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About the "Independent"

As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, the Harvard Independent provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The Independent has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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We belong to no one but ourselves.

MASTHEAD

Harvard's Gabriel Kreiman Thinks Artificial Intelligence Can Fix What the Brain Gets Wrong

HMS professor Gabriel Kreiman leaves a tenured position to build an AI startup that promises to give humans infinite, searchable memory.

BY PATRICK SLIZ '27

A Harvard Medical School neuroscientist left one of the most prestigious posts in academic medicine last year to chase the bold claim that artificial intelligence can give people what the human brain cannot: perfect, searchable, infinite memory. Gabriel Kreiman, whose lab has spent 20 years mapping how the brain consolidates experience, launched Engramme last year with co-founder Spandan Madan, a former Harvard Ph.D. student. The startup is now in talks to raise around $100 million at a valuation of nearly $1 billion.

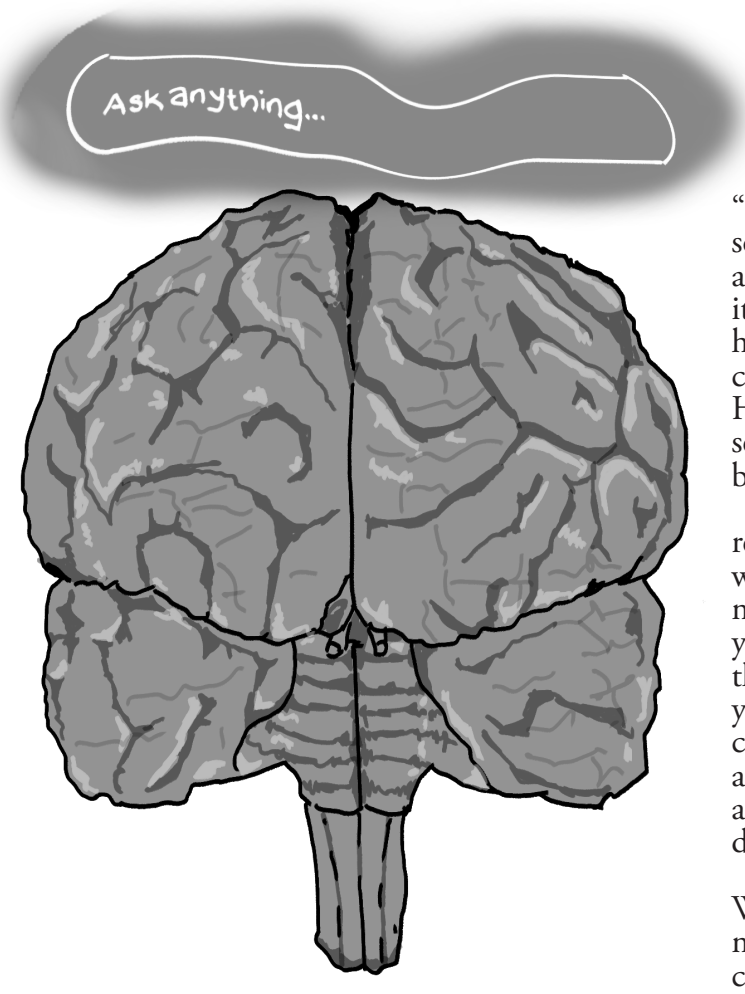
As AI has continued to grow, professors and researchers in academia have increasingly moved into the private sector—whether recruited by major tech companies like Google and Meta or founding startups of their own—typically in hopes of faster impact or better compensation. Kreiman is the latest example. He received a Ph.D. in computational neuroscience from the California Institute of Technology, completed postdoctoral training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and became a professor at HMS in 2007.

At HMS, his lab studied how memories are formed in the brain, hoping to construct models that could replicate the underlying biology. "I realized that to [augment human memory] at scale … I need to do this outside of academia, and that's why I founded the company and started in the Silicon Valley world with Engramme," Kreiman explained in an interview with the "Harvard Independent."

What separates Engramme from typical AI assistants is its underlying architecture. Current AI systems, such as ChatGPT, are known as large language models. "When we started working on this problem, we started working with language models," Kreiman said. "But they are the wrong architecture for memory." He explained that this method is like using the language part of your brain to recall memories, rather than the part responsible for memory. "We're using the kind of algorithms that have been important in neuroscience to model associated memory formation and retrieval in the longer term."

"Think about every book you've ever read, every conversation you've had, every person you've met, every email, all of that being instantaneously accessible to you," Kreiman stated. "We can ingest [everything that's in digital format] into our model and then proactively remind you or bring those memories to you." In that sense, humans could have access to effectively limitless memory: any digital information given to Engramme could be stored and recalled when the memory is relevant.

In practice, Engramme ingests a user's digital data and builds what Kreiman calls a "memerome," a play on "genome"—a personalized index of a person's memory. Rather than waiting for a user to search, the system monitors context in real time and surfaces relevant information automatically. As a user writes a paper in Google Docs, the algorithm might surface an article they read



three years ago. If a user meets with an old friend on Zoom, the system could provide any information from their last virtual conversation. Essentially, the system will read data from any platform you give it access to—your emails, Zoom meeting transcripts, photos, texts—and then retrieve and present relevant information to the user.

The interface currently runs through external devices, like a smartphone or smart glasses, feeding information to the user as it becomes contextually relevant to the large memory model. While the technology is currently limited to external devices, Kreiman dreams of a science-fiction future. "In the long term, what we'd like to do is go inside the brain."

Kreiman's motivation for enhancing memory comes not only from his research but also from personal experience. "One of the inspirations for me [in this path] was that my grandmother passed away because she had Alzheimer's," Kreiman remarked. "So witnessing on a daily basis that progression in memory loss has been a major inspiration for me, in addition to all the research to actually build the company."

While Kreiman felt that moving from academia to industry was necessary, it was a challenge. "My research has been at the intersection of vision, memory, neuroscience, and AI, and those are the building blocks of the kind of ideas and algorithms that we have at Engramme, in addition to all of the research foundation," he explained. "Building a company requires a lot of other skills and other knowledge in the business world, and many other aspects which are completely new to me."

Although Kreiman did not comment on the reported talks to raise around $100 million, he explained some of their go-to-market strategies. The company just moved into a San Francisco office, is hiring rapidly, and is seeking to hire more personnel from top AI companies.

Kreiman's co-founder, Madan, led the development of the startup's systems. "[Madan]'s really an amazing computer scientist. A lot of the actual coding of the algorithms, a lot of the actual architecture side, it's really been driven a lot by his passion and his amazing talent," Kreiman explained. Madan completed his Ph.D. in computer science at Harvard, working in Kreiman's lab for the last seven years before they decided to leave and build the company together.

Of course, building a perfect memory requires extensive data collection, which is why privacy is at the forefront of Kreiman's mind. "There's nothing more intimate than your memories," Kreiman stated. He clarified that Engramme will not be able to read any of your memories, and users will have complete control over what memories they share with the algorithm. The company does not directly store any raw data; only the processed, encrypted data.

Another ethical question is availability. Will consumers who can afford a "perfect memory" have an advantage over those who cannot access the technology? "I mean, not everybody has access to LLMs, right? Not everybody has access to computers, not everybody has access to cars," Kreiman countered. "I think this is a very good question that applies to almost anything."

While Kreiman was inspired by his late grandmother, he acknowledged that the technology was designed for the general population, not as a treatment for dementia. "This is not a cure for Alzheimer's. This is an aid to remember things," he stated. "But I think people who have early dementia or [are] beginning to see the signs of memory loss are the ones who are going to embrace this faster."

As the company continues to grow, Kreiman is ambitious and envisions success. He acknowledges that many colleagues and academics at Harvard thought his decision to move into industry was "crazy." Kreiman acknowledged that Engramme builds on research and scientific principles developed at institutions like Harvard, highlighting academia's role in advancing the field. However, he added, moving into industry allows for a major, tangible impact by bringing that research into the public eye.

"I envision that five years from now, we will do for memory what OpenAI did for language," Kreiman said. As of now, perfect memory remains an aspiration, but Kreiman is betting it won't for long.

PATRICK SLIZ '27 (PSLIZ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WISHES HE COULD HAVE A PERFECT MEMORY DURING HIS EXAMS.

GRAPHIC BY SAGE WILLEY '29

The Harvard Graduate Student Union Strikes For Increased Pay and Protections

On the Union's demands and the University-wide implications of the strike.

BY JULIA BOUCHUT '29

On Tuesday, April 21, members of the Harvard Graduate Students Union-United Auto Workers went on strike against the Harvard administration after 14 months of bargaining for a new contract. For the past 72 hours, union members—which include graduate and undergraduate student workers at Harvard, such as Teaching Fellows, Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Course Assistants—have stopped performing their professional responsibilities to picket across the University's campuses. Undergraduate students have been left in limbo as courses are cancelled and campus buildings are blocked.

The HGSU-UAW bargaining committee consists of around 3,900 student workers who hold approximately 4,900 positions across the University. Harvard has over 6,000 unionized employees who are represented across clerical, technical, academic, and service operations. Currently, the University has formal agreements with seven unions, of which the Area Trades Council, Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union also have contracts that expire in 2026. The prior HGSU-UAW Agreement lasted until June 30, 2025.

HGSU-UAW began talks to develop the terms of a new contract in Feb. 2025. The Union and University have regularly met since March 2025. Over the course of 23 bargaining sessions, HGSU-UAW and the University have reached consensus only on workspace and materials, as well as vacation or personal time. 23 articles are still outstanding, and one regarding a lab transition program has been withdrawn.

Frustration over the lack of progress in these discussions contributed to the recent escalation. "A strike is a last resort. I am willing to go on strike, but I certainly do not want to go on strike," bargaining committee member and Ph.D. candidate Denish Jaswal said to the "Harvard Independent." "After 14 months at the bargaining table, there are still some articles that the university has never responded to. There are many articles on our key demands that I laid out that Harvard has not agreed to make progress on. And so, I think that we have tried everything else, short of a strike, to get them to move."

Director of Harvard's Office of Labor and Employee Relations Brian Magner refrained from commenting on behalf of Harvard in a correspondence with the "Harvard Independent."

The Backdrop

Four days before the strike began, Provost and the Dane Professor of Law John Manning '82 and Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick '90 addressed HGSU-UAW and its demands in an email to University students and faculty. "The University remains committed to negotiating in good faith and reaching an agreement with HGSU-UAW-UAW," the April 17 message wrote. They continued to discuss HGSU-UAW requests for additional monetary compensation, worker benefits, and harassment and discrimination protections, determining that each was unfeasible for Harvard to comply with.

HGSU-UAW President Sara Speller and Vice President Sudipta Saha responded on behalf of the Union. "Here's the bottom line: Harvard's email portrays our proposals as unreasonable special protections. We are asking for equity: equity of pay between TF work and RA work, equity for those asking for protections from discrimination and harassment, equitable protections for non-citizen and disabled student workers, and an equitable union security structure that mirrors every other union contract on this campus," Speller and Saha wrote.

"The strike is not inevitable—we encourage the University to come to the table and work through these issues together. We remain available to meet, any time of day or night," they continued. "But in the coming days, and if a strike is to begin, we encourage you to speak to the workers about their experiences."

HGSU-UAW has classified their main claims into four categories: compensation, non-discrimination and harassment procedures, non-citizen student worker protections, and Union dues.

Compensation

HGSU-UAW is asking for a salary that accounts for the high cost of living in Boston and Cambridge, which has been estimated to be approximately $70,000 for an adult without children. Currently, TFs are paid on average $26,300 over 10 months for 20 hours of work a week, and Research Assistants are paid $40,830. Ph.D. students on research salaries receive a $50,000 stipend. Guaranteed funding for Ph.D. students in the Humanities and Social Sciences lasts only five years.

The Union requests that the University raise TF pay to around $45,000 during the academic year—an adjustment which the Union feels is necessary to, according to Speller and Saha, "correct a Harvard-specific workaround that keeps TF wages low and makes it difficult for upper G-level graduate workers to stay afloat." The Union also wants its wages to continually increase in proportion to inflation. To support their demands, the Union cited peer institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford, where student workers make up to $60,293 and $58,460, respectively.

Some union workers find the gap between Harvard and these other universities shameful. "Harvard is the most well-endowed institution in the world. It can lift, it can set the highest standard for working conditions in this entire world, if it wanted to, and it is actively choosing not to," Jaswal said.

The University responded with a proposed 10% increase to all salaried appointment rates over four years. "This is in line with compensation offers in other recent labor negotiations. HGSU-UAW, however, has proposed a 74% increase in the minimum rate for TFs and a 22% increase for salaried research assistants," Manning and Weenick wrote in their April 17 letter. They continued to clarify that, in addition to compensation, Ph.D. student workers receive benefits to cover tuition, health insurance, and living expenses, which total at least $425,000 over a minimum of five years.

Ph.D. candidate and GOV 1295 TF Jessica van Meir clarified these numbers based on her experience, which has been compounded by high University housing expenses. "One of my best friends last year moved to Ohio because Harvard raised her rent by 40% from one year to the next," she said. "She simply could not afford to live here anymore on a TF salary, and she was working more than two sections a semester."

During one of the bargaining sessions, the University's CFO gave a presentation breaking down Harvard's finances. Union members were left confused by the conveyed lack of liquidity. "I think the biggest question was, you have a $57 billion endowment, why can't that be used to fund our proposals?" Jaswal said. "I think their answer was that they value the endowment growing in perpetuity over paying their workers a living wage. So the answer was not that they can't afford it. The answer was, this is not their priority right now."

Non-discrimination

HGSU-UAW's second key demand asks for recourse regarding harassment and discrimination processes.

In 2023, the University established the Harvard University Non-Discrimination Policy for all University affiliates. The policy designates the institution in charge of approving or denying all harassment and discrimination claims.

According to Speller and Saha, one in five student workers experiences harassment, discrimination, or bullying during their time at Harvard. "We have had multiple workers come to the table to testify about their experiences being sexually harassed and assaulted in their place of work, only for the University to insist that the very processes which have failed our members are the ones that we must accept in the name of 'equal treatment,'" the pair wrote. "Some workers have even, in the midst of crisis, been placed on involuntary leave, depriving them of pay and healthcare when they need it the most. Their experiences have fallen on deaf ears."

"The HGSU-UAW proposal would conflict not only with federal regulations for Title IX complaints, but also with the University's policy that members of our community should have access to the same procedures," Manning and Weenick responded.

"Over the course of my Ph.D., I've personally known about half a dozen people who have been assaulted, harassed," Ph.D. candidate Rachel Petherbridge said to the "Harvard Independent." "All these people have one thing in common, which is that they've either not trusted Title IX enough to go to them, or they've gone to Title IX, and they were completely failed."

For Petherbridge's friends in the corporate world, Human Resources quickly addresses sexual harassment concerns. "They go to HR, they give the whole thing, there's a couple meetings … and the person who harassed them is out within two weeks," she said. "At Harvard, you're lucky if it takes 18 months."

Non-citizen workers

HGSU-UAW asks for increased protection for non-citizen workers via more legal and financial support, in particular against the federal government's immigration policies. They also seek to compensate individuals for time lost at immigration appointments.

"We're asking the university to not let ICE on campus unless with a judicial warrant or any other governmental agencies that might be doing that kind of immigration enforcement," Jaswal said.

According to the Union, the University has declared to fight for its non-citizen affiliates but has not put this verbal commitment in writing.

Union dues

Finally, the Union asks the University to require all student workers to pay HGSU-UAW regardless of membership. Under this proposal, no one will be required to join HGSU-UAW—but those who do not will nonetheless pay a "fair share" fee since the organization is required to represent all student workers regardless.

The flat Union dues are 1.44% of a student worker's monthly salary, along with a $10 initiation fee.

"Harvard administration claims that its position is predicated on providing 'freedom of choice' for workers. However, this simply cannot be true—if it were, then we would not be the only union on campus lacking a contract with the model we are asking for," Speller and Saha wrote.

"What we are asking for is for everybody to pay their fair share. So this means either becoming a union member, or if you don't want to become a member, paying what's called agency fees, which is a little bit less than standard union dues, so that we can upkeep the union," Jaswal added. "Without fair share fees and this kind of union security in place, we are not able to afford a lot of the basic functions of our union."

Existing Tensions

The University has been slow to respond to the articles presented, Jaswal explained. "I think that that kind of highlights two main issues in this bargaining process," she said. "One, the University has not been doing the bare minimum of responding to our proposals in a timely fashion. And second, when they have responded, their initial response has been [to reject] essentially every single article we've opened."

The Union has bargained with the University in good faith, though the administration does not seem to be coming from the same place, Jaswal continued. "We come to them with many testimonials. We are not opening articles for the fun of it."

"We are opening them because student workers have informed us how various aspects of the contract have not been sufficient to meet their needs, and that's why we have made and offered the changes that we have."

Van Meir expressed broader disdain with the University after a compensation dispute. Van Meir was a TF for a class at the Harvard Kennedy School, which required 20 hours per week to grade. Upon speaking with a colleague in the Sociology department, she realized that her hours corresponded to serving as a TF for two sections, though she was only receiving pay for one. She met with the Office of Labor and Employee Relations, hoping for a resolution. "I encountered a level of hostility that I was really shocked by, because I was in this meeting with some guy in the Office of Labor and Employee Relations who was interrogating [me]," she said.

Her Union representative secured her pay for two sections, but it should have been simpler in her eyes. "My feeling from that experience was, if this is how Harvard treats its graduate student workers, I'm not going to recommend to other Ph.D. students that they come here," she said.

Petherbridge voiced her support for the Union, not the University. "I get like $1,500 a year from Union benefits that would not exist before I started," she explained. "In terms of compensation, basically, everything that I've benefited from has been directly from Union action, not because [of] the University."

Undergraduate Involvement

Leading up to the strike, HGSU-UAW sent undergraduate students email blasts about organized meetings and placed pamphlets in personal mailboxes in student dormitories. These actions have been specifically targeted at Harvard College enrollees.

Van Meir views the strike as important for undergraduate and graduate students alike. "[The] undergraduates' quality of teaching will be better if the graduate students teaching them have good working positions, and Harvard will be able to attract higher quality Ph.D. candidates if they have competitive packages for those students."

"What we are asking first and foremost is for solidarity from the undergraduates," Jaswal said. "So recognition that this is a joint struggle, and that you all will benefit if we are treated better in our workplaces, because our working conditions and your learning conditions are intimately intertwined."

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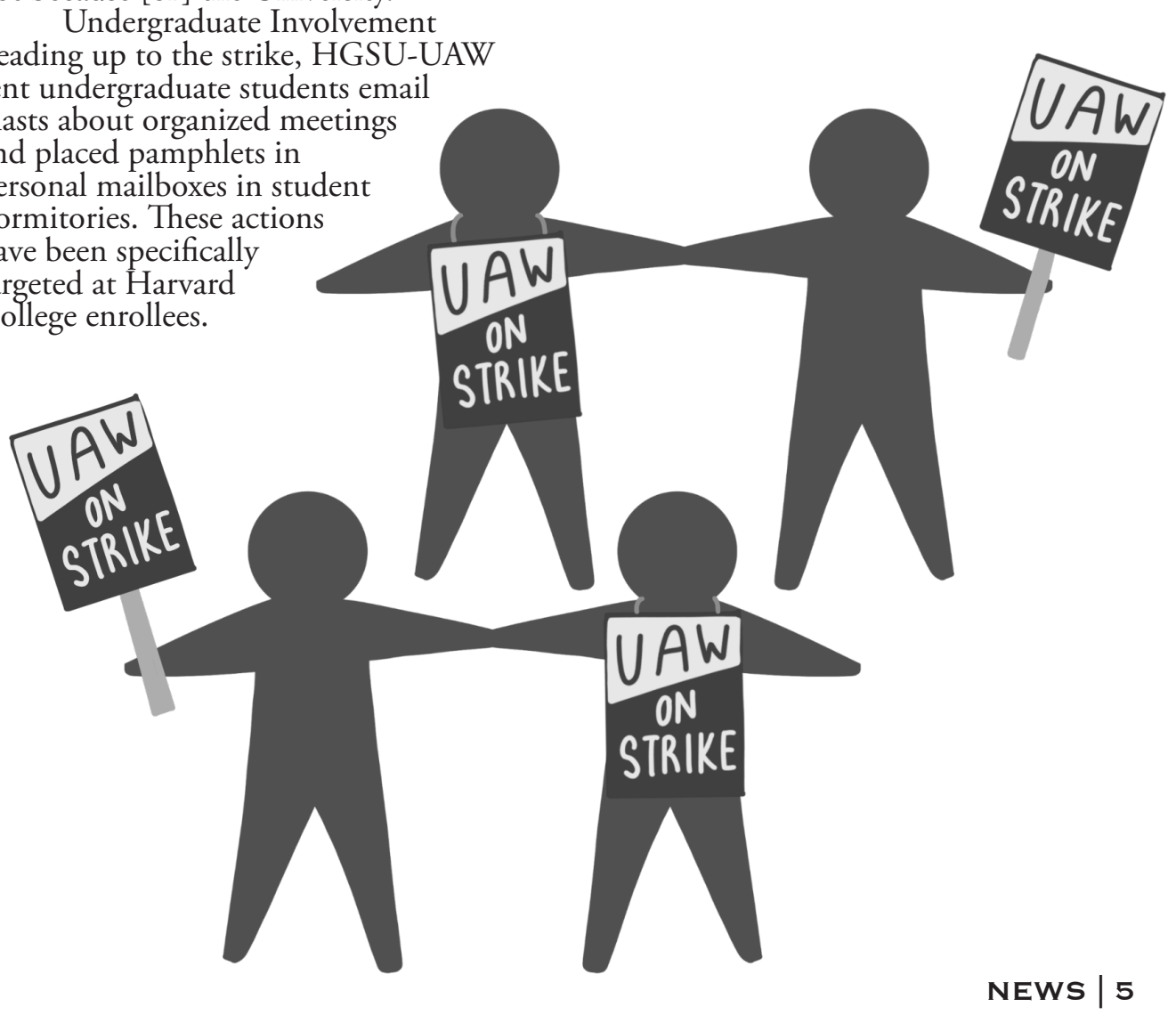
Graphic by Cameron Bernier '29



"Energy, Climate, and the Environment": Expanding Climate Education at Harvard

Harvard's 50th concentration embraces an interdisciplinary approach to addressing climate challenges in higher education.

BY RANIA JONES '27

On April 7, Harvard announced the launch of a new concentration, "Energy, Climate, and the Environment," set to be offered in the 2026-27 academic year. The decision came after Harvard faculty members overwhelmingly approved the interdisciplinary program in a 215-3 vote. ENCE is Harvard College's first new field of study since 2018.

The ENCE concentration offers undergraduates the opportunity to tackle complex, evolving climate-related issues, pushing students to examine the environment through the lenses of science, engineering, sociology, economics, and ethics. In a statement from Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability and Salata Institute Director James Stock, he noted that the concentration's explicit integrative commitment is what Harvard's liberal arts mission promises, allowing students to develop their thinking, connect their ideas, and apply their learning to society's greatest problems. "In 2026, there is no harder problem—and no clearer test of that promise—than climate change and the energy transition," Stock wrote.

Lene Hau, the Mallinckrodt Professor of Physics and of Applied Physics, coordinated the 41-page ENCE proposal with Robin Kelsey, the Shirley Carter Burden Professor of Photography, and Jason Beckfield, the Robert G. Stone Jr. Professor of Sociology. In an interview with the "Harvard Independent," Hau attributed the conception of the program to the felt climate anxiety of undergraduates and a lack of opportunity to take action. "They felt they had no agency," she said.

The approval process for the new concentration, Hau explained, was organically driven and required significant brainstorming, workshopping, and ideation from faculty and undergraduate students across the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences: "It's been a four-and-a-half-year process … and we have had significant faculty buy-in."

"We have had so many inputs and interactions with students, like we have held burrito nights in Cambridge and coffee chats with students in the Science and Engineering Complex in Allston," Hau said.

"We have created a community," she continued.

Bridging the FAS and the SEAS, the concentration is organized into four tracks: Nature, Ethics, and the Human Imagination (hosted by the Arts & Humanities Division); Science and Engineering for Sustainable Solutions (hosted by SEAS); Markets, Politics, and Societies (hosted by the Division of Social Science); or Climate and Biodiversity (hosted by the Division of Science). "We cannot have siloed disciplines trying to solve [climate issues] individually; it will never work," Hau expressed, explaining that the complexity of the environment necessitates collaboration across schools and disciplines.

The concentration is set to include a shared introductory course alongside additional core classes within each curricular track. Beyond their primary focus, students will be able to further specialize their track by pursuing different "braids" or customizable pathways. The braid structure enables tracks to remain flexible and dynamically develop over time.

"We are not training students to in any way be experts in everything. They will be experts. They will go deep in a particular field, but then they will develop literacy in the complementary areas," Hau explained.

This past spring, the College offered what will be the introductory course to pilot the program and its multifaceted approach to the climate problem: "ENCE-10: Gateway to Energy, Climate and Environment." The course brought faculty from the applied physics, history, and sociology departments to mirror the professional climate of the world that students will enter, including Joyce Chaplin, the James Duncan Phillips Professor of Early American History, in addition to Beckfield and Hau.

The bookend of the program will require students to complete ENCE-100, a senior capstone project, pushing undergraduates to collaborate on a contemporary climate-related problem. The concentration's fundamental philosophy, Hau explained, is solutions-focused, with the ultimate goal of preparing undergraduates to play a significant part in driving future solutions after graduation and to understand the value of different stakeholders.

ENCE builds on Harvard's current climate offerings, which include an environmental fellowship program, a broad range of course offerings throughout departments, and extensive extracurricular opportunities, including the Harvard Undergraduate Urban Sustainability Lab and the Harvard Undergraduate Clean Energy Group.

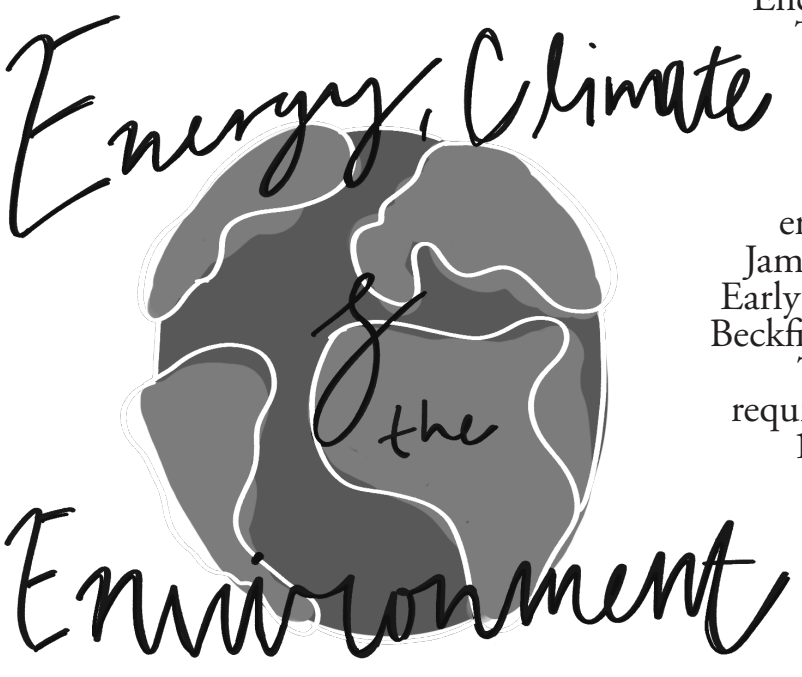
The new concentration joins the College's current environmental concentrations, complementing, rather than competing with, the existing "Environmental Science and Engineering" and "Environmental Science and Public Policy."

As Stock notes in his statement, some faculty have expressed concerns that adding this concentration will compete with existing environment-centric majors for enrollment and teaching capacity. "FAS and SEAS explicitly structured ENCE to complement and strengthen existing programs, rather than replace them," Stock assured. These concerns were a call for careful consideration in the concentration's design, rather than a call for inaction.

Hau echoed these sentiments, explaining that the proposal was not without its pushback, given the ambitious nature of the concentration's reach. "It's unprecedented in scope, which is exciting, but also very complicated," Hau explained.

Stock concludes his statement, acknowledging that there is no singular shape or form to Harvard's climate initiatives. Hau expressed a similar notion, noting that what ENCE brings to Harvard's curriculum is unheard of in higher education globally. "What we are doing is really, truly unique in the world. And I'm seeing the response I'm getting from other institutions, even in other countries."

"These problems around climate change, they are so big and existential … There's simply not a single silver bullet solution," Hau added.



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Graphic by Madison Krug '27

The "Elixir of Freedom": Mitt Romney Weighs In on Trump's Second Term

At JFK Jr. Forum, Mitt Romney reflects on political polarization, artificial intelligence, and why he believes America's best days are ahead.

BY MORGAN JAY '29

On April 13, the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School hosted a conversation between Mitt Romney—former U.S. Senator from Utah, governor of Massachusetts, and presidential candidate—and Jill Lepore, the David Woods Kemper Professor of American History at Harvard College. The event marked the second installment in "America at 250 and Beyond," a series of conversations hosted at the IOP celebrating America's semiquincentennial by discussing the nation's history and its path forward. One of Trump's most prominent Republican critics, Romney, commented on the direction of both the party and the country.

Starting his career as a consultant, Romney became the co-founder and chief executive officer of Bain Capital, before leaving to run the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Before his involvement, the Olympics had been plagued by scandals over rights to the games and were facing losses of hundreds of millions of dollars. Romney cut the budget by $200 million, leading to a $50 million surplus. He would go on to become Governor of Massachusetts as well as the Republican nominee in the 2012 presidential election.

Lepore began the conversation by asking Romney whether President Donald Trump's election in 2016 marked a departure from traditional Republican ideals or whether it was comparable to Barry Goldwater's rise in the mid-century, which American political historian Richard Hofstadter argued was reliant on "exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy."

"I think the departure has happened in the last several years," Romney replied. "President Trump represents a more dramatic departure from, if you will, the Reagan Republican Party, and the party my dad would have recognized."

He cited Democratic policies like President Joe Biden's border policy, cultural issues like sex changes for prisoners, and support for the "defund the police" movement as having fueled the demographic shift underlying this change.

Romney acknowledged that both parties have moved to the fringe, citing the nomination process, campaign finance regulations, and social media as reasons for the increased polarization. "We have fewer and fewer people willing to participate in primaries," Romney said. "The people who tend to go to a caucus … the people who are going to go to a convention … are the people who are rabidly interested in some issue or the other." He also criticized social media for only offering users news that fits their ideology, straining the nation of what he called "common facts." Finally, he mentioned the disproportionate influence of megadonors.

In terms of partisanship within the government, Romney warned the audience about a growing lack of separation between the three branches of government. With the Republican Congress generally following the Trump administration's lead and both parties recently having deployed the "nuclear option" to require only a simple majority for judicial appointments, Romney said that the legislative and judicial branches are more partisan and less independent. This dynamic, he warned, rewards politicians for party loyalty rather than sound legislation.

"The reason we're not able to address the challenges we have is that many people have gone to Washington looking to keep their job, not get something good done," Romney said. He named artificial intelligence, climate change, energy policy, and the national debt as key challenges going unaddressed.

Romney also sharply criticized President Trump's foreign policy, especially the administration's posture toward European allies. Trump has attempted to acquire Greenland and threatened to leave the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While Romney said he agrees that European partners should contribute more to NATO, he emphasized the importance of strong alliances in confronting China's economic and geopolitical rise. "In that battle, we want as many friends as we can possibly have," he said. "I want to link arms with our allies. I want to be able to say to China, 'as long as you play by these economic rules, none of us are going to allow your goods to come into our country.'"

Romney's criticisms of contemporary American politics painted the audience a pessimistic picture, so Lepore asked him to consider Gerald Ford's inaugural address—when Ford famously told the nation, "My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over."

"Who will make that speech one day about this moment?" Lepore asked. Without naming a specific figure, Romney replied that the great civilizations of history have reversed decline in three ways: an exceptional leader, a crisis, or a rising generation.

He placed President Abraham Lincoln and—to a lesser degree—Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan within the first camp. He described the unity that can be derived from a crisis. Finally, he mentioned Jon Grispan's "An Age of Acrimony," which examines American democracy during Reconstruction.

"I met with the author, and he said [the Civil War enmity] dissipated in the beginning of the 1900s, from 1865 to about 1910. The young generation said enough. The rising generation wouldn't buy into it," Romney said.

With those three options on the table, Romney left his audience with a cautiously optimistic prediction for America's future. "We're still the greatest nation, in my view, on earth. There is an extraordinary elixir that America enjoys: the elixir of freedom," he said. "I'm convinced that our best days are ahead, but we're gonna face some challenges to get there."

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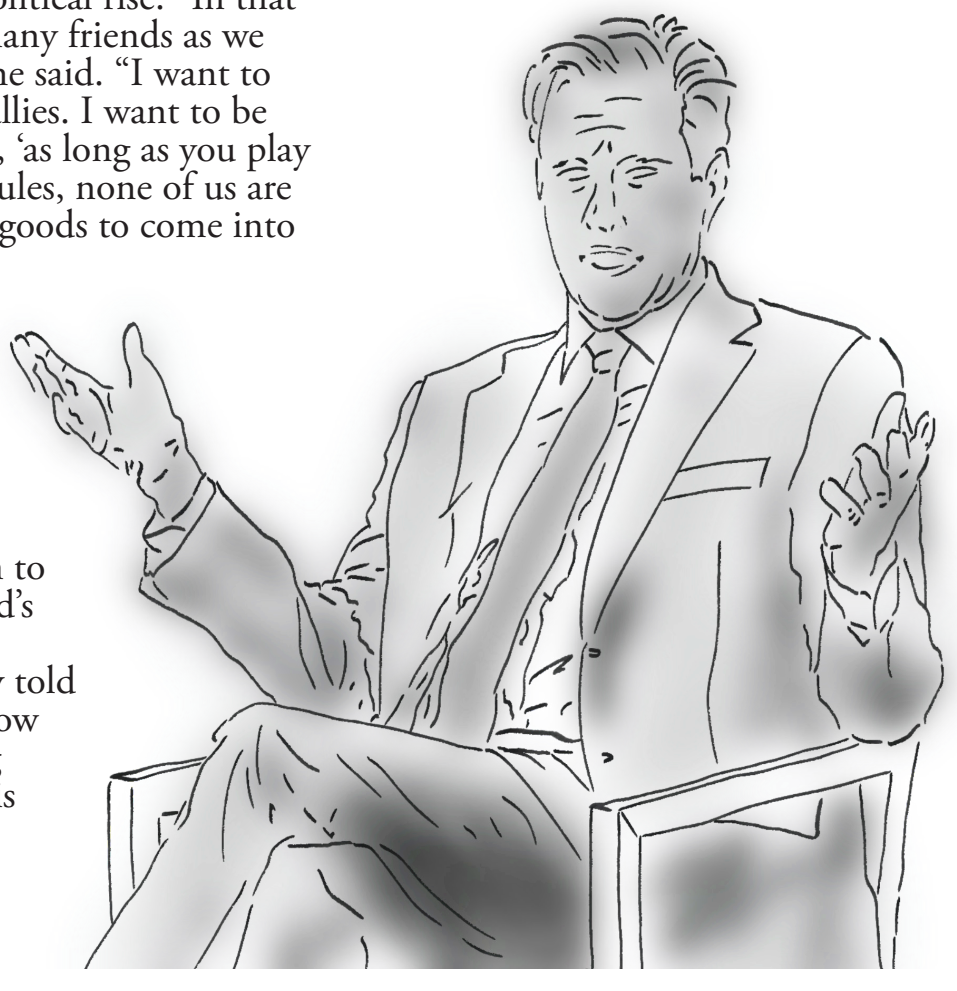
Graphic by Kerrie Zhu '28



FORUM

Rumìnatìons on "Wìld Geese"

Mary Oliver, mental health, and the asinine search for perfection.

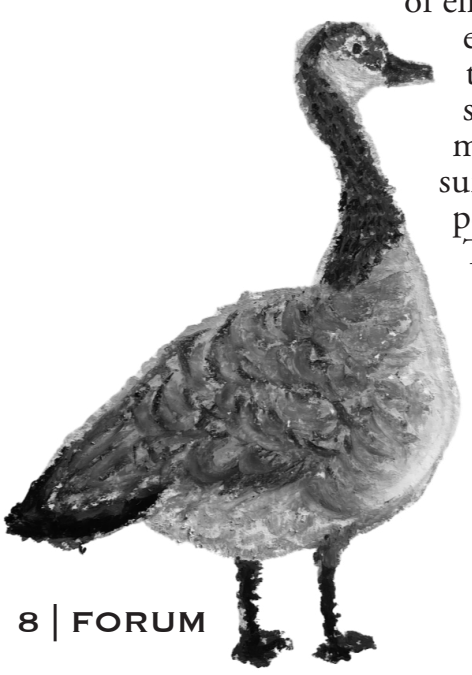
BY NOAH BASDEN '29

"You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on
your knees
For a hundred miles through
the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft
animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell
you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of
the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the
clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and
exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things."
— Mary Oliver

Though this week has been marked by clear skies and glorious sunshine, this Earth Day, I find myself holed up in Lamont Library—specifically, level 1 row 41—reading and re-reading the late Mary Oliver's 1986 poetry collection "Dream Work." This collection includes "Wild Geese," arguably Oliver's most loved and famous poem. The piece is not only an ode to nature but an essential commentary on the need for a different perspective that every college student should adopt at some point in their lives.

In a sentiment I initially found hard to swallow, Oliver opens her poem with, "You do not have to be good" (line 1). Notice how she didn't say perfect nor great—just good. In other words, it is okay not to be good. That sounds like quite an obvious statement, yet how often do we actually allow ourselves to internalize these words? I would wager that, in actuality, we give ourselves grace less than we might imagine. When in reality, to feel is to be your true, authentic self—to be human.

On the flip side, perfection is a myth that many of us have conned ourselves into believing is attainable. I have found that, especially at places of elite higher education, there is a sort of herd mentality surrounding perfection. There is a sense of obligation to do more, be more, and achieve more because we are in a privileged academic space. That our presence here is proof of some exceptional ability or potential. Of course, we should want to do great things with the education we've received. But when the pursuit of perfection becomes the only goal, we risk failing to apply what we've learned over the past four years to building a life that is simply "good enough"—whether as an end in itself or a step toward something more refined.



To live is, in my opinion, to be vulnerable: in a sense, it's "let[ting] the soft animal of your body/love what it loves" (lines 4-5) and being unapologetically yourself. As Oliver puts it, "the world goes on"(line 7), so my question is: Why waste what precious time you have pursuing something unattainable, instead of living on your own terms?

The logical explanation for what I mean by that starts with an essential question: what is living for me, and by extension, you? I've already touched on feeling as an essential part of living a good life, but there is something more foundational to it. Living is, in part, rejecting the pressure society places on you to sacrifice your free time in pursuit of building a career or increasing productivity that never feels like enough.

It's "over and over announcing your place/in the family of things" (line 17-18), saying to the world that you exist beyond your output. There is a you that exists outside of Harvard that laughs way too loudly at stupid jokes or finds comfort in the dulcet tones of Adrianne Lenker's music—despite all your friends calling you performative. There is a you that deserves to flourish, and that version deserves just as much, or even more, attention than the version that gets overly excited at the prospect of lunch, as the only break you get during the day. It's this iteration of you, not the competitive athlete in the case of some, nor the people striving to maintain their 4.0 GPA, in the case of others, that Oliver is speaking to.

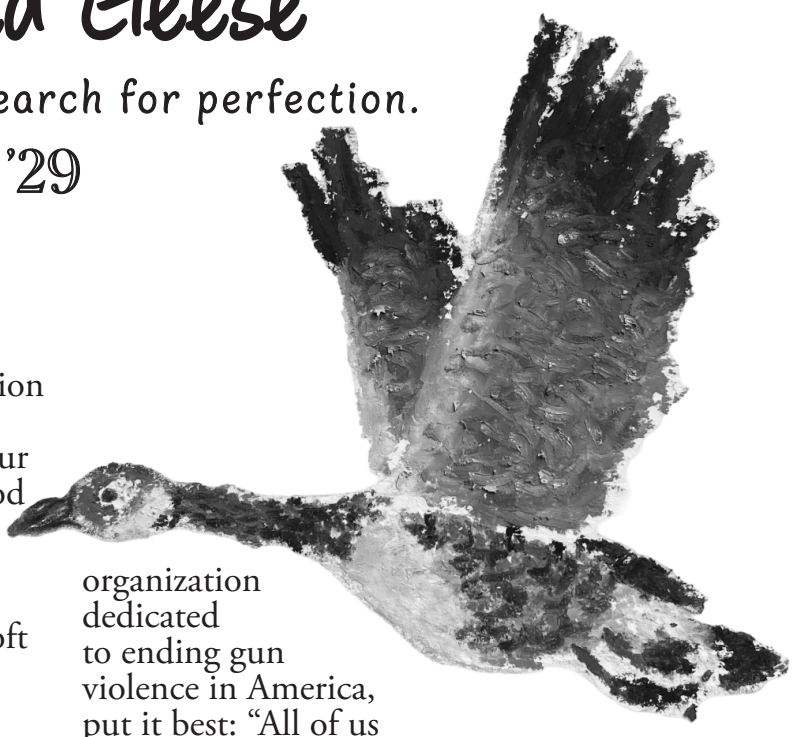
On that note, I find it ironic that I am currently writing this hunkered down in the darkest corner of Lamont's basement. Perhaps I'll take my own advice and practice what I preach. Until next time…

Originally, as you can see, this article was going to end on a positive note. In light of recent news and reflection, I realise I didn't address what we are supposed to do for those whose lives are taken before they can announce their place "in the family of things" (line 18).

My mind turns to Shreveport, Louisiana, and to the eight children senselessly murdered last week in what was the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S. in the past two years. Seven of those eight children were gunned down in what local police have described as "execution-style" killings at the hands of their own father.

Children.

Gabby Giffords, the former Representative from Arizona who survived an assassination attempt in 2011 and subsequently founded Giffords, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending gun violence in America, put it best: "All of us should be outraged that we live in a country that routinely subjects our kids to such unimaginable violence."



Maybe Oliver was wrong. Maybe we do need to "walk on [our] knees/ For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting" (lines 2-3) because we ought to feel ashamed. It is shameful that firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in this country, and the politicians' thoughts and prayers aren't doing anything to stop it.

It is shameful that, in Louisiana, where this tragedy happened, you do not need a license to own a firearm, nor, in the case of private sales, do you need to go through a background check to purchase one. It is because of laws like these that I reject the frequently said phrase "Guns don't kill people, people kill people." Actually, guns do kill people—and we've made it far too easy for the wrong people to get their hands on them.

Reading the line "Meanwhile the world goes on," (line 7) in this context almost seems like an insult. It is a fact of life that the world will move on from this tragedy—but should it? Every time a horrific event like this occurs, which in America is far too often, we mourn in the moment, yet the vast majority of the population moves on. The survivors and affected communities, alongside the activists who have devoted their lives to preventing these atrocities from happening, don't get to move on. They are confronted every day by reminders of what was, waking up to quiet houses no longer filled with the laughter of youth, tables set for one instead of for many. They don't get to move on.

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Graphics by Sarahluna Sassine '29

A Case For American Nuclear Energy

America's big clean nuclear future.

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

Science, politics, and economics all say nuclear energy is the key to a clean future. The source currently accounts for just 18.6% of total electricity generation in the United States, despite capacity (the construction of new plants) remaining relatively steady since 1990. The semi-forgotten clean energy source has received minimal investments over the past 30 years, while wind and solar power have received billions of dollars—even though they account for a similar percentage of today's total electricity output. By the end of this piece, I hope you will understand the power of nuclear energy and why I have decided to dedicate part of my future career to the field.

What even is nuclear energy? How does this atomic science produce this massive amount of power? When you consider that nuclear physicists dedicate their lives to understanding these questions, they become far more complex. In the most basic sense, nuclear fission works by splitting atomic nuclei (typically uranium), releasing a massive amount of heat that turns water into steam, which powers a turbine to produce electricity. In other words, nuclear energy harnesses the power of highly exothermic reactions.

Ok, now we know the process—next, the context. The history of nuclear energy is layered, which leads me to question what the world could have looked like if we considered the plain facts rather than jumping straight to fear rooted in past events. After the Manhattan Project, it became clear that the destructive powers of nuclear weapons could be leveraged for energy generation. Through military and civilian research, alongside initiatives such as Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace," nuclear power was expanded into electricity production for naval vessels and domestic homes. Starting in the 1950s, countries around the world—mainly the United States and the Soviet Union—aligned, invested heavily in the source, and expanded its use across North America, Europe, and Asia.

After this rapid development of the energy resource, what changed? Why has the United States gone from a net increase of 109 nuclear reactors between 1960 and 1990 to a net decrease of 18 since then? Often called "the most serious accident in U.S. commercial nuclear power plant operating history," Three Mile Island was a partial reactor meltdown on March 28, 1979, which released radiation affecting two million people.

The two other major accidents often associated with nuclear power are Chernobyl and Fukushima. The Chernobyl disaster occurred on April 26, 1986, due to a flawed Soviet reactor design and multiple operational errors, including the disabling of the automatic shutdown mechanism. The result of this terrible event was 30 total deaths—all operators and first responders—and the release of radiation affecting millions of people in surrounding areas.

The Fukushima disaster occurred on March 11, 2011, following an earthquake and tsunami that limited the plant's cooling capacity, leading to a meltdown and the release of radiation into the Pacific Ocean. There were no direct radiation deaths, though thousands of deaths were associated with the evacuation. Notably, the reactor handled the earthquake well, as they are designed to withstand such events. The problem was that the reactor was not built high enough above sea level to withstand the tsunami. As a result, 11 of the 12 backup diesel generators were shut down due to water damage. All it would have taken to prevent this disaster was building the plant higher or placing the diesel generators in watertight bunkers.

All three of these accidents sound awful until you put them into context. For Three Mile Island, the radiation from the meltdown averaged one millirem above the usual background dose; for context, you receive six millirem on average from an X-ray and 3.5 millirem on a coast-to-coast flight. Chernobyl, by far the worst of the disasters, caused at least 30 deaths and 5,000 cases of cancer as a result of radiation. And in all three cases, industry regulations were overhauled to improve safety.

Despite these tragedies, this is a minuscule number compared to deaths caused by gas and oil. I do not have the space to account for the estimated 91,000 deaths in just the United States each year due to these industries, not to mention the ecological disasters they have unleashed.

Nuclear energy, yes, is powerful and can be dangerous when mismanaged. But with proper oversight, the numbers show it is significantly safer than our primary forms of energy generation.

Nuclear power is one of the most stable sources of energy. When a global crisis sends oil prices skyrocketing and unpredictable weather hinders solar and wind fields, nuclear power provides stable, constant power generation. It requires one three-hundred-sixtieth and one seventy-fifth of the land area used by wind and solar, respectively, to produce the same amount of kilowatt-hours—a unit equal to 1,000 watts sustained for one hour.

In terms of sustainability, nuclear energy is critical to a carbon-free future. On a lifecycle basis, nuclear power produces about 12 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt-hour, roughly equal to wind power, and one-quarter as much as utility-scale solar. France serves as a real-world example, with two-thirds of its electricity generated by nuclear power. Its carbon emissions per kilowatt-hour are 42 grams, compared to the global average of 472 grams. Even with these low emissions, France ranks among the cheapest countries per kilowatt-hour in Western Europe.

A common fallacy in the nuclear debate is that nuclear waste is unmanageable. The amount of waste produced by the United States over the last 60 years could fit within a football field stacked ten yards deep. So far in our production history, we have produced 400,000 tons of nuclear waste; each day, we consume 12 million tons of oil. This doesn't even mention that waste could be recycled and reused for power generation with further research. The waste produced has its radioactivity reduced to one one-thousandth of its original level after 40 years. While still not safe, with proper investment in geologically stable storage sites, the issue of nuclear waste could be effectively addressed.

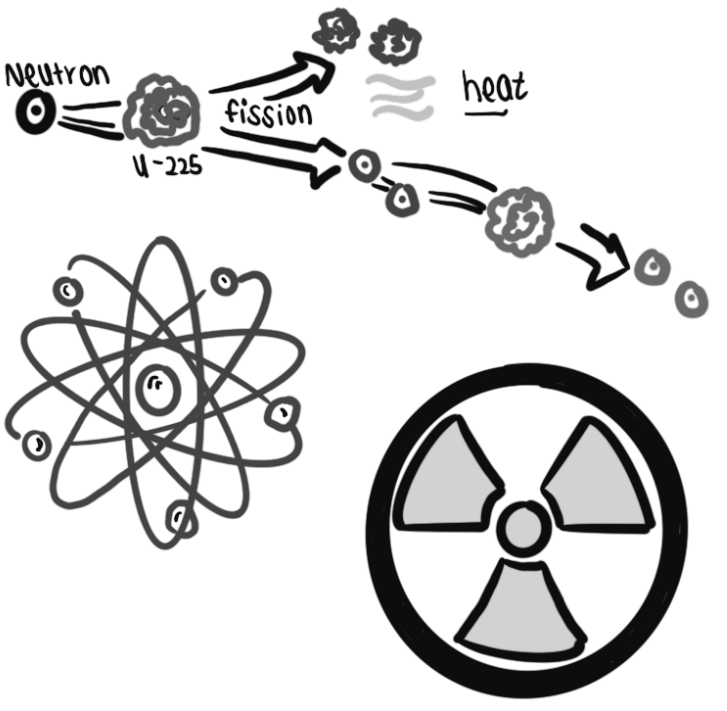
Beyond the waste issue, the main downside—cost—is being addressed by multiple initiatives. On May 23, 2025, President Trump issued four executive orders focused on reviewing nuclear regulations and their effectiveness. There has also been a push to construct small modular reactors, which, among their many benefits, enable mass production rather than the specialized construction required for large reactors.

Nuclear energy has spent years being Hollywood's bogeyman. From "The Simpsons," prominently featuring a satirized (and arguably fully misinforming) nuclear plant, to movies like "China Syndrome" that rest on misleading or exaggerated premises. Even the "ecological groups" pushing against nuclear conveniently take millions in donations from oil and gas. This era of deception must come to an end if we want a clean, bright, energy-dense future.

With billions of well-deserved dollars being pumped into the industry, a nuclear golden era appears to be on the horizon. And because of its amazing benefits, it is safe to say nuclear is the key to breaking oil and gas's hold on the world.

KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS EXCITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY.

GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27



Bishop's ʻŌʻō

Mono bishopi

STATUS: EXTINCT

"I was summoned by my assistant with wild shouts. He had an entirely new bird!

I made this had shot specimen

lote: assistant beautiful which may be an "ōʻō." "It

Kona Grosbeak

Chloridops kona

STATUS: EXTINCT

"On the 1

It dull, sluggish solitary bird, very silent -

It whole existence may be summed up in the words "to eat."

They are not shy and do not fly far if shot at, and sometimes when feeding, they do not take notice of the gun

Palmer once (October 12th) shot as many as a dozen on a big lava flow, and six of them during five minutes within a distance of fifty yards

...-'ai-hāwane

...s anna

EXTINCT

...oth of ... someone

... had

... ai hawa...

"this bird, which was believed to be extinct."

...was shot near ... headwaters of Awini on mount ... hala."

"...I fired at him without effect and so intent was he on looking for his mate that he immediately returned and was brought down by another shot.

and Hawai'i Mamo

Drepanis pacifica

STATUS: EXTINCT

"no doubt it is on the verge of a speedy extinction"

"...I succeeded in getting one bird ... a shot at ... a tall ... the top of ... ohia tree."

"Of the others I saw no more, though I repeatedly visited the locality again."

Kaua'i 'Akialoa

Hemignathus procerus

STATUS: EXTINCT

"In one instance I shot a female, and the male stopped in front of the tree, calling desperately."

Befriending "Paradise"

A tale of an island understood through movement.

BY CLARA LAKE '27

"Paradise is not easy to reach," said Nonna Manu.

From the ridge upon which her house sat, I could see the white rooftops of Lipari spilling down the island's green hills and into the sea, where the port and the "Laurana," the ship that my travel companions and I had just arrived on, were nestled.

"Nonna Manu" is a nickname given by her two grandsons, aged six and two-and-a-half. These were my adopted family members, as I would spend July as their au pair, teaching them English. I was following in the footsteps of my mother, who decades earlier had gone to Italy as an au pair for the boys' father when he was their age. As a college student from the suburbs of Massachusetts, I was stepping into a life very different from the one I knew—onto an unknown island where I knew no one beyond my pseudo-family and did not speak the native tongue.

The first night, I told Manu I hoped to run while I was there (as a skier for Harvard's varsity Nordic team, this would be my summer training). She suggested I begin right then and gave me instructions for a route up the nearest hill. As dusk fell, I set out down a street whose slope made my knees ache. The asphalt through rows of stucco houses soon gave way to a dirt path. I ran until I reached a small church high above the coastline. Peering over a cliff, I could see the lights of Canneto below, bright against the dimming orange light of the sun and the navy blue of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Standing there, I was overwhelmed by the unfamiliar beauty of my surroundings, filled with excitement and curiosity. I had a feeling that I would find my place that summer, in the only way I knew how, as an endurance athlete—through motion.

Life on the island settled quickly into a routine. My mornings began early. I would awaken before the rest of the family and slip out onto the porch in time to glimpse the sunrise, which cast a soft pink glow on the sea, illuminating the Stromboli volcano in the distance. In these quiet hours, I ran on paths that barely existed, leaving only traces on the satellite map on my phone. At one point, it led me through a patch of thorns and to the top of Monte Guardia, overlooking the town. From my perch, I could also see two large rocks in the sea that Manu told me they are landmarks in Odysseus' journey home from Troy.

The Isole Aeolie (Aeolian Islands) are named after the Greek ruler of the winds, Aeolus. They were born from volcanic eruptions; evidence of this surrounded us. After breakfast each morning, Manu and I prepared the boys for the beach. There, we swam together and watched the older boy jump from the pier with friends while his younger brother cooked pails of "pasta pesto" and cake from pebbles, singing "tanti auguri a te," or "happy birthday to you."

These days were marked with memories—and candidly, lessons. One morning, I saw what I thought was plastic floating in the calm water. I assumed that pollution had reached the edges of our Earth until the eldest son told me it was a rock: pomice, he said. Manu pointed out that its white and light structure demonstrated its volcanic origins. A few weeks later, Manu drove us around the island to see the now-closed pomice (pumice) mines. The cliffs were entirely white, sloughing into shallow water tinted turquoise by the pale rock below and ivory fragments that dotted the surface.

Tuckered out from the beach, the boys usually napped after lunch, along with most of the island. Their siesta was strange to me at first; while the island slept, I stayed awake, braving the heat in the quiet streets. One day, I jogged two kilometers downhill to the sea along the road we usually took, swam laps, and climbed back up the switchbacks. Midway through July, I rented a trekking bike from a man named Bruno and pedaled my way around the brutally hilly circumference of the island. Each afternoon, under my sweating brow, I began to feel closer to the island; it was becoming my friend, especially since I could not understand the Italian everyone else spoke.

In the late afternoons, Manu, the boys, and I went back out exploring. Manu took us to the far corners of the island, sharing her intimate knowledge and appreciation for the land, having first visited at age nine. The children's curiosity and energy fueled my own and gave me a unique lens through which to experience the environment we were learning about together.

One day, we drove to the other side, to Acquacalda. Between the cliffs and the sea was a single row of houses, separated from the water only by the street and a rocky beach that clattered noisily as the waves washed over it. Manu said that during the winter, the waves were so large and violent that no one could live there. There were large manmade rocks that the older boy scampered over. I was close behind, flinching with anxiety each time a wave sprayed us, then helping the younger one follow his brave older brother. I could feel the intensity of that town, but let myself see it through their eyes, as an incredible adventure. "I am the king of the world!"

Another afternoon, we went to the Caolino Caves. Colorful red and white hues of volcanic earth rose around us, remnants of past excavations, a hint at how humans once tried to extract from this place. The older boy and I hiked down a trail to see where sulfuric gas leaked from a seam in the earth. The dirt was loose and slick, and we slipped a few times, but

he was determined to show me.

Back on the porch, the island of Vulcano was visible, with a large crater from past volcanic eruptions. On my day off, I took an aliscafi (a ferry that rides above the water) to this island and hiked all the way up the crater. I peered down into the crater, feeling that I was at the mouth of a sleeping beast. Later, again renting a bike for my journey around this new island, I begged the owner to let me rent a normal bike, rather than an electric one. He finally relented, sending me off on a bright green ride called "Starfighter." I was soon reminded of how harsh volcanic-formed hills are, particularly under the relentless sun. On Vulcano, I found beaches where the sand was completely black and burned the soles of my feet.

The Aeolian Islands have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000, protected for their unique volcanic environment. I am beyond grateful for my time there, to the boys for showing me how to explore like a child again, and to Manu for sharing this special place with us. Paradise may not be easy to reach, nor is it easy to know. But learning Lipari through motion created a grounding connection.

Back home, where nature feels more contained, I miss that intimacy. Surrounded by college students, I almost forget what it feels like to view the world with childlike wonder. But the lesson remains: to know a place is to experience it with your whole body. Run through the cherry blossoms and see the beauty of Boston in spring, look for new ways to understand where you are, and move through it, with it, rather than simply past it.

Clara Lake '27 (claralake@college.harvard.edu) claimed the Strava QOM up Vulcano's crater.

Photo Courtesy of Clara Lake '27

The Unconsummated Kiss

On the limits of desire in Keats, Fitzgerald, and Woolf.

BY VIVIAN YE '27

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter." In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," John Keats, an English Romantic poet, addresses an ancient urn and imagines the scenes depicted upon it, including a "Bold Lover" who can never kiss his beloved, forever poised at the edge of fulfillment. Yet he is told not to grieve: "She cannot fade," and "For ever wilt thou love." Suspended in art, the kiss is never consummated. Desire, within the world of the urn, is infinite, timeless, and limitless.

In literature, the kiss often functions as a threshold—the point at which desire becomes embodied, physical, and exposed. What had existed as imagined, expansive, and unbounded becomes subject to time, expectation, and the limitations of lived experience.

So what kind of transformation occurs when this threshold is crossed? Does fulfillment of the kiss always mean a loss of possibility? Two renowned authors, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Virginia Woolf, offer different answers.

In Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," Jay Gatsby's first kiss with Daisy Buchanan is the instant he "forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath." The imagined and real collide, the infinite and ideal meet the finite, the corporeal, and the concrete. Desire and attachment are no longer abstract, but instead assume a physical and determinate form, and Gatsby's "mind would never romp again like the mind of God."

Gatsby's love has long existed in anticipation—his heart "beat[s] faster and faster" as he waits to kiss Daisy—but the kiss anchors that projection in reality. His tragedy is not in the fulfillment of the kiss, but in his attempts to sustain that experience and build a life around it. In doing so, he treats a singular experience as something scalable across time. Spending five years amassing wealth and dreaming of winning Daisy back, Gatsby discovers that reality cannot live up to his imagination: "no amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man can store up in his ghostly heart." The "colossal vitality" of his illusion has already "gone beyond [Daisy], beyond everything." In trying to "repeat the past," his love for Daisy is corrupted by time, social reality, and change, leaving him disillusioned. Fitzgerald thus echoes Keats' claim—perhaps the unheard melody really is sweeter.

Virginia Woolf offers a different perspective.

In "Mrs. Dalloway," Clarissa Dalloway, now married and living the life of a traditional housewife, reflects on the kiss she once shared with her former female lover Sally Seton, describing it as "the most exquisite moment of her whole life": a "religious feeling!"

For Clarissa, the greatest moment of intensity lies not in anticipation, but within the kiss itself. The novel refuses to extend the moment, preserving it instead in memory. As soon as the kiss occurs, the experience is interrupted by Peter Walsh, drawing Clarissa back into the heteronormative social world structured by marriage, time, and expectation.

Unlike Gatsby, Clarissa seems to recognize the constraints society places on her, and doesn't attempt to project that kiss into a life. She seals the kiss: it is "a present, wrapped up … just to keep it, not to look at it—a diamond, something infinitely precious." Perfection, then, relies on strict confinement to a past moment, isolated from ordinary life.

Taken together, these texts suggest that once the kiss is fulfilled—no longer suspended like Keats's "Bold Lover"—it becomes subject to limitation. In Fitzgerald, the first kiss coincides with the loss of expansive and imaginative freedom; in Woolf, it is "wrapped," kept away as a moment in the past. But what's more important is not the fulfillment itself, but how the characters interpret it. Gatsby mistakes the kiss for a beginning—something to be extended, repeated, and transformed into a life. In doing so, he binds it to time, to reality, to the social world, and it cannot sustain the meaning he gives it. Clarissa, on the other hand, recognizes the kiss as a moment complete in itself, a sort of ending, and preserves it through memory. Both responses, though, ultimately reveal the difficulty of integrating such intensity into continued lived experience.

We are often inclined to treat moments of heightened intimacy—first kisses, confessions, marriage—as promises of something more, something that should be sustained. It feels almost counterintuitive to imagine such instances as endings rather than beginnings. Yet something is lost in these firsts: the unformed space in which desire remains multiple and unfinalized takes on a fixed form. In life, the kiss becomes more than a literary device—it is a physical manifestation of romantic love. What literature suggests, then, is that once love is real and embodied, it can no longer remain a pure possibility, becoming vulnerable to the pressures of material life. It is perhaps when love is held at a distance—untouched by time, expectation, and social reality—that it retains its greatest intensity and purity.

VIVIAN YE '27 (VIVIAN_YE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CONCENTRATES IN ENGLISH AND IS ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO LITERARY CRITICISM AND PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY.

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTY ZEMBROWSKI '28

Exploring American Hometowns: Topsham, Maine

The way life should be.

BY SOPHIA GONZALEZ '28

First of all, it's not "Top-sham," it's pronounced "Tops-um."

I am what you call a true Mainer, born and raised—we are very proud of our status, and transplants are almost eternally outsiders. If you've ever met someone from Maine, they'll make it a key part of their personality; I'm no exception. I suppose it's a certain rugged charm: that the cold, long winters, the constant presence of more trees than people, and having the best of all worlds—mountains, lakes, forests, and rocky shores—that endows us with our pride.

But it took leaving my town of 10,000 residents and coming to Harvard to fully appreciate the privilege of having spent my childhood among the creaking pines and the whooshing sea breeze.

We are not to be confused with those who have vacation homes and are fleeting visitors. Don't get me wrong, we need our tourists. They fuel our economy even as they clog our predominantly two-lane roads, and never know how to pronounce the town they're in. Speaking of roads, Topsham lies at the gateway to two of the state's busiest routes: I-295—which connects our capital, Augusta, to the rest of the country—and Coastal Route 1, the scenic way to Acadia National Park. Because of this, we have some of the best pit-stop shopping and dining in the surrounding area.

If I only wrote about Topsham, this article would be too short to make it to print. However, the town is deeply connected to its surrounding areas. For example, my high school served four communities: Topsham, Harpswell, Bowdoin, and Bowdoinham, meaning you could drive across 40 square miles—well over an hour—and still be in the same school district. Given this size, getting your driver's license at 16 is a basic necessity.

The Midcoast area is known for its long shoreline dotted with harbors, hundreds of islands, charming towns, and forests filled with winding rivers. Topsham is known for being overshadowed by our neighbor across the bridge, Brunswick, home of Bowdoin College. Literally 90% of photos that show up when you Google "Topsham, Maine" are actually Brunswick, sans the old and retired yellow paper mill—that's ours.

Like many Mainers, I claim to have salt (and a little ice) in my veins. As a baby, my mother used to walk the sandy shores of Popham Beach State Park with me slung in a shawl, scouring for sand dollars. Once I could walk, we'd visit Acadia every summer and munch on wild blueberries as we hiked. As I found my balance on skis, I took to the Maine mountains and quickly mastered the art of faceplanting at uncontrollable speed into powdery snow.

Each season has its extremes: autumn burns through the treetops; a good winter brings mountains of snow; spring delivers the flowers, but mostly mud; and summer is what makes it all worthwhile. Having a bit of everything means understanding that we are at the mercy of Mother Nature, but also learning to tough things out.

There is no waiting for the perfect day—it's never promised. Even in elementary school, we would go snowshoeing through the wooded trails, snow or shine. In my Advanced Placement Environmental Science class, we would don our waders and trek through the bog at the Cathance River Nature Preserve—one time, the mud took hold of my boot, and I was claimed by the pungent marsh. As soon as the sun arrived in early May, my friends and I would head to the beach, often having to cover our bikinis with sweaters and shorts to protect against the cool coastal winds.

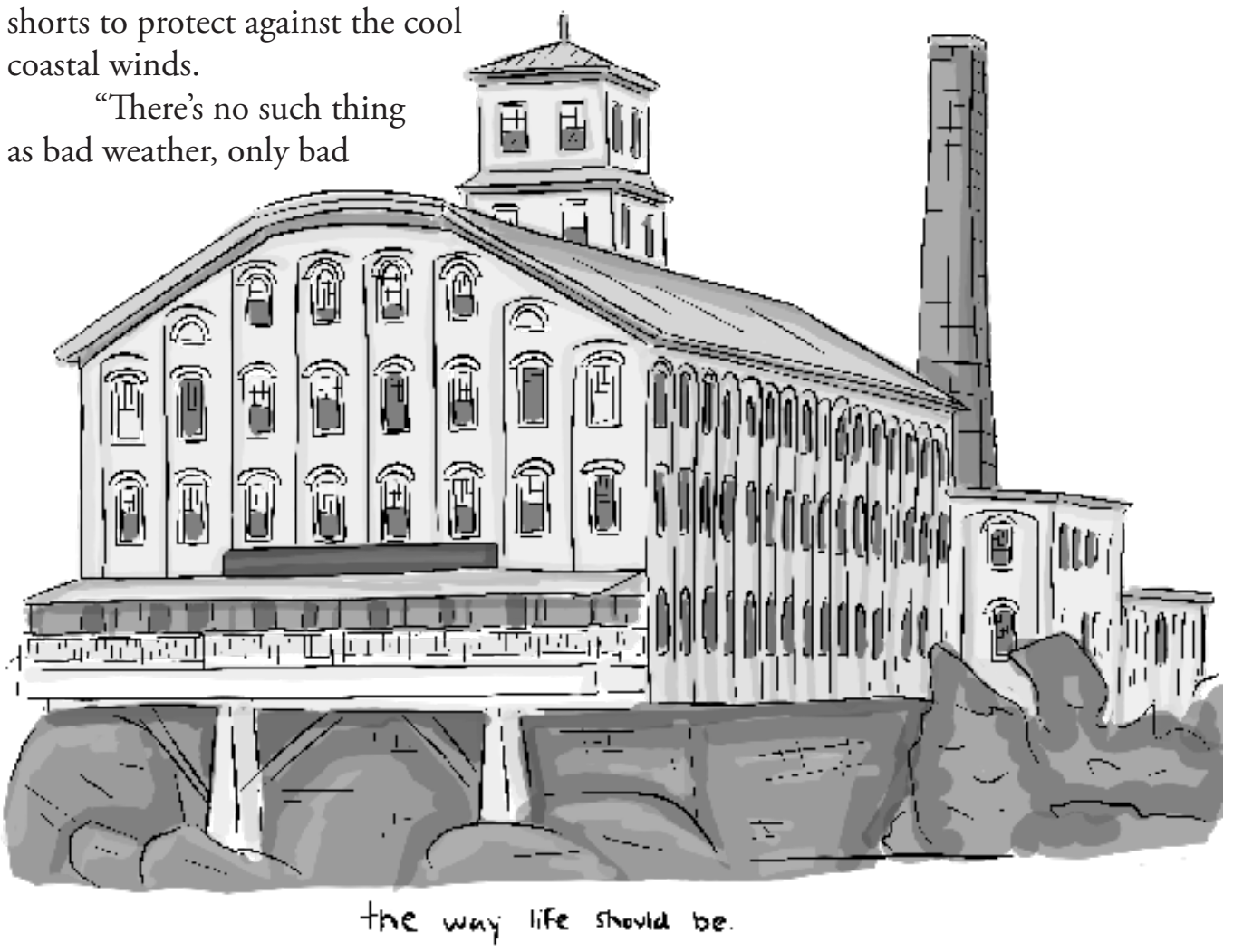
"There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing," we say—or at least I say.

Though not a part of my town or school district, the sandy shore of Popham Beach holds a special place in my heart, and it feels impossible to describe my home without it.

I could drive the bends and curves through my neighboring town, Phippsburg, with my eyes closed. I'm convinced that the sand there is eternally tangled in my hair. However constant my love for the long golden beach is, every summer it is unrecognizable.

It faces the Atlantic head-on; each winter it is ravaged by storms and pounded by waves. Accompanied by the shifting of the Morse River, it is the fastest-eroding beach in Maine, losing 91 feet of waterfront land per year.

When I was a child, beyond the gnarled pines were vast dunes of seagrass, home to the small endangered bird, the piping plover. Back then, I used to walk as close to these dunes as possible, afraid the waves would rise and drag me away. Now, the waves have risen and carried off much of the long coarse grass, leaving an elevated bank where, at high tide, the water now kisses the pine roots, which desperately try to hold onto the sand. The dwindling plovers are also now forced to change their nesting habits or face extinction.



I suppose this is the unrelenting nature of the Maine coast. However, the few pockets of sand we have are the most vulnerable to the rapidly changing natural environment. Efforts have been made to protect Popham, such as using donated Christmas trees to help trap and compact sand and replanting dune grass, yet these are temporary fixes with no long-term solution in sight.

The winters are now about 2 weeks shorter, less harsh and less magical, the storms are more powerful and unpredictable, and the sea levels continue to rise, all of which threaten both the coastline and the traditional way of life.

When I run into the waves at Popham, it is cold, but nowhere near the polar plunge it used to be, even in the summer. The waters are so warm that sharks have now become a regular sight, something that never crossed my mind in my youth. The warming Gulf threatens the staple of Maine and our biggest food export: the lobster.

These factors don't just affect the coastline but also threaten the local way of life. The seaside areas are getting more expensive, and it's harder and harder for the young people who call it home to stay. It has the largest elderly population in the nation. Add this pressure to our sustaining industries like lobstering and lumber, and the Maine I know starts to feel like it's fading.

"The Way Life Should Be" is the state's official slogan, and I wholeheartedly agree. I am also heartbroken that the next generation of Mainers could experience a very different childhood from the woodland wonder of my own.

The "Maine aesthetic" is romanticized as all harbor towns, fresh lobster, and wild blueberries, and we do have that. Topsham is overlooked because it lies adjacent: it is small and wooded, and its coast lies along the Androscoggin River—not quite postcard material. Still, it is my home, my community.

Rural fun is not given; it needs to be sought out, no matter the weather, location, or how mundane things may seem. I have endless stories of backyard bonfires and late-night drives after football games, eyes peeled for deer. I could never decide on one representative Maine day, but last summer came close.

We were at my friend's camp in the lake-dotted region. It was a picturesque day, with music playing from our phones and cards in hand as we played cribbage on the dock. One of us noticed thick, gray clouds rolling in, but the game had to go on. It wasn't long before the sun disappeared and the pouring rain began. Instead of seeking shelter, we launched ourselves off the dock into the rippling lake, giggling and splashing. Only when the lightning lit up the sky did we climb out and take shelter inside.

That is the Maine I know and love. There's no waiting for the weather to clear; just making the most of what we have. The difference now is that the tides and winds are changing.

Sophia Gonzalez '28 (sophiagonzalez@college.harvard.edu) can't wait for a true Maine summer.

Graphic by Miranda Chao Hwang '28

Eco-Warrior

Written and Designed By Ellie Guo '29 and Sam park '29

Songs for Touching Grass

Ten songs for Earth Day that are best enjoyed in the great outdoors.

BY AUDREY ADAM '27

Earth Day could not have come at a better time. Spring in Boston is in full swing: temperatures are consistently above freezing, the trees boast blooming buds, and soft petals blow through the air. What better opportunity to look outward and appreciate the fresh florals and verdant colors overtaking once-bare branches. The playlist spans soul, indie folk, classic rock, and soft alternative, with songs that touch on nature or the feeling of spring after a long winter.

1. "There Must Be a Better Way" by Friday, Saturday And Sunday

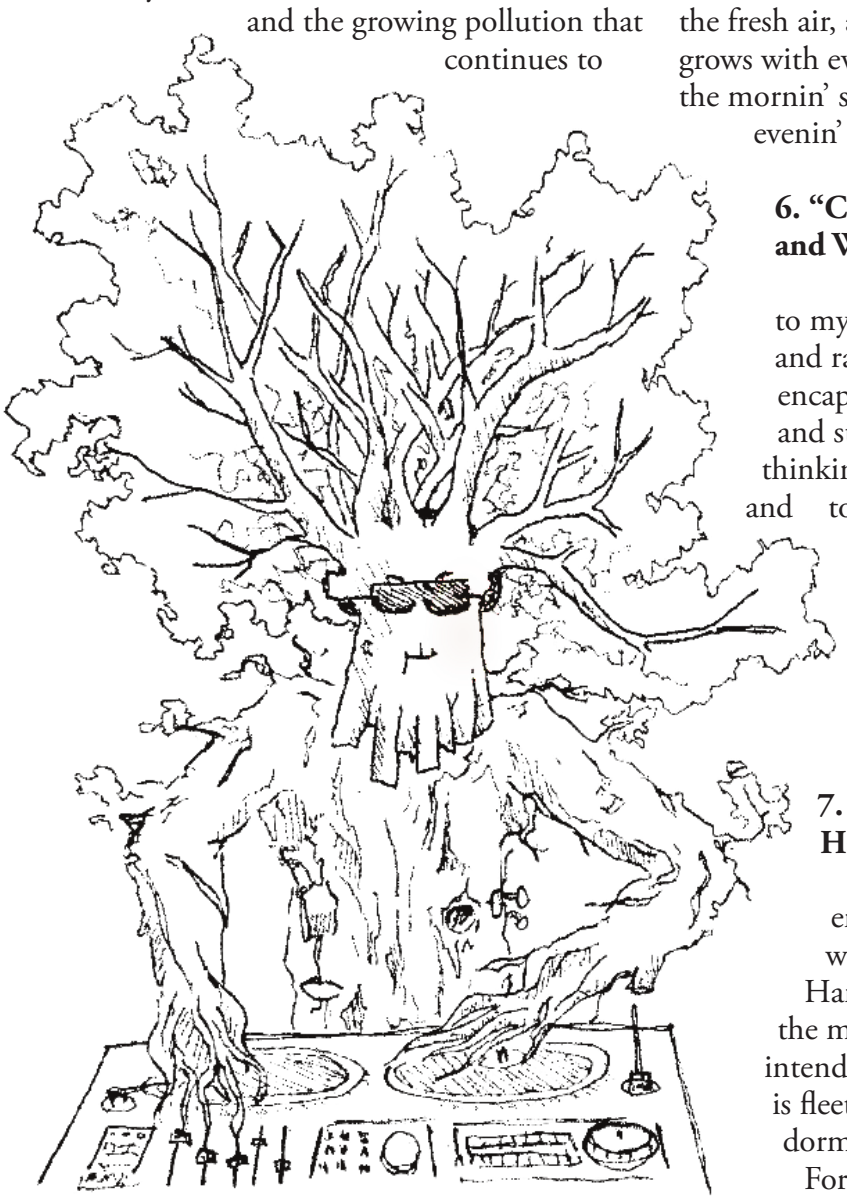
While the song's lyrics are not directly related to the planet, I firmly believe this must be the first tune in the queue. There is something about the music's piano-heavy hook that encapsulates the feeling of stepping outside and feeling the sun on your face. It feels somewhat jazzy, with elements that evoke fresh air and rustling leaves. I guarantee that it's a funky soul melody, designed to boost your serotonin and make you stop to smell the flowers on your walk to class.

2. "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" by Marvin Gaye

Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On?" is, in my opinion, one of the greatest albums ever made. With the singer's silky voice layered over bass, guitars, and alto saxophones, the instrumentation creates an atmospheric listening experience. In "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)" in particular, Gaye highlights environmental issues through pointed lyrics in the chorus.

"Whoa, oh, mercy mercy me
Oh, things ain't what they used to be, no no
Where did all the blue skies go?
Poison is the wind that blows
From the north and south and east."

Gaye mourns the absence of blue skies and the growing pollution that continues to poison the environment. This Earth Day, it's worth a listen, as the music reminds us of what's at stake and what we need to do for our planet.



3. "Natural Beauty" by Neil Young

This song is a lament for what is lost and a wish to preserve the good things in life. "Natural Beauty" is about survival in nature in general and survival in any situation, really. "The subject of the song is meandering, it's kind of a trip through space," Neil Young said in 1992. The melody evokes the suggested reflective meditation, unfolding slowly over four minutes. For Earth Day, it invites us to look around and note why the world around us is worth preserving.

4. "(Nothing but) Flowers" by Talking Heads

The lyrics to this song imagine a world in which the wilderness has reclaimed parking lots, pizza places, and factories. The band's vision sounds both utopian and slightly terrifying—Talking Heads sing that they "wish [they] had a lawnmower." It may seem an odd choice for a playlist of appreciation, but the song actually offers commentary on how much society prioritizes industrialization over the nature it destroys. The song inverts typical pro-environmental messages to show how far society has drifted from the natural world, making it worth a listen on a day dedicated to our Mother Earth.

5. "(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay" by Otis Redding

Hot girl walks are sometimes overrated, and this song romanticizes the simple beauty of popping a squat near a nice view. There is something underappreciated about resting unhurriedly, sitting still, and admiring the earth around us—three things this song encourages listeners to do. The urge to run outside, smell the fresh air, and feel the prickly edges of leaves grows with every line. Feel free to be "Sittin' in the mornin' sun" until you're "sittin' when the evenin' come."

6. "California Stars" by Billy Bragg and Wilco

This is the obligatory shoutout to my hometown, as someone born and raised in San Diego. This song encapsulates how it feels to lie in a field and stare up at the stars, choosing to stop thinking about the bugs flying around you and to admire that we are really just dots in a vast world. The lyrics read, "I'd like to dream my troubles all away/On a bed of California stars," which sounds increasingly appealing as finals season approaches.

7. "All Things Must Pass" by George Harrison

Arguably the most philosophical entry on this list, but worth sitting with. Renowned English musician Harrison wrote this during one of the more desolate moments of his life, intended to emphasize that hardship is fleeting, change is inevitable, and dormant possibilities eventually blossom. For an observance that celebrates Earth's resilience, Harrison's lyrics about sunsets and parting clouds fit well within its sentiment.

8. "Driving to Hawaii" by Summer Salt

The fantastical imagery inherent in every word of "Driving to Hawaii" captures the joy of an afternoon in a warm, tropical setting, surrounded by nature. The indie song's evocative language really paints Earth at its best and is well worth appreciating. Even if Cambridge, Massachusetts, winter and spring seasons are still caught in a game of chicken, maybe some warm-toned melodies can trick your body into thinking you're somewhere where high UV levels bring that summertime glow to the surface.

9. "Mother Nature's Son" by The Beatles

After attending a talk given by the Maharishi while studying Transcendental Meditation in Rishikesh, India, Paul McCartney was inspired to write this song. While the lecture was the impetus for his writing, McCartney has attributed "Mother Nature's Son" to a more personal source: his love for the outdoors. "I was always able to take my bike, and in five minutes I'd be in quite deep countryside. This is where my love of the country came from," McCartney wrote in his book, "Many Years From Now." This personal connection makes the song feel like a memory, evoking nostalgia, gratitude, and sympathy for nature.

10. "Second Nature" by Bon Iver

Sung over a soft melody, Bon Iver tackles climate change through his lyrics. His lyrics question whether humans are intrinsically destructive beings, posing questions such as, "Is this our fault? And are we just too damn used to it?" and "Where is mother? She was a stunner, can we page her?" It's an uncomfortable question to ask, and the song does not offer a solution, but Earth Day would be as good a time as any to ask it.

Whether you spend the day basking in nature or admiring photos of your past adventures from the basement of Wigglesworth Hall, this playlist hopefully offers a soundtrack to get you into the tree-hugging mood. Happy Earth Day, and listen to some good tunes in our planet's honor.

AUDREY ADAM '27 (AUDREYADAM@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) JUST GOT BULLIED INTO SWITCHING FROM APPLE MUSIC TO SPOTIFY.

GRAPHIC BY CALEB BOYCE '29

SPORTS

Recovery, Remembrance, and the Red Sox

On the support sports can offer for a hurting city.

BY TYLER DANG '28

Every year on Patriots' Day, the Greater Boston area comes together to celebrate the dedication of runners from around the world at the pinnacle of the sport. The Boston Marathon was first held in 1897 to bring the spirit of the Olympics to the city. Having grown significantly since its founding, the marathon is considered one of the most important races globally, attracting runners and fans alike to recognize the talent and preparation required to qualify for the event.

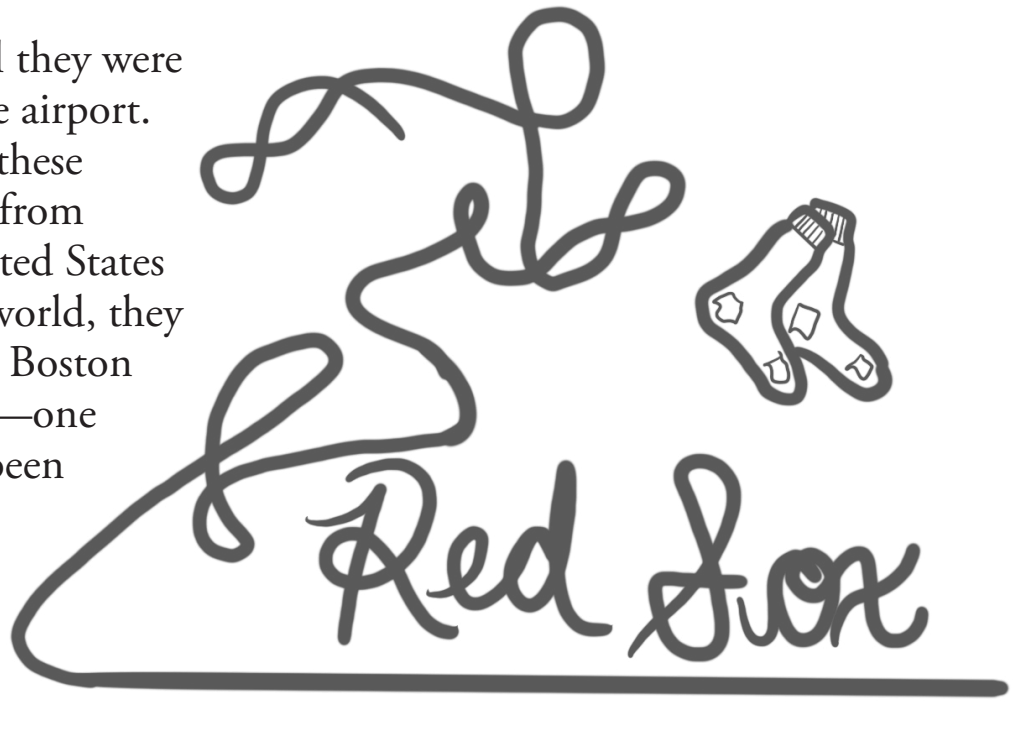
However, these annual celebrations were interrupted in 2013, when two explosive devices detonated near the finish line in what would be the largest domestic terrorist attack since 9/11. The lives of three spectators were lost that day, and more than 260 others were injured. Massachusetts Institute of Technology officer Sean Collier also passed away in the line of duty.

Though the brothers responsible for the Boston Marathon Bombing were eventually caught, their actions permanently disrupted thousands of lives and left Boston facing years of recovery. And yet, the marathon was still held again a year later. The wreckage was cleared, and Boylston Street, the site of the bombs, was reopened. Boston stabilized, gradually returning to normal but with an ugly scar that the people refused to hide; instead, they used it to unite in the recovery.

Boston Strong

Forty minutes before the bombings, thousands of fans streamed from Fenway Park. They were happy: the Red Sox had just beaten the Tampa Bay Rays, and now they could celebrate the runners as they crossed the finish line. However, consecutive booms upended the once-jovial crowd. The players, though, did not learn of the bombing until they were en route to the airport.

Though these players hailed from across the United States and even the world, they acknowledged Boston as their home—one that had just been attacked, one they had to leave for a series in Cleveland.



Given Boston's deep baseball culture, the Red Sox players seemingly had a responsibility to lead the city through recovery. "It felt wrong leaving. We're just a baseball team, but it was still home. We're like, 'Are we running from this?'" third baseman Will Middlebrooks said to the "Boston Herald."

Landing 550 miles away from Boston, the men felt frustrated, angry, and hurt. However, at a team dinner the same night as the bombing, it became clear the Red Sox would not let the tragedy define them. "Usually, [at] team dinners, there's a couple guys that miss. Everybody was there. You could get a sense that … this is our time," reliever Joel Hanrahan later said.

No one would have blamed the Red Sox if they had lost the game right after the bombing—but they knew they had a responsibility to represent their city, especially in such daunting times. In their dugout, for everyone to see, they hung a jersey with no name—just the words "Boston Strong" and 617, the Boston area code. Over the three-game series, the Red Sox went on to sweep the Indians.

"Boston Strong" had become the rallying cry for the city, created by students at Emerson College. It was spread on shirts in bright blue and yellow, the same colors as the finishline of the marathon, and soon it represented the entire recovery effort. The slogan rapidly grew, and the One Fund Boston used it to raise millions of dollars in aid for victims. The team, too, adopted the phrase with Middlebrooks being one of the first to publicly endorse it.

This is Our F-ing City

When the Red Sox finally returned to Boston on Thursday night, everyone was sheltered inside their homes. The bombers were still at large. Throughout the city, people waited with bated breath for the next inkling of information about the manhunt. The Red Sox were scheduled to play the Kansas City Royals at home the next day, but the lockdown postponed the game.

When the perpetrators were caught, a wave of relief swept over the city: it seemed like they could now move on from the terror and focus on healing. Torey Lovullo, a Red Sox coach at the time who was originally from California, watched the announcement live and felt compelled to act. "I actually went down to as close to the finish line as I could get and celebrated with the people. I considered myself a Bostonian, and I was so proud to stand with them and unite with them," Lovullo recalled.

Before their first game following the arrest, players and staff toured hospitals to meet with victims and hospital personnel. "You go into these rooms, and their eyes just lit up and their mood lit up because they saw Boston Red Sox players. I felt such a responsibility from then on out … that we were playing for more than just our organization," catcher David Ross relayed. These visits evolved into lasting bonds between the team and survivors lasting past the initial recovery.

At 1:00 p.m., with fans packed into Fenway Park, a powerful pregame ceremony took place. Everyone who helped the city in its time of crisis was honored, including law enforcement, firefighters, city leadership, and medical workers. When the players took the field, there was a notable difference in their uniforms: instead of the usual "Red Sox," the lettering on each player's chest read "Boston." For that Saturday game, the players were representing more than their team; they symbolized the strength, resilience, and unity of the city—something no one could strip away.

After the ceremonial first pitch, a soon-to-be Red Sox legend, David "Big Papi" Ortiz, made an iconic speech. Ortiz first joined Boston in 2003, helping end the 86-year World Series drought. One of the best in the league, the designated hitter was an integral part of the team. As such, his injury-related absence throughout the 2012 season was reflected in the team's final standings. He continued to miss games throughout the beginning of the 2013 season, staying in Boston during that Cleveland series to rehab. However, Ortiz would make his season debut that Saturday.

In just a few words, Ortiz summed up the sentiment in Boston: "This is our fucking city, and nobody gonna dictate our freedom." The pain that struck the city would never be forgotten, but they refused to let that hurt define them.

Towards the Finish Line

Over the months that followed, the Red Sox refused to back down. After finishing last in their division the year before, the team finished 97-65 to earn the first spot in the American League East, tied for best in the majors. As a team, the Red Sox led the entire league in runs. Capping off such a momentous season, the Red Sox defeated the Tampa Bay Rays and Detroit Tigers to reach the World Series. Facing the St. Louis Cardinals, they won it all in game six—a home game in Boston as a fitting end to the season.

During the celebratory parade, the team stopped at the finish line of the marathon. One player took the trophy and placed it on the finish line. "I wanted to take a scene of tragedy and also make it a scene of triumph," recounted Jonny Gomes. That was the role of the 2013 Red Sox: taking tragedy and shaping it into an unbreakable bond throughout the city. The team filled the gap that emerged: when the people needed something to believe in, the Red Sox rose up.

Forever Stronger

On April 21, 2014, as runners lined up for the 118th Boston Marathon, the thousands of supporters now celebrated more than the efforts of the runners: they celebrated the lives and memories of everyone who had been affected a year prior. What was meant to terrorize the city instead invigorated it with 9,000 more runners participating compared to 2013.

We often forget the role that sports play in our lives. We let team rivalries and national competitions divide us instead of allowing these games to unite different people. The story of the Red Sox in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombings serves as a reminder of the role sports play in upholding community.

In "A Farewell to Arms," Ernest Hemingway writes: "The world breaks everyone, and afterward, many are strong at the broken places." Boston demonstrates this perfectly. The bombing should have devastated the city, ruining a historic race and throwing the city into sorrow. And it did, but not for long. With the help of the Red Sox, the city made sense of the situation and found a deeper meaning in the disaster.

Many believe that sports should serve as an escape, allowing fans to take their minds off the anxiety that plagues daily life. However, this argument breaks down when it comes to player agency. Some claim that this "escape" requires silence from athletes with total detachment from the world around them. But these leagues and their athletes don't live in a bubble. They are affected by daily events just as much as the next person. Ortiz was in Boston throughout the manhunt, just like any other resident. Middlebrooks, Ross, Lovullo, and the entire roster felt the pain and destruction just like any other resident.

Sports do not serve as an escape because we can forget everything and tune out the world outside. They serve as an escape because they provide a space for us to process, understand, and unify against the toils of life. The Red Sox did not carry victims away from the explosions. They did not perform the surgeries. They did not capture those responsible. But the team helped the city heal differently—they served as a reminder that we can keep fighting and emerge after a great loss.

Tyler Dang '28 (tylerdang@college.harvard.edu) enjoyed the 130th Boston Marathon.

Graphic by Amelie Lima '27

Greg (H)ooper of Cambridge, MA

Harvard Men's Basketball's "hometown hero."

BY MEGAN LEGAULT '28

All college athletes eventually come to face one of the biggest dilemmas in modern publicity—the retirement post. How does one sum up four years of hard work and camaraderie into a singular post without suggesting that they tie all life's meaning to their athletic career or have "peaked?" Even the Oscar-winning short film that marked Kobe Bryant's retirement has been clipped online, becoming the punch line of a running joke as "Dear Basketball" bellows melodramatically over the dreary instrumentals of a Daniel Caesar single.

Harvard Men's Basketball's very own Greg Cooper '26 arguably got as close as it gets to this sought-after balance. Choosing Drake's "Weston Road Flows" to set the tone for a curated combination of college and pre-Harvard photos, Cooper showcased how basketball was woven into the trajectory of his life. Most notably, he included a screenshot from a 2019 Snapchat story taken at Lavietes Pavilion, where Cooper wrote "Gonna be playing here one day trust me"... and so he did.

Cooper grew up in Cambridge—Cambridgeport, or "the Coast," to be specific—a place where basketball was an integral part of the social scene. "On summer nights, the courts at Hoyt Field and Dana Park would fill up with teenagers trying to prove their talent," Alèx Leith, Cooper's personal rebounder and childhood best friend, told the "Harvard Independent."

"As kids, Greg and I would excitedly watch the older boys play from behind the fence," he recalled. "It would only be a few years before Greg was doing slam dunks on those very courts as hundreds of people watched and cheered."

Leith and Cooper met playing soccer at Mayor Field when they were nine years old. Since then, Leith has had a front-row seat to Cooper's journey as a local basketball talent. He watched as Cooper went from competing in informal dunk contests at local parks to winning an undefeated high school state championship, to playing on "the biggest stage in Cambridge basketball": Lavietes Pavilion. Accomplishments, Leith says, were no measure of luck, but the result of years of sacrifice and determination.

Brandon Wooten, Cooper's trainer since high school, agreed with Leith's opinion. Wooten, who also played collegiately, first met Cooper through "Old Man Jim" at the Quincy YMCA during his junior year of high school. "Greg was at the gym almost every day, training at 5 a.m. This got my attention because I only trained athletes who were willing to prove their dedication by waking up early," Wooten said.

Wooten's training sessions would begin to push not only Cooper's physical limits but his mental fortitude with early wake-ups and running suicides to the point of vomiting—uh, no thanks! But, it was in these challenging moments, when he had pushed Cooper to a point of total exhaustion, that Wooten says he "got to see Greg's true character."

"Though he was close, he never quit," Wooten admired. "He always found a way to push through the pain, the negative thoughts, emotions, and self-doubt. He never gave in and never made excuses." Extreme as it may have been, this training proved pivotal for navigating the trials of his collegiate career and developed a mentality that has served him well beyond basketball.

Growing up local, Cooper had a unique perspective on Harvard when he arrived on campus. While attending St. Peter School, located just a few minutes from the Quad, he had a friend whose mother was a professor and lived in Quincy House. Unlike the rest of us, his earliest memories of campus aren't from a campus tour or Visitas. Instead, they consist of walking to Felipe's in eighth grade, riding hoverboards through Quincy's dining hall, and doing flips on a fitness trampoline to impress college girls who walked by on the lawn.

When it came time to make his college decision, Cooper recognized that his acceptance to Harvard was an offer to a world-class education. So, despite having offers to play basketball elsewhere and a desire to explore the world beyond Cambridge, he decided on Harvard, gambling his athletic career in the process since a walk-on offer was far from guaranteed.

His senior summer, having gained some attention from Harvard's coaching staff, Cooper was invited to a scrimmage with current players. Not only did he play well, but he also capitalized on this opportunity to connect with members of the team's roster. "I got their numbers, and they would text me whenever they were in the gym, and they'd open up the side door for me," Cooper said to the "Harvard Independent." He spent that summer sneaking in through side doors, putting himself in the eyeline of Harvard's coaches who watched on as he demonstrated that same no-quit mentality. By the first day of his freshman year, Cooper's stubbornness earned him a spot in Harvard's locker room.

Despite all the work he put in to get there, Cooper would not register much court time playing for the Crimson. He could have quit. Without athletic scholarships, even Cooper admires the equalizing dynamics for student-athletes at Harvard. "Athletes are not given a one-up in terms of housing, social status, kind of, everybody's in the same boat," he said.

But, remaining true to character, he stayed on the team. "He figured out that there are ways to affect the game without being on the court," Wooten said.

Cooper welcomed friends and teammates to Cambridge, introducing them to culturally diverse neighborhoods beyond Harvard Square and showing them his favorite local restaurants like The Coast Cafe. His family opened their home for weekly home-cooked meals by his sister and offered a place to go when the team stayed on campus during holidays.

For the Cambridge community outside the Harvard bubble, Cooper has emerged as a role model for young athletes. Playing at local Boys & Girls Clubs' courts and bringing nearly 150 students, families, and alumni of St. Peter School to attend a Harvard game as "Coop's Troop" each year.

"What makes Greg special isn't just what he does on the court, but how he shows up afterward—taking time to meet our students, sign jerseys, and connect with them in a genuine way," Wendy Burns, Director of Admissions at St. Peter School, said to the "Harvard Independent."

"Our students see themselves in Greg—a Cambridge kid, shaped by local schools, who has worked hard, succeeded at the highest level, and continues to give back to the community that raised him," she added. "His kindness, humility, and commitment to others have left a lasting impression on our students. He's not just someone they cheer for—he's someone they aspire to be like."

When a player with significant court time is a fan favorite, that's one thing; when a player who totaled 44 minutes of court time over four years packs the stands, it speaks to something greater about what they represent. As for Cooper, it is the way he embraced his role, stepping up as Cambridge's "hometown hero."

"Basketball is such a powerful sport in that it's very accessible. Anybody can play it, and it's such a good connector of anybody, no matter where you come from, your height, your weight, your abilities, your lack thereof," Cooper said. "It's so easy to look up to great basketball players in the NBA, in college, and really have that fuel your desire to do what you want to do."

Walking away from his Harvard basketball career without an accumulation of accolades, the role Cooper has played in the program, and the renewed perspective it gave him on the sport and community he grew up with had an impact far beyond what any award could capture.

"I knew that I was connected with communities, and if I could inspire one kid, that would be enough for me," Cooper said … and so he did.

Megan Legault '28 (mlegault@college.harvard.edu) once told Cooper he needed "air traffic control" after watching him compete in a formal dunk contest at Lavietes Pavilion.

Graphic by Megan Legault '28

COVER ART BY CLARA LAKE ’27
LAYOUT BY CAMERON BERNIER ’29 AND NUALA MERNIN ’29

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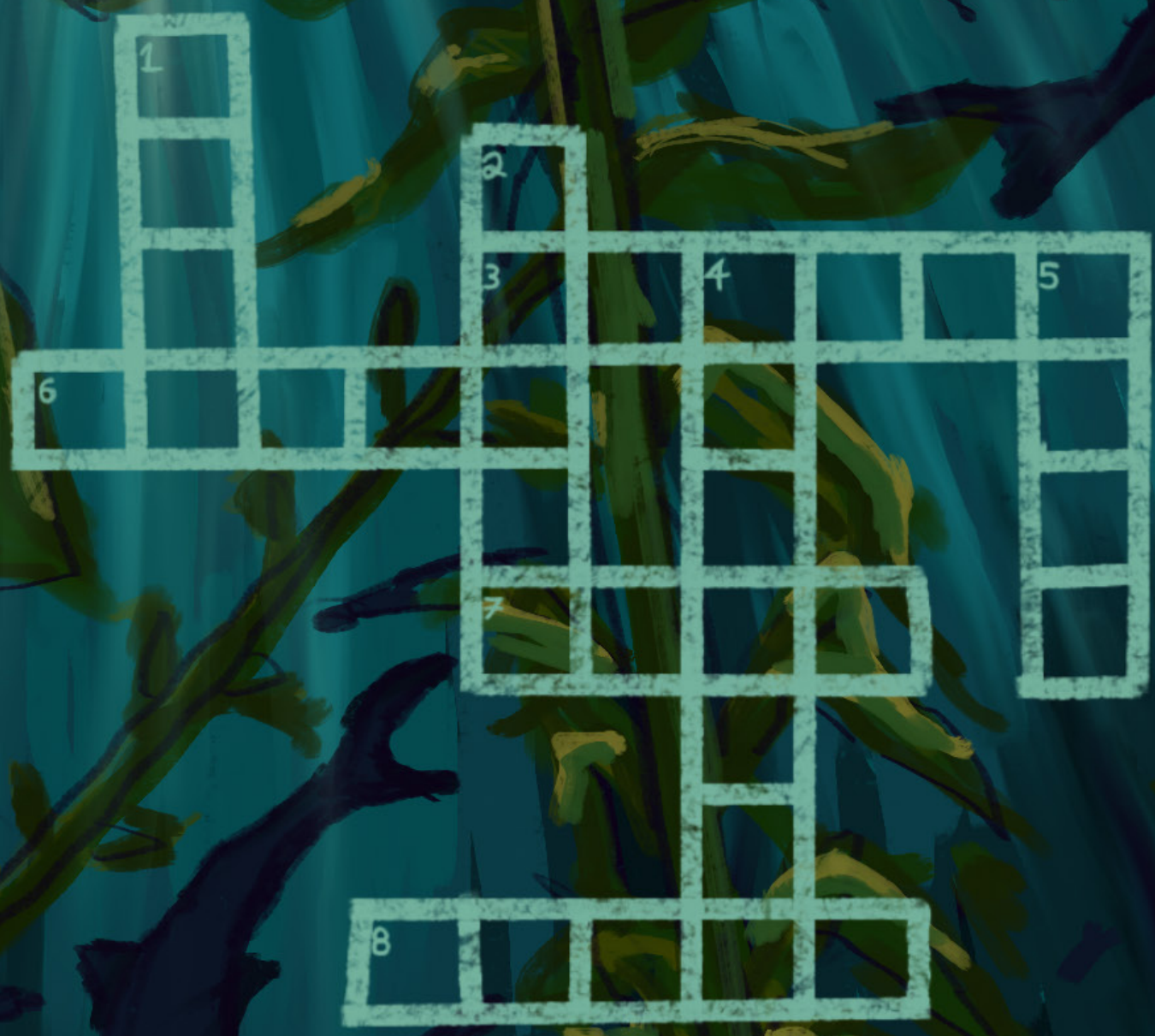

Down

1. Greek mythology’s ancestral mother goddess
2. City where an international climate treaty was adopted in 2015
4. NASA’s latest mission to leave our home planet
5. Is a river in Egypt?

Across

3. Company specializing in “same-day delivery”
6. Makes up over 70% of the Earth
7. Unique numeric code associated with a world in Minecraft
8. Second part of the three R’s

Rania Jones
Mia Park Tavares
Linden M

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