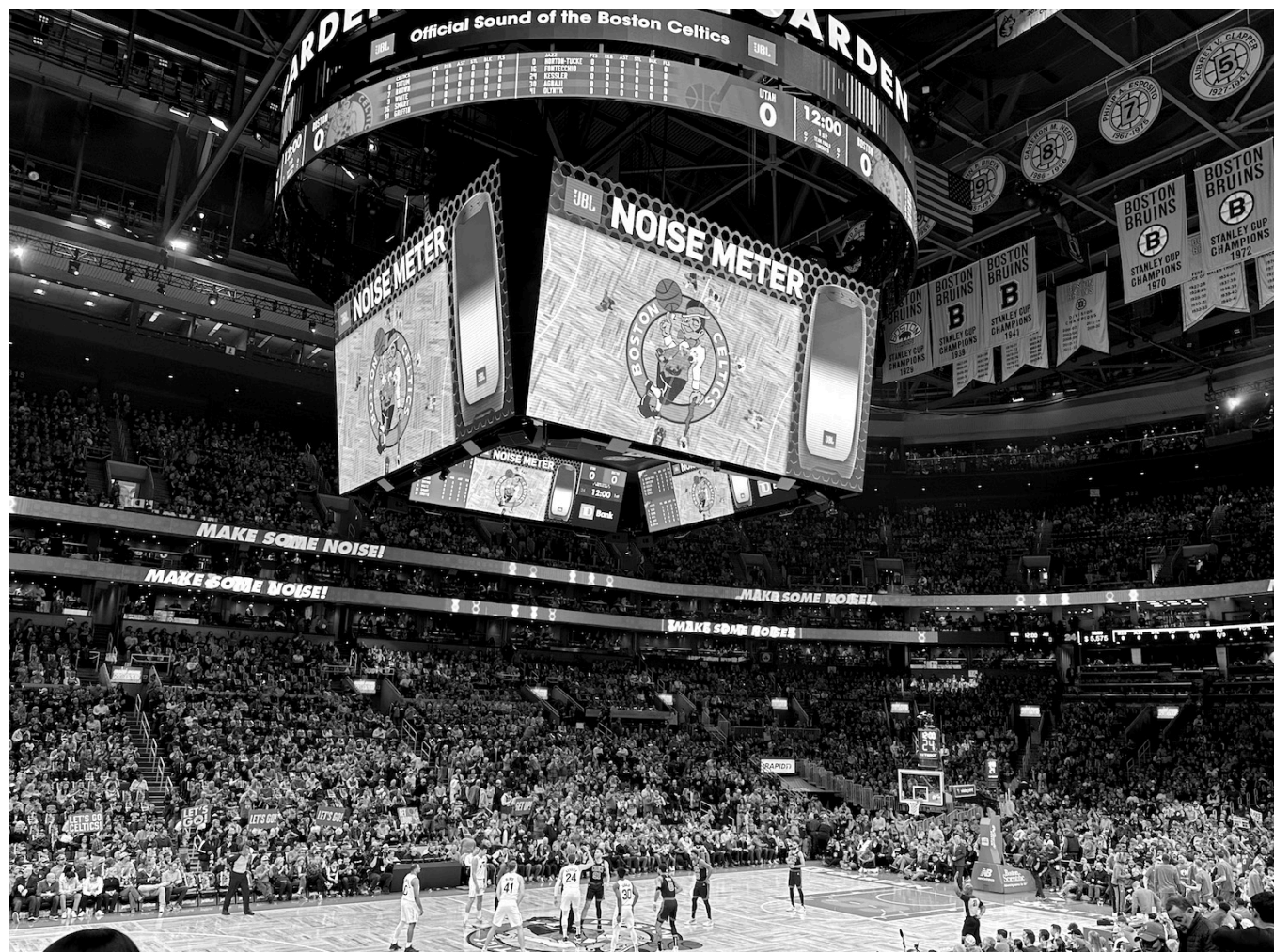
Trophy curse may spell trouble. Awarded to the NHL team with the best regular season record, only eight out of the 36 Trophy winners have gone on to win the Stanley Cup, and none since the Chicago Blackhawks in 2013. While I personally have rarely watched the Bruins play this year, I often throw the Bruins moneyline in a parlay and it has never let me down to date.

**Hurricanes (+1000):** With the second-best record in the NHL, the Hurricanes are obvious contenders despite having to make their way through a stacked Eastern conference bracket. They have a deep, well-rounded roster and if goaltender Frederik Andersen can find top form, this team sure can make some waves.

**Oilers (+1300):** While the Oilers do not have the best odds to win the playoffs, they should not be discounted. Connor McDavid, runaway Hart Trophy (MVP) favorite, has led this team to the current #2 seed in their division. Additionally, being from the western conference, the Oilers have a far easier path to the finals than any team in the east, so look for them to still be around late in the playoffs.

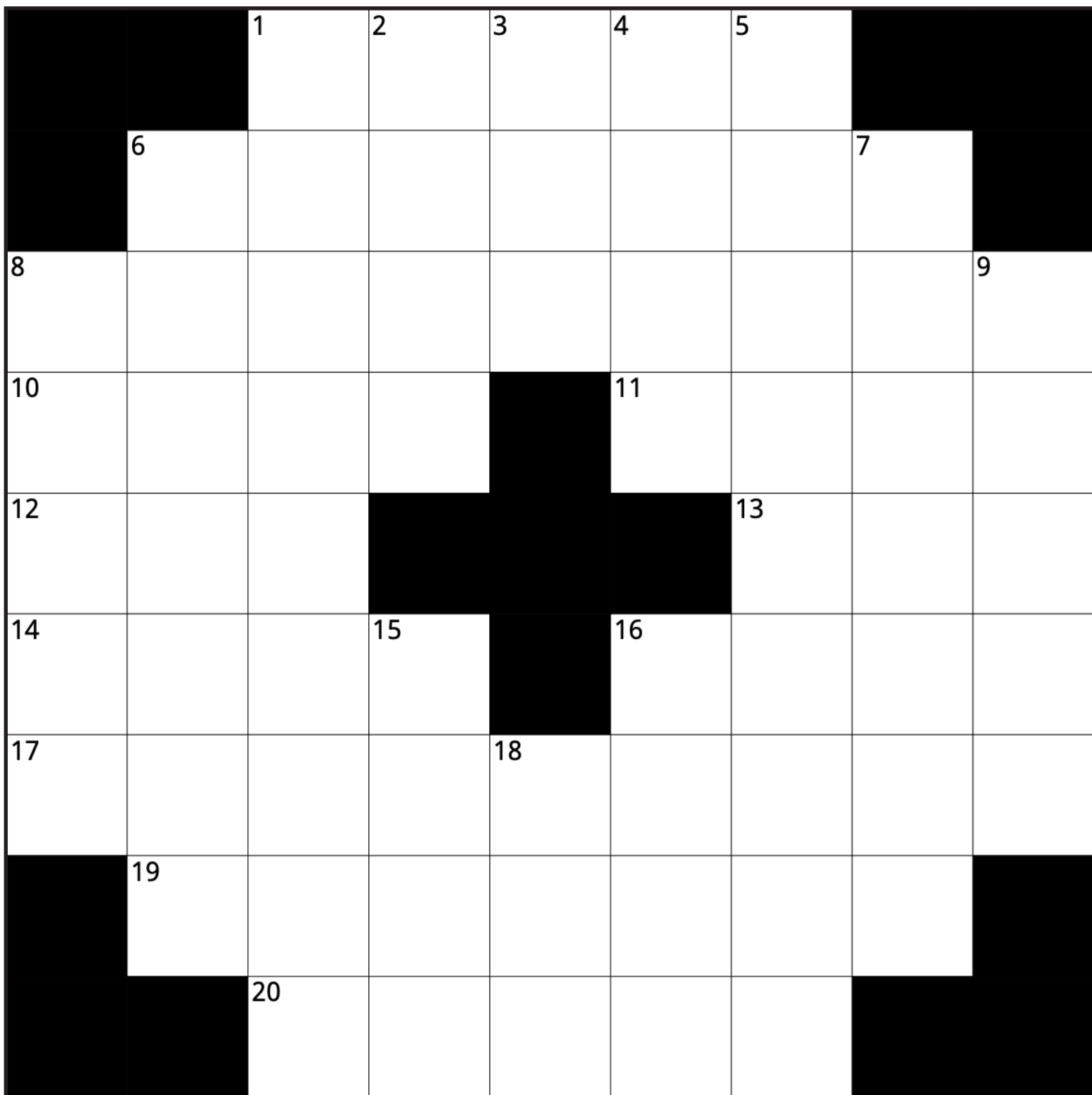
While you can bet on both sports individually, you can also place a bet on an extremely intriguing Boston Championship parlay at +1964. If anyone is feeling some extreme New England pride, this option should offer some allure (I have already placed money on this).j

Andrew Christie '26 ([andrewchristie@college.harvard.edu](mailto:andrewchristie@college.harvard.edu)) is really hoping that the Celtics win, both as a Boston sports fan and someone with a large Celtics NBA champs bet (+330).



# In-House

by Becca Ackerman '25

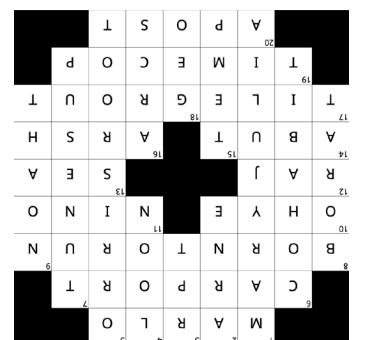


## ACROSS

- 1 Our EIC
- 6 Fararri's shelter
- 8 Springsteen's first hit
- 10 "\_\_\_ of little faith"
- 11 Barcelona boy
- 12 "The Big Bang Theory" character
- 13 It's all wet
- 14 Touch
- 16 9-down's predecessor
- 17 Bonding material for bathroom floors
- 19 1994 Van Damme film
- 20 Deaf as \_\_\_

## DOWN

- 1 Former *Independent* EIC
- 2 "Alfred" composer
- 3 White paper (abbr.)
- 4 Nutcase
- 5 Pulverized perfumery item
- 6 Share digs
- 7 Pepares for a guitar lesson, say
- 8 "\_\_\_ Subsequent Moviefilm"
- 9 Marbella M.'s president, say
- 15 Fill-in
- 16 Circle segments
- 18 Prefix with thermal



COVER ART BY EL RICHARDS '26

LAYOUT BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24

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