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Falling action

Inside: Closed Dhalls, Open Mics, and Changing Minds

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CONTENTS



Inside: Closed Doors, Open Minds, and Changing Minds

*The Indy is looking
for a denouement.*

Cover design by
Audrey Effenberger '19

- 3 Strike and Recovery
- 4 Nat'l Coming Out Day
- 5 Narratives of Outness
- 6 Songs of Harlem River
- 8 En Boca Review
- 11 Harvard v. Cornell

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The HUDS Strike and My Recovery

A struggle with disordered eating.

By ANONYMOUS

I had only just recovered from years of starving myself and constantly upsetting myself over food anxieties when the HUDS strike rumors had begun. The talk of food instability for some caused understandable stress, but the mere mention of food created this nagging feeling in my gut much worse than any hunger I've caused myself.

At the beginning of this year, I had finally started making real peace with myself. The summer had been long and full of days I couldn't get out of bed, and certainly not out of my room to go searching for dinner. My eating disorder was more than me wanting to fit into that white romper my mom had bought me, or to look better in my bathing suit on the few days of the entire year that I would go to the beach. No, my eating disorder was a way for me to have control over myself and my life. If I felt unproductive doing a problem set, I easily reasoned with myself that I should work through dining hall hours. If my roommates willed me into joining them for dinner, it was easy to be simultaneously writing my paper while pushing food around my plate. But they did notice, and they saved me from myself by reassuring me that I deserved food and that I did have the control over my life and choices for which I was desperate.

I have been so proud of myself for recovering. But then the news of an impending HUDS strike emerged. I support the dining workers entirely, but I would be remiss to say I haven't felt mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausted in the process.

It is typical in recovery to relapse and have especially hard days where all you think about is how you look, what others think about you, how far away you are from reaching your goals, how little you can control your life... But this semester, there have been many more of those days strung

together.

At first news of the strike, people immediately began discussing how students would be fed. The fear of food instability was spreading across campus and has only ramped up after seeing how bare dining halls look during the strike. The constant discussion of food has brought me back to a time when I avoided eating in public entirely and could barely get out of bed to find some crackers to keep from feeling nauseous under the stress I put myself. With the many invitations to attend the dine-in with HUDS last Thursday during the strike, I started to pull away from my social interactions entirely to spare myself the frustrations I kept experiencing. I could not very well explain to my lab partner I had grown closer to while doing assignments that I would not go to the event because I would have to leave crying while calling my mom to calm me down (as I've had to do in the past when the dining halls would get overcrowded and the feeling of everyone staring at me got too strong).

With the unexpected replacing our normal meals, people have repeatedly said that students just need to "suck it up," effectively. But sometimes, being a picky eater is not something anyone can help. Sometimes, being a picky eater is a result of years of starving yourself and needing to find a few select foods you were able to believe you deserved to eat. For me, macaroni and cheese reminded me enough of my mom that it was comforting instead of stress inducing. It was easy to make and eat in front of other people, and that is really all it takes for someone to progress through recovery. I have many memories of the dining hall workers helping me to find the food I was most comfortable eating, and even made sure to always have the condiments I preferred available because they understood.

The volatile new dining hall situation has made it increasingly difficult to find food I feel comfortable eating without a resulting anxiety. The added stress of now having to travel to a different house in order to eat, and knowing that I will not even know most of the others in the dining hall with me at the time, has made me feel more reclusive now than in past years.

I respect HUDS and want them to get the respect from the University that they deserve. It is important that students get involved in movements like this that will affect a majority of our community that the student body may have been ignorant of previously. But at the same time, I urge the student body to remember during this time that students who chose to abstain from participating may have many reasons for doing so, which may be harder to understand. Regardless of whether you chose to refrain from joining in at the picket line or prefer not to speak up when talks of the protests begin, you are encouraged to make your own decisions to best tend to yourself. For those who are struggling with

"It is typical in recovery to relapse... But this semester, there have been many more of those days strung together."

the strike as you recover, I hope you feel safe and supported in the communities you have formed at Harvard, and that you are able to reach out to the resources available to cope with this stressful time. All that matters is that you are able to evaluate your needs and find ways to advocate for yourself, even when campus does not seem mindful of your struggle.

The Indy (editorinchief@harvardindependent.com) hopes that anyone with questions or concerns regarding this piece feel comfortable reaching out to Harvard resources such as ECHO, Room 13, and more.

Coming Out of My Cage

By HUNTER RICHARDS

On National Coming Out Day: a reflection.

I never could make up my mind about anything: not dinner, not what outfit to wear for formals, where to go for dinner, or what song to put on during car rides. But, contrary to popular belief, being bisexual has nothing to do with a failure to make up your mind. It's not that I don't know whether I like girls or boys, because, being the master of multi-tasking, I like to think I can actually do both pretty successfully.

A visiting fellow in the Program on Education Policy and Governance at the Harvard Kennedy School's Taubman Center for State and Local Government, Bush has distinguished himself as a leader in the realm of education policy. He is also a guest instructor and presenter in an HKS course titled "The Political Economy of the School," where he will share his knowledge and experience with students. As he noted in his address, Florida's education system rose in rank from near the bottom to sixth in the nation during Bush's governorship, having implemented a school grading accountability system and increased school choice for parents.

Arriving on Harvard's campus freshman year with confidence and some ideas of who I wanted to be, I thought that college would be my fresh start. But I had not made it a whole month into my freshman year before I began to hear ignorant preconceptions and perspectives about the identities to which I felt closest – yet was unable to claim. I feared that I would never be free to open up about my sexual and romantic orientation, especially since the accepting community I thought I had joined failed to live up to expectations. The moment someone in my entryway told me that she felt lucky that she wasn't placed with a queer girl in the freshman housing system, I packed away all my emotional and mental baggage so well that it rivaled my ability to organize a freshman Canaday double with the biggest bed risers on the market. While I was able to keep my concerns from resurfacing in conversations out of fear that I would be revealing myself and ruin the friendships I had developed, it ate away at me.

Hiding my sexuality did not mean I was not subjected to microaggressions. Certain

conversations led me to quickly change the subject – a tactic I had become accustomed to growing up in a conservative, rural community. But at the end of freshman year, I met a girl from MIT who I really liked. It took precise planning for me to find a time to go on a date when my roommates would not ask where I had went, in addition to subtly suggesting we meet on her side of Cambridge to avoid seeing anyone I knew. Despite my careful planning, I happened to pass my freshman proctor while walking with my date. I immediately tried to stand towards the shadows of the sidewalk and look less like myself. While heteronormativity usually precludes the assumption that I am on a date with a girl – and my proctor was openly gay – I wasn't ready to face reality. I knew I was queer from an early age, but it took me some time before I was ready to let anyone else know.

“Love and take care of yourself.”

I quickly realized that it was not feasible to stay closeted whilst entertaining any potential-relationships, so I succeeded in sabotaging all possible connections. Coming up with excuses for where I was headed and always checking over my shoulder while on dates put too much stress on me. It was not only relationships with other girls that proved difficult to navigate, though. I had learned through early experiences of talking to guys that many may not be respectful and instead see it as a “fantasy” of theirs. My fears of being commodified compounded with the possibility that that guys I dated might also deny my sexuality entirely left me in a nervous wreck. But sophomore fall, when the boy I was seeing told me about how his awful bisexual ex left him for a girl, I felt something in me break...and I erupted.

National Coming Out Day fell during a busy week of midterms and the weighty eruption resulted in a good old fashion Facebook proclamation. Though the post

was restricted to only people I had met at Harvard, it was a momentous step. I quickly began receiving messages from friends letting me know that they loved and supported me.

But there were still many who refused to admit that the only thing straight about me was my eyeliner. While my mom has always known and wasn't surprised when I officially told her, other family members and friends from home who found out later on were not supportive and said many things that hurt me. But their comments left me with this bitter need to be even happier and more comfortable in order to show them how wrong they were.

It was this need to proclaim my newfound comfort that allowed many people to trust in me as a confidant about their own issues and experiences with sexuality and relationships. While I may have been putting on a front to appear more happy than I truly was, I have since become much more comfortable and confident in myself because I realize I can help others and serve as a positive influence. It was a long road for me to understand my sexuality – of which I still stand by as being fluid – but now that I've learned how to figure it out it has been an amazing experience helping others. In the almost-year that I've been openly bisexual, I've had over a dozen people confide in me that they were questioning and many of them soon felt comfortable coming out themselves.

This past year has been the happiest time of my life because I'm finally free to open up without fear of revealing my identities. Previously, I did not feel safe being openly queer, but when I came out it was my choice and only mine. For those who may not yet understand exactly how they feel most comfortable describing their orientation or are simply not sure if they are ready to tell anyone, the process is entirely valid. I would only ever urge you to love and take care of yourself during a tumultuous journey to self-discovery. There should be no deadlines or expectations in the sorting out of feelings and identities.

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) wishes readers a happy National Coming Out Day!

Narratives of Outness and Non-Outness

Reflections from an open mic.

By MEGAN SIMS

The tables in Barker Café are draped with an array of pride flags: Gay, bi, trans, ace, genderqueer. Soft jazz music plays in the background. The lights are low.

The Harvard College Office of BGLTQ Student Life's annual National Coming Out Day open mic is called "Narratives of Outness and Non-Outness." People begin to fill the round room on a Tuesday evening. They eat churros, sip diet coke, and add their names to a large colorful banner celebrating the holiday.



National Coming Out Day is complicated because coming out is complicated. For most of us who are BGLTQ+ identified, it is a long, protracted process that often takes years, or even a lifetime. "Out" sometimes feels less like a physical state and more like an action continuously taken for fear of ending up back in the closet where we all started.

The open mic, co-sponsored by Speak Out Loud, contained some stories of coming out and of being out, but those were not the only narratives at the mic. There were meditations on transness and on loss. Performers read pieces by queer Chicana poets and Walt Whitman. There were pieces performers had written years ago and ones written in the minutes before coming to the stage.

There isn't a right way to come out or a right way to be out, and the variety of narratives on stage showed just that. Though National Coming Out Day is often seen as a way to celebrate only those who can safely be

out, there is more to the story. Celebration does not have to be flamboyant. It does not even have to be vocal. Perhaps the space fostered by the Office of BGLTQ Student Life and Speak Out Loud, one of affirmation and openness, was enough for some, even those who weren't out, to feel a part of the fabric of this coming out narrative.

Part of the beauty of the evening was in the way it flowed. There was no set structure. A few people signed up beforehand and performed at the beginning. Afterwards, audience members simply volunteered to speak. Some just talked without a script or a written piece. This space wasn't a showcase but an acknowledgement that the multitude of coming out stories can't be contained or neatly displayed and laid out for consumption.

One early performer framed his story with Harvard's history of secret tribunals and homophobia. Another spoke honestly about his personal ties to the Orlando shooting this past summer. Being LGBTQ+, whether out or not, situates a person within a long and complex narrative that is so much bigger than a single Facebook status. Queer history is not isolated to National Coming Out Day. For so many of us live every day having to come out over and over again or not being able to. We fight bigotry. We sometimes lose. And one event cannot capture all of it.

Interns at the Office of BGLTQ Student Life gave every person who read a flower as a token of gratitude. And maybe it was not much, just a small gesture in the face of a world that is changing too slowly. But it was something. And that something was beautiful.

Megan Sims (megansims@college.harvard.edu) wants to lend support to all LGBTQ+ people—from those who have been out for years to those coming out for the first time to those who cannot safely do so yet.



Antique Stories, New Voices

An interview
with BlackC.A.S.T.
director
Darius Johnson '18.

By MEGAN SIMS

Darius Johnson '18 just wrapped up their fourth show here at Harvard—the second they've directed. As president of the Harvard Black Community and Student Theatre Group (BlackC.A.S.T.) and director of *Songs of the Harlem River*, they've played a huge role in shaping theatre in the black community on campus.

Megan Sims (MS): What was your vision when choosing to put on this particular show?

Darius Johnson (DJ): When I watched the first production of the show that had been done in New York a few years ago, one thing that I noticed was the very apparent lack of queer narrative in the show, even though it was five shows written during the Harlem Renaissance about the Harlem Renaissance. Each scene was a small scene written by a different playwright. And even though the original playwrights didn't initially put those narratives in the script, all the scripts are public domain so you can edit them and adapt them, which is what we ended up doing. The original production didn't take that opportunity to weave in those other narratives that were, I believe, very salient parts of the larger Harlem Renaissance arts movement and lifestyle, particularly in the black community. And so my biggest vision was to really incorporate those queer narratives into the show, not in a way that problematized the narratives but to show that these were people who were living during this time and that these stories contributed to all the larger social issues that were being raised during the Harlem Renaissance by artists and by activists.

MS: Can you talk a little more about the adaptation process? What were your goals and intentions, and what themes were you trying to draw out?

DJ: I asked Madison Johnson, who is secretary of BlackC.A.S.T. a few weeks before school started, "Hey, some of these plays are kind of weird, do you want to help me change them?" and they were like "Sure!" and then we worked together. We pretty much went through each scene and decided, "Does it need to be changed, why does it need to be changed, what changes need to be made?" There were a couple of the scenes where the writing was very, very contemporaneous for the 20s and 30s, so a lot of it was difficult to understand for us as adapters in order to adapt correctly, and I suspected it would be difficult for me as a director to direct these shows and then also for audience members to understand. For example, the last scene, "The Starter," Madison and I decided that the plot was great, that the larger context of talking about socioeconomic status and marriage and gender roles were all important themes, but those themes weren't clear in the script. So we just agreed on a general plot and just rewrote the whole scene. Basically, a good 90% of the words in that scene were written by Madison or myself. And in the first scene, "Girl from Back Home," we just thought it was a little boring, "Oh this woman has these respectability politics about wanting to be a married

black woman and that's why she leaves this man." But we thought that's not really that salient of a theme nowadays, so we decided to queer it up and make it a story about a woman who's terrified to explore her sexuality with this other woman from back home who she loves. And a lot of subtext got introduced accidentally or intentionally. Every scene was a whole different process that we sort of went through piece by piece.

MS: How has it been being a part of BlackC.A.S.T. since the rousing success of *Black Magic* last semester?

DJ: It's been really tiring but really fulfilling. Because when I got on campus, BlackC.A.S.T. wasn't that big of a thing. We had a small comeback with *Negative* in the Adams Pool Theatre directed by Jumai Yusuf, and *A Raisin in the Sun* directed by me in the Loeb Ex. And then we had *Black Magic*, and we just exploded. When *Raisin* happened we sort of got back on the map, but then we got the mainstage space, and I think *Raisin* really helped us get the mainstage space because *Raisin* was supposed to be a staged reading that two BlackC.A.S.T. members and Danny Rodriguez turned into a full production with limited resources and limited time. And it ended up being a great production. So once *Black Magic* happened, everyone was

contacting BlackC.A.S.T. wanting to do a whole bunch of things and contacting me and asking what we were going to do next and having ideas on what we should do, and it was a lot. Because *Black Magic*, though it was a success, was really a struggle behind the scenes. There were a lot of us who didn't have that much theatre experience trying to put on this huge show that we had written. And so in that respect, although the end product ended up being great, it was a lot of stress for everybody involved. Coming out of *Black Magic*, I decided to do a small scale production in the Loeb Ex before taking on anything huge again just to give BlackC.A.S.T. a moment to recharge and do some recruiting for board members. From *Black Magic* we were able to really flesh out a board. I just didn't want us to have a lull from having a great show like *Black Magic*. I wanted us to have another great show that was smaller scale. I think what people really loved about *Black Magic* was how intersectional it was. There were black people and queer people and non-binary people and it was all over the place, and people really liked that. So that was sort of the thing I tried to repeat in *Songs of the Harlem River*. People on campus want to see

these stories. We learned a lot from *Black Magic*.

MS: How do you feel *Songs of the Harlem River* fits into the larger conversations about race and blackness going on in this country?

DJ: I'm really into old shows. I'm really into antiques, like physical antiques and also antique theatre—so that's what really attracted to me to *Songs of the Harlem River*. What I always think is really great is how different the stories can be and still translate into really salient themes. So we talk about “Deacon's Awakening,” the second scene, which is about women's right to vote. Nowadays, access to voting along racial and socioeconomic lines is a very salient theme, like laws that are meant to be de facto barriers to women, people of lower socioeconomic status, to people of color. When you look at the show, it's like, all these things happened in the 20s and 30s, but you can draw very easy parallels or even progressions of these problems that are still unresolved now. Even if you look at the Black Lives Matter Movement and how ridiculous it is that we still have to have movements about the lives of people of color mattering. And if you look at our third scene,

Interview with Darius Johnson '18, continued.

“Blue Eyed Black Boy,” it's about a lynching where this family is terrified of their son being lynched for something as stupid as brushing past a white woman. And nowadays we think about children being killed for carrying toy guns. The scene seems ridiculous when you watch it, but we can think about things that happen today where people are being shot in the street for similar reasons. I think that's a really unique thing about the show being five different plays, that it hits you really quick and fast with these things that relate to contemporary things.

MS: Anything else you want to add?

DJ: I think that one positive thing I've noticed, especially doing this show and coming out of *Black Magic* is how HRDC is slowly trying to better itself. There are still a lot of problems in the theatre community as far as Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. I think that people are trying to be more cognizant of that, but we're still at a place where problematic shows are happening and problematic things are happening in the theatre community. I think that BlackC.A.S.T. being in the spotlight now and being able to bring these people into theatre experiences is helping the larger theatre community come to terms with the larger problems that still exist.

Megan Sims (megansims@college.harvard.edu) hopes to continue to see a diversity of stories told through theatre at Harvard.



Cambridge and Boston, both old and new, from above. Audrey Effenberger

Enjoying En Boca

New restaurant joins the Harvard Square dining scene just in time!

By CAROLINE GENTILE

As of late, the food scene in Harvard Square has been bleak. With the onset of construction and the subsequent mass exodus of restaurants, there have been significantly fewer options to choose from for midday or late night chow. Add the HUDS strike into the mix, and the options dwindle further. Thankfully, as of Thursday, October 6th, there is a new restaurant in the square: En Boca.

Housed in the building that formerly held Sandrine's, En Boca was purchased in March 2015 by restaurant developers Bill Goodwin and Peter Sarmanian, who are also behind two well-known Irish pubs in Boston. Unlike their other restaurants, however, En Boca is far from an Irish pub. Goodwin said that his goal in creating En Boca was to serve "creative, farm-to-table food with a Mediterranean influence," in an ambiance that is "classic with a modern feel."

Two friends and I decided to check it out right after it opened. Walking into the restaurant, we immediately felt transported outside the grind of the Harvard Bubble, despite being a stone's throw from the River Houses. It was certainly a departure from the dreary and neglected dining halls.

En Boca's menu consists mainly of small plates: our server recommended we order three or four per person. "It's all about the sharing experience," Goodwin explained to me over the phone, before I even set foot in the restaurant. With this in mind, my companions and I ordered seven small plates and one of their larger (but still shareable) dishes.

At En Boca, everything is served to the table as soon as it is ready. Before we knew it, our table was adorned with several small plates. The first thing we sampled were the patatas bravas, which were paired with aioli, tomato, and sweet pepper. The potatoes were cooked perfectly—the skin was crispy, but the potato itself was tender.

The sweet pepper sauce and creamy aioli complemented one another and the saltiness of the potatoes. Overall, this dish was delicious and simple—I imagine it will be a popular menu item as time goes on!

Next up were the crispy Brussels sprouts. It seems as though the chefs at En Boca have realized the truth about vegetables, particularly Brussels sprouts: they are much, much tastier when paired with bacon. The Brussels sprouts themselves were beautifully browned, but I stand by my assertion the bacon was the star of the show. Of all the small plates, my dining companions and I agreed that this was one of the best.

Another standout dish was the local halloumi cheese. For anyone who has never tried halloumi, ordering it at En Boca is the perfect opportunity. The small plate gives you just a taste of this delicious, salty cheese paired with notes of hazelnut. After your first bite, you'll wish this dish came with more than just three pieces.

The charred cauliflower, while not quite a standout, was still delicious. The cauliflower itself, lightly fried, was not particularly flavorful, but the accompanying sultanas and labneh (a creamy Mediterranean aioli) really made the dish. In fact, the labneh also paired extremely well with the falafel, which we found to be too dense and dry on its own. The unexpected, yet harmonious combination of the falafel and the labneh, however, proved to be a delicious surprise.



Left to right: patatas bravas, Brussels sprouts, and charred cauliflower. *Caroline Gentile*

En Boca, continued.



Of all the dishes, the baked farm egg with chorizo dressing and polenta was our least favorite. Though it sounded good on paper, this dish lacked the texture and flavor that the other dishes so beautifully executed. The egg was cooked well (complete with plenty of yolk porn), but it blended in too much with the polenta, resulting in a mushy texture and bland flavor. The chorizo was saltier than it was flavorful, and unfortunately did nothing to salvage the dish. However, I liked the idea of a poached egg on the menu, and hope that the chefs will find a better way to serve it.

Our final savory course was the half roasted chicken with a sunchoke reduction. It seems as though the chefs had saved the



best for last. After all, there are few things better than flavorful, juicy chicken covered in crunchy, briny skin. The sunchoke reduction amplified the chicken's flavor perfectly. Though we were already pretty full by the time we got our final course, the chicken was one of the best dishes they served. However, since this dish was advertised as one to share, we think that the presentation could have better reflected the sharing aspect. The chicken was served on the bone. In order to share it, we had to cut into it with our own utensils, which could get a bit awkward when dining with acquaintances rather than friends or family. Given how delicious it is, leaving people to their own devices to cut the chicken might even create a *Hunger Games*-esque situation! If this chicken were sliced before it were served, then it would probably be more socially acceptable to eat in a group!

En Boca's chef, Bryan Jacobs, who used to be the private chef for both George Bush and the Anheuser-Busch family, is still experimenting with the dessert menu. He served us a palate-cleansing dessert as well as an Egyptian cake. The palate-cleanser consisted of a quince sorbet with tahini shortbread, hazelnut and mint oils, and chantilly. While on paper, this combination may sound strange, it was one of the most unique desserts we had ever sampled; light, refreshing, sweet, and tangy.

The Egyptian cake, made with semolina and rum, had a wonderfully crumbly texture without being dry. To achieve this texture while still maintaining the flavors of the cake, chef Jacobs used a brown butter reduction as his base, instead of the tried-and-true method of creaming butter and sugar together. Paired with airy chantilly, which he made using an oxygen gun, this dessert was also light and perfectly sweet. Anyone who wants to see Science and Cooking in action must try eating at En Boca. Creating desserts that are both decadent and light is quite a feat, and Chef Jacobs certainly accomplished it.

It's also important to note that En Boca is technically a wine bar, and it boasts an



Clockwise from upper left: falafel, baked farm egg, and roasted chicken.
Caroline Gentile

INDY ARTS

En Boca, continued.

extensive wine list including plenty of fine wines served by the glass. In fact, they have a brand-new, cutting-edge enomatic wine dispenser, which allows the restaurant to preserve wines once they are opened. While no one in our group partook in the wine selection, it seemed to be popular with the other patrons.

En Boca offers many other beverage options, including cocktails, beers, and ciders. One of my dining companions decided on the strawberry peach fizz cocktail. After her first sip, she decided it was both too sweet and too strong; the overwhelmingly saccharine aftertaste did not sufficiently mask the taste of alcohol. While this was disappointing, our server quickly noticed that she was not drinking it, and offered to replace it with another she might prefer.

This is just one example of the outstanding service at En Boca. While aspects of the menu are still a work in progress, one thing that En Boca has mastered is its service. Our server, Isabella, was polite, knowledgeable, and attentive. She truly made our dining experience as enjoyable as possible.



Egyptian semolina cake. *Caroline Gentile*

Two hours and \$103 later (a reasonable price for such a high-quality dinner for three), we left En Boca, full of delicious food and a desire to come back soon. While some of the small plates were not quite perfect, the chicken and the desserts were more than enough to make me want to return. Before En Boca officially opened its doors, Goodwin acknowledged his excitement about opening and “correcting our mistakes as we go.” With its outstanding service and talent

in the kitchen, En Boca has a great deal of potential, and I can’t wait to see how it evolves in the coming months.

Caroline Gentile '17 (cgentile@college.harvard.edu) can’t wait to turn 21 already so she can go back to En Boca and sample all of their wines – to adequately review them for the Indy, of course.

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Two Octobers

Harvard-Cornell and its comparisons.

By JESS CLAY

On Saturday afternoon, as I sat in the cool concrete stands of Harvard Stadium, my father texted me a photograph and a message. At the photo's center was the University of Texas Longhorn Band, the "Showband of the Southwest" incarnate, marching across the green turf of the Cotton Bowl. They marched square as a Roman legion, bedecked from shoulder to heel in burnt orange fabric and white leather fringe, and a crowd of ninety-two thousand gazed down upon them. The fans were starkly divided into seas of orange and red as Texas squared off against Oklahoma. It was a down year for the two aristocrats of Big 12 football — both teams entered the game with a pair of losses — but it was still the Red River Shootout, with the State Fair of Texas waiting just outside the entry gates. My father captioned the picture "October in Texas," and I found myself still thinking of that game and the coarse cries of carnival barkers and the hypnotic pummeling of saltwater taffy. The Harvard band then struck up a tune, so I snapped a picture of the mostly-empty bend in the horseshoe of Harvard Stadium. I captioned it "October in Massachusetts," and sent it back to my old man.

I did it mostly to validate his own game-day experience, because I actually found myself well-pleased to be watching Harvard-Cornell. It was a matchup of the Ivy League's last two unbeaten teams, a game slated to be Harvard's last best home game until the Yale finale, and it came amidst an October afternoon where a long sleeve t-shirt was the order of the day. If the stadium was less



October in Massachusetts. *Jess Clay*

than full with its crowd of eleven thousand, it was not on account of the weather or a lack of effort from the athletic department. Promotions abounded for the game. It was Community Day, with free entry for Allston, Brighton, and Cambridge residents, and it was also Youth Football day, with discounted rates for area youth teams. I was constantly reminded of this fact as junior high schoolers swarmed the concourses and stairs, their jerseys hanging loosely over unpadded shoulders, the names of assorted towns and animals rumpling proudly across the fronts.

The usual contingency of Boston Brahmins and college professors and geriatric Harvard grads sat needle-nosed in the late afternoon, and cheered tersely at first downs and scores. But more surprising was the crowd's less rarefied element, men of that same strain of Boston fandom which continually renews

the population of the bleacher seats at Sox games. They knew the names of the Harvard side, even had nicknames and abbreviations for a handful of players, and displayed a profound familiarity with all things Crimson football. This made it clear that they were probably not of the university crowd at all, but instead loyal subway alumni. They cheered so raucously and knowledgeably that were it not for the shadow of a chill in the autumn air and the non-rhoticity of their lusty cries, one might have pegged them for the fans of a Southern state school. I found myself reminded of people who claimed their college allegiances not by forking over thousands for a degree, but by the simple dictates of geography and Wal-Mart sales. Those ranks usually bolstered Texas and Alabama, and I was pleasantly stunned that Harvard should have such support.

This development belied the steady climb of Harvard football to the upper echelons of the sport in New England, and they maintained that position in a chippy contest against Cornell. The teams traded touchdowns in the first quarter and roughing the passer penalties in the second, while Cornell was called for a personal foul early in the third. At halftime, the score stood 14-7 in Harvard's favor, and they never relinquished the lead.

Towards the end of the Crimson's 29-13 victory, the Harvard band entered the largely empty stands behind the southern endzone. Throughout the game, they and their Cornell counterparts had traded brassy haymakers, as Harvard blasted "Ten Thousand Men of Harvard" and Cornell riffed a number of variations on "Far Above Cayuga's Waters". At one point, a rogue subset of the Cornell band infiltrated the Harvard section, where they were met with the casual nonchalance of the Harvard band, the flustered directives of the stadium staff, and the general amusement of the spectators. Yet as the outcome became increasingly clear, a satellite of the Harvard troupe emerged from the stadium's bowels and blared "Ode to Joy" as the clock wound down.

I whistled along as I walked the stadium's upper row, and thought of the picture my father had sent me. I thought of how far a cry the Ivy League's scramble bands were from the Showband of the Southwest, and how far a cry Harvard-Cornell was from Texas-OU, but the comparison did not trouble me. This was October in Massachusetts, after all, and it carried odes all of its own.

Jess Clay (jclay@college.harvard.edu) has come to contentedly reconcile his love of the two.

captured and shot



Whatever the hell it is
we do in Monticello.

By KELSEY O'CONNOR