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Inside: Celebrating the start of fall.

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The Indy grows in darkness.

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Audrey Effenberger '19.

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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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Dreaming of *La Reunion*

By MEGAN SIMS

Last night I dreamt I drove to *La Reunion*,
a defunct socialist utopian colony on the Trinity River,
which has always to me seemed less river, more repository,
more gaping concrete scar across the city of Dallas.
The bridges they build to cross the ugly thing are beautiful.

I dreamed of traffic.

I had to cross through people, rivers, columns of a place I knew for some might seem
like *La Reunion's* legacy. But I feared it.
I was searching for the cemetery

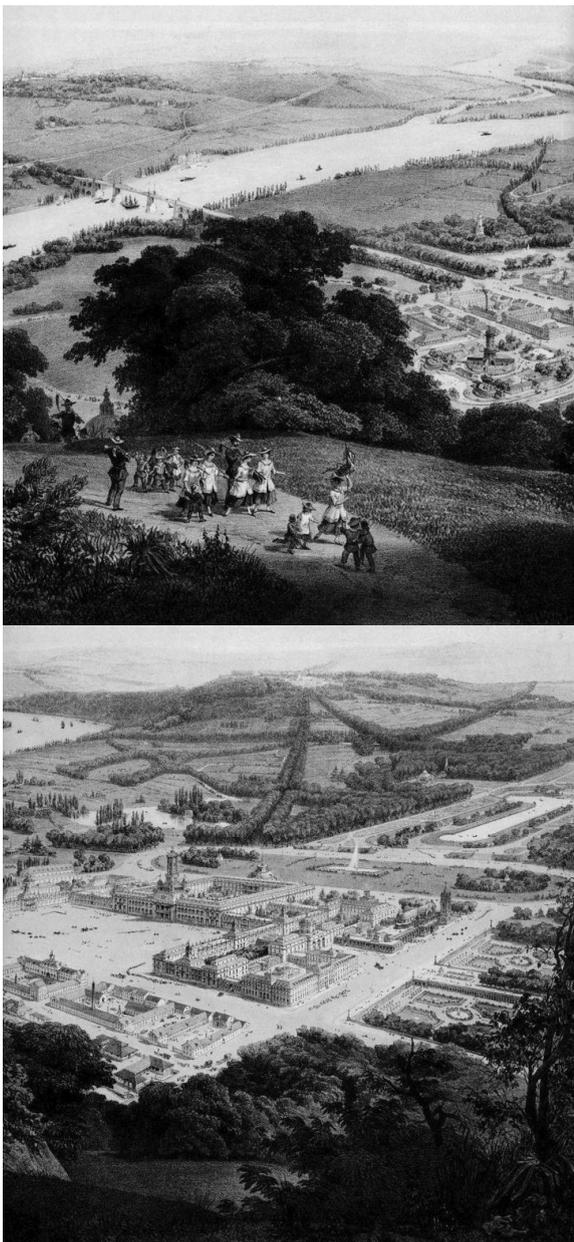
thinking there I might find the ghosts of past somebodies or
the place I never had a chance to grow up.

Once I dreamed I was on a ship that broke in two.
The front half kept on sailing the Riviera while the back half
sunk suddenly into the abyss. I mourned this,
estimated eighty people lost their lives
in one sinking moment. I don't know why we kept sailing.
In my dreams this had happened before, as though I was being followed
by a gaping hole in the universe, a tear in the surface of the earth.

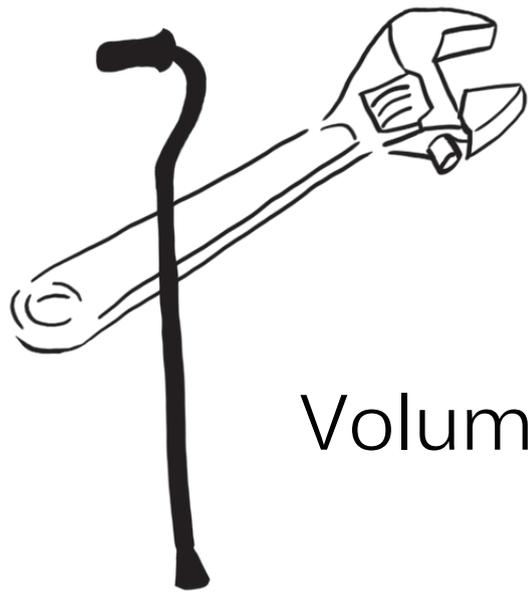
On some island I never saw before (will never see again), we docked
and I read the names I almost forgot and I dreamed again of *La Reunion*
where the river doesn't swallow you whole and home
is waiting on the other side of the thinning crowd
of the ghosts dropped here.

Perhaps this is the other side.

Megan Sims (megansims@college.harvard.edu) dreams.



Courtesy of the Dallas Historical Society.



Engi queer ing: the SWUG chronicles

Volume 1: S.O.S. (Suffering of Seniors)

By HUNTER RICHARDS

By senior year, I'm retired from my wild days. Or, more accurately, I'm just plain tired. I've finally grown into the title "SWUG," or "Senior Washed-Up Girl," and it fits better than the first pair of leggings I bought in college that convinced me to toss all my jeans out.

Personally, I believe that "SWUG" is not fully inclusive. For starters, "Senior" implies that I haven't been entirely done with this institution (both Harvard and the practices of "going to college" and "existing") since I stepped foot onto campus during Opening Days. I also take issue with being called "Washed-Up" when we all know I haven't washed my hair in a couple days, but let's all continue to focus on how well I am pulling off this headband or braid. I also want everyone to recognize that I'm not "Washed-Up" because I'm a girl, and not all girls are "Washed-Up" by graduation. There are more than two genders and more than a million excuses for why I'm not showing up to lecture.

Luckily for the author's sake, this column is all about me and what a hot mess I am. After four years on more than low heat, plenty of roasting along the way, some especially salty stages, and switching up the recipe for available substitutions, I'm proud to announce that dinner is served. Except, instead of burnt grill order hamburgers, it's me. And I'm not necessarily dinner, even if I am looking like a snack sometimes. Most importantly, I'm about

to make these leftovers last for the next two semesters and you're all invited to dive on in after saying grace (but I also accept gratitude in the form of Venmo).

Senior year is ...

- Keeping track of the last time you went out (or even just took more than a five-minute shower) by how long your leg hair is getting. And you would think that it grows linearly but you're starting to notice a more exponential pattern. Or maybe you've just really lost all track of time. It doesn't really matter since you don't exactly have time to let anyone get close enough to notice.
- Five Buck Chuck becoming its own food group. Yeah, it ends up being more cork than wine by the time you open it up because you were too cheap to buy the \$2 corkscrew literally right next to the rack of pinot grigio, but it's all about the journey. It's a bonding experience to strain the wine to remove as much cork as possible after your roommate jabbed away at the bottle with a screwdriver

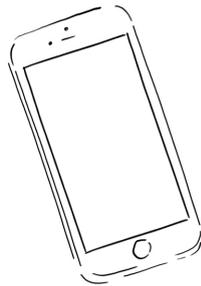


that hasn't gotten much use out of it. Only a desperate senior sitting down to thesis is willing to disassemble a tea bag to use the cloth part as a strainer tied to the bottle neck while pouring out wine into small plastic cups stolen from your dining hall. The cost of the wine and Uber to Trader Joe's are immediately worth it once you accept that you're just setting yourself up for a bonding retreat with your roommates for the night.

- Wearing the free t-shirt you stole from the activities fair as a sophomore for a club you don't even do to the class the morning after falling asleep while not completing the PSet due when you walk in.
- Experimenting with different hairstyles so that you can still go out to a party without having to shower. Space buns are really cute and so fun but, most importantly, you can't tell that you sweated through a 2 mile walk to your thesis meeting and another 3 hours through lab earlier that day. Partying with friends is less fun if you have to put in more work getting ready than you put in just to get to the actual party.



- Showing up 10 minutes late to meetings that you planned. Yeah, you texted at 2:48 that you would be running a little late to your 3:00 meeting but you left out the part that it's because there is zero chance you're about to walk to the square when there's a perfectly capable shuttle coming in 20 minutes.
- Not owning a fresh notebook. Why bother spending money on a brand new notebook for a class for which you, if we're being honest, aren't entirely sure you're going to be going to lecture? You know that you only filled up 75% of your notebook from your Culture & Belief Gen Ed last spring and those extra ~30 pages are plenty to get you through section until at least the first midterm. You'll figure something else out by then. Or you'll just start taking notes on your laptop, which will also make the fact that you've been iMessaging your roommate throughout class less obvious.
- Debating whether a class is really all that important because it has lecture on Fridays. Yeah, it's a requirement but how committed are you really to your concentration? If your concentration was really the one for you it would understand why you need your Fridays to sleep in.
- Only returning texts to people who gave birth to you, live with you, make out with you, or have some role in getting you paid. Time and energy are especially precious senior year and texting back is such a chore.
- Having your laptop break and immediately assuming this is a sign from the universe that you should just drop out already. You also likely would have if Harvard Secure was reliable enough to load the info page but you refuse to waste your data on this school.
- Scheduling dinner with your roommates every night of the week because #NoNewFriends. You know the night your roommate has a studio class until 6:30 but you're fine to suffer with them because the thought of having to make small talk with your tutor about your post grad plans gives you enough stress while fake smiling to snap a muscle in your cheek for good. Why is "getting a cat that I can make an Instagram account for" not a valid response when asked what you're looking forward to about graduation?
- Reminding everyone who owes you money on Venmo that you're graduating in May and need them to stop holding out on you. If they think you're above tracking them down after you've graduated, they're dead wrong because you're willing to send evites inviting them to follow through each month immediately before paying rent.



To Autumn

The equinox upon us.

By CAROLINE CRONIN

The 22nd of September this year marks the Autumnal Equinox. The equinox is the time at which the astronomical season of autumn begins. An astronomical season is defined and measured by the alignment of the stars and planets, and not – as in a meteorological season – by the average temperatures of given months. Though we have been at our green ivy-covered college for almost a whole month, the beginning of the fall season is only now upon us (and that ivy will soon grow red). To be precise, the equinox names the time and day when the Sun shines directly on the Equator and the length of the day and the night are almost equal. According

to timeanddate.com, “The September equinox marks the moment the Sun crosses the celestial equator – the imaginary line in the sky above the Earth’s equator – from north to south.” In Boston this Friday, the equinox occurs at 4:02 PM Eastern time.

The weight that the passage of time carries and the realization that this Autumnal Equinox will be only my fourth though my last at Harvard College leads me to an intoxicatingly potent series of thoughts. One of these thoughts is the use of “autumn” as a verb and “autumnally” as an adverb. With gratitude to the Oxford English Dictionary, I muse over the definition that to autumn is to cause to mature or to age. I autumned here over the last few years and now wonder what is to become of our harvest.

Caroline C. Cronin (ccronin01@college.harvard.edu) is autumnally expectant.



The first falling foliage. *Francesca Cornero '19*

Tantalizingly Far from Right

Michelle Jones's admission to the PhD program in Harvard's history department was rescinded earlier this month, causing a worried student body and faculty to question the university's commitment to its mission.

As per the original story covered by the *New York Times*, Ms. Jones was by no means an ordinary candidate. While the university has previously accepted students who have a history of having been incarcerated, Jones's case stands out for she carried out her scholarship while still in prison, serving a twenty-year sentence for having murdered her 4-year old son. A teenager at the start of her sentence, she went on to rehabilitate herself in studying her own prison, earning a college degree, and becoming a published scholar. Now 45, she finds herself being denied a place she earned against the greatest of odds.

The newspaper spoke with Professor Kaia Stern, Director of the Prison Studies Project and visiting faculty in the Department of Sociology, who expressed serious concern at the university's decision to rescind Ms. Jones's admission. When asked whether she thought the university could seem justified in wishing to protect itself from a misconstrued association with the student, Professor Stern pointed out that "on the contrary, it betrays the institution's core values of inclusion and scholarship."

She further argued that Professor Stauffer's suggestion—that Jones would struggle to find her place on a campus occupied by the "elite among elites"—was a greater digression from the university's principal values than the admission he was rebuking. "It's a disgrace how the administration continues to disregard Harvard's mission to create citizen leaders in the face of pressure from the public eye,"

she claimed. That Harvard continues to be a pioneer of trends that are replicated in other schools further places a burden on it to be on the right side of moral quandaries as this one.

What does it really mean for the university to have decided that Michelle Jones, for what she represented, was not fit for enrollment despite having been admitted? Surely it is recognized that the values of inclusion and diversity that Harvard claims are among its most crucial, can only be maintained through an unwavering commitment. Even if these were to be seen as exceptional circumstances – Chelsea Manning, a former Army soldier who was convicted for acts of espionage found her fellowship offer rescinded as well – that it would appear acceptable to make such an exception is worthy of our criticism.

Even though redemption isn't explicitly at the core of Harvard's mission, it seems as though the justification for Michelle Jones's rejection is entirely different. By making the offer and eventually withdrawing it, the university reveals that it is willing to recognize but not support the redemption of Ms. Jones. She has become the epitome of what a successful and well-functioning criminal justice system ought to bring about: the recovery of people's goodness, inquiry, and morality through grueling self-reflection. But Harvard seems to be comfortable in being wrong, elitist, exclusive in this discussion.

In our conversation with Professor Stern, we asked her about how she felt this incident compared with the decision of the College, last year, to rescind 10 admissions after learning of racist and anti-Semitic posts on Facebook group chats. She declined to comment anything specific on the record, but claimed that while she saw the two as an interesting parallel, the sheer difference in time frames between committing the offense, and the

Harvard's missed opportunity with Michelle Jones.

By PULKIT AGARWAL

university's response to it make one far more indefensible than the other.

Three Harvard graduate students—Aaron Bekemeyer, Ella Antell, and Laura Correa-Ochoa—wrote in their letter to editor of the *New York Times* last week that for a criminal record to be seen as an indefinite obstruction to excellence is an idea that deserves serious critique.

While it's unlikely that we would ever get a formal comment from the admissions committee, for they don't as a matter of policy discuss individual applicants, we can be certain that their decision will continue to be seen as regressive.

Ms. Jones has now enrolled at New York University, which we at the newspaper consider a loss for Harvard. Nonetheless, we wish her the best, and hope that Harvard does a better job of standing by the values it so cherishes.

Professor Elizabeth Hinton, who was on Jones's admissions committee, declined to comment on this article.

Pulkit Agarwal (pulkitagarwal@college.harvard.edu) looks forward to following Jones's path and continued redemption in her career.

World Domination & Politics

Fall at the IOP.

By MALCOLM REID



Starting off the year at a brisk sprint, the IOP has already gotten into the swing of activities and forums for students with unabashed rigor. For any unfamiliar with the IOP, just as the best writers flock to the *Harvard Independent*, so too do the future politicians of Harvard find their way to the Institute of Politics. In essence, if one is looking for a future Anthony Eden – or a future Colonel Gaddafi – it’s a good place to start.

However, a notable part of the charm of the IOP is that not only does one get to meet these future powerhouses, one is able to meet current ones too, from Betsy DeVos to Yo-Yo Ma and many others. Speaking of which, upcoming speakers include Secretary DeVos and Christine Lagarde of the IMF – and all who can make it to these events are highly encouraged to attend! As time goes forward, the reader can expect to find many of these events to be covered here in the *Independent*, giving readers a taste of what happened and also how the issues addressed affect the wider community. Many of these events are lotteried and therefore one might not have the opportunity to attend all that are interesting,

but look out for our coverage to keep abreast of what’s happened and what the speakers are like.

These forums are excellent events to attend, but they certainly aren’t the only events open to the Harvard community that could prove enlightening. The IOP’s Fellows Program (often stylized as the FSG or Fellows Study Groups) is a lesser known venue for engaging with high-profile individuals. FSG essentially brings some of the most reputable and seasoned veterans of politics and world affairs together to interact intimately with our community and to have frank conversations or provide sagely advice. At some point, I do suggest going to each fellow’s study group, as they all are amazing and personable people. Unfortunately, in the case of FSG, one cannot find any media coverage here or elsewhere, as they are very much off-the-books affairs where the fellows can feel free to say whatever they feel inclined to. However, have no fear, as you can expect to find conversations and interviews with various fellows featured in our publication over the coming weeks!

Quite aside from these events, there are other IOP events one can attend, such as the Harvard Political Union’s debates (some of which may be covered here as well) if you want to become involved in Harvard’s political scene- or otherwise become engaged in the community. These are often on a variety of topics, the most provocative of which you can expect to find me participating in I’d imagine. There are also other special events that the entire Harvard community will have the chance to attend, so do look out for those, and we will keep you informed of any that are to be featured in the *Independent*.

For all those who were not familiar with the IOP or did not apply to it, this semester we look forward to showing you some of the fascinating political events around campus, and hope you enjoy their coverage! Secretary DeVos will be here on September 28th, so if you’re interested in her department or her experience, enter that lottery! Keep a look out for the coverage of that event in about two weeks’ time. This is just a brief glimpse at what is to come in the coming weeks, and a brief introductory article to start our relationship as writer and reader as the semester goes on. And as I go sprinting hither and thither covering these events around campus, I look forward to seeing many of you there!

Malcolm Reid (mjreid@college.harvard.edu) looks forward to taking advantage of the myriad events Harvard has to offer.

Yardlings in Power

Freshmen elected to the UC get to work!

By JILLY CRONIN

Last Friday at noon, the elections for the Undergraduate Council closed, and the freshmen representatives – new to both the UC and to Harvard – were announced. Three students from each of the Freshman Yards were elected. The results are as follows:

Crimson Yard:

1. Rushi Patel
2. Sonya Kalara
3. Ifeoma White-Thorpe

Elm Yard:

1. Emma Robertson
2. Jackson Walker
3. Jordan Silva

Ivy Yard:

1. Seth Billiau
2. Swathi Srinivasan
3. Wilfried Zibell

Oak Yard:

1. Abby Scholer
2. Ivan Vazquez
3. Luke Kenworthy

It is generally expected that those who have left the dwelling of the Yard for good no longer notice the groups of Yardlings' distinctions. However, given the gerrymandering of Freshmen dorms into smaller "yards", perhaps a brief explanation is required to ensure the execution of our flawless student democracy: There are four yards within Harvard Yard: *Crimson Yard*, which is comprised of Greenough, Hurlbut, Pennypacker, and Wigglesworth; *Elm Yard* with DeWolfe, Grays, Matthews, and Weld; *Ivy Yard*

with Apley Court, Hollis, Holworthy, Lionel, Mass Hall, Mower, Stoughton, and Straus; and *Oak Yard*, with Canaday and Thayer.

Though each of the freshman representatives is eager to make a difference at Harvard and has his or her own goals for the coming term, there are a few common themes threaded through all of their platforms. One of these themes is that of increased inclusivity and Yard spirit through more inner-Yard gatherings and events. "Inclusivity" is, after all, the magic word of the day!

Luke Kenworthy, from Oak Yard, is one of the many representatives who is passionate about social inclusion and wants to kick-start projects that foster such inclusion in the freshman yards. "We (the representatives of Oak Yard) plan on supporting each other's initiatives and soliciting feedback from students to ensure success in our projects." He feels that although there are so many wonderful and interesting things going on at Harvard on any given day, it can sometimes be hard for freshmen to know when these events are occurring. "One idea I have in mind is creating a calendar of social events on campus that are open to everyone so that freshmen can always find things to do, especially on the weekends." He plans to reach students with surveys, social media, and in-person meetings while on campus to ensure that he is hearing feedback and keeping up to date on new ideas. This would create a more in-depth calendar than the weekly "You're Invited!" emails sent out college-wide.

Swathi Srinivasan, elected to Ivy Yard, wants to work with her fellow representatives to bring more benefits to freshmen at Harvard. She would like to provide Harvard students with more free hygiene products (presumably) to promote better health and cleanliness among students. Srinivasan also



The road to UC office... or Holden Chapel, at the very least. *Francesca Cornero '19*

feels that students should receive credit each semester for printing, similarly to Board Plus.

The representatives are also looking forward to working together to achieve their common goals. Swathi Srinivasan informed us that the new representatives "already have communications going, and are on the road to being good friends. We want nothing more than to bring the UC closer to students, and enact change that seems fit, not only in our eyes, but in the eyes of our yard." She and her fellow representatives want to better connect with the student body through an expansion of their social media presence to provide the freshman class with a deeper understanding of the freshmen representatives' capabilities and limits because she believes that communication is key to their success.

The freshmen representatives will work with the rest of the Undergraduate Council and the Harvard administration to ensure that the students' ideas and concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

Jilly Cronin (croninj@college.harvard.edu) just might have her delicate faith in governing bodies partially restored by the success of these enumerated goals.

Shana Tova

Religion among the intelligentsia.

By ALAYA AYALA



Humans of Winthrop House.
Francesca Cornero '19

Picture this: You're sitting in class discussing a novel that you were assigned to read. The conversation is going great, everyone is making great points, and the ideas are flowing. Then someone brings up the moral implications of the novel. Suddenly, the conversation isn't going as well. Left and right, your peers are stating their opinions, starting off with "well, I'm not religious, but..." or "Well, I am religious, and..."

There's nothing wrong with what is being said, in fact, people are still making good points. The problem is the tension in the room.

In my short time here at Harvard, I have noticed that a lot of the time I feel a need to defend myself whenever the topic of religion is brought up. There's never open hostility towards religion, but there's something about being at Harvard that makes one feel as though they shouldn't bring it up in academic conversations.

That's not to say that Harvard doesn't try to make religious students feel included outside of the classroom. On the Student Organization List provided by Harvard's Office of Student Life there are about twenty organizations listed under the Religious and Spiritual Life filter. In February this past year the Harvard Diversity Peer Educators hosted a "Faith and Religion: Identity, Relationships and Rep. at Harvard" event. This week Rosh Hashanah starts on Wednesday the 20th at sunset and ends on Friday the 22nd at nightfall. The Harvard Hillel will host their High Holidays events during this time.

What's odd is that Rosh Hashanah and

other non-Christian religious holidays don't necessarily get attention from the school when it comes to class time, or a lack of it. This year Winter Break officially begins on December 20th, the last day of Hanukkah, and after Bodhi Day (December 8th), making it difficult for those students who celebrate the holiday to spend time with their families.

This happens around other religious holidays as well. Islamic holidays such as Eid-ul-Adha (Friday September 1st) occur during the school year, and there are no break periods for students observing them.

This brings up an important question. Could Harvard be doing more to make students feel that religion and religious perspectives are welcome at prestigious academic institutions?

Look forward to hearing from religious student leaders at Harvard and their many perspectives!

Alaya Ayala (alaya_ayala@college.harvard.edu) wishes all those celebrating the Jewish New Year, Shana Tova!

An Author in Adams

The Indy sat down with student author Briuana Green to talk about her new book, *The Fall*, and what's going to happen next.

By EMILY HALL



Courtesy of Briuana Green.

If five years ago, you'd told Briuana Green '18 that she'd be a published author before graduating college, she might not have believed you. But today, she's exactly that.

Originally from Arkansas, Briuana came to Harvard without any concrete plan of how she'd write a book, but she had known for a while that she wanted to eventually. What she didn't realize was that during her sophomore year of college, her sister's new high school experiences would inspire her to write her first young adult novel—*The Fall*.

Available in printed and e-Book version on Amazon, *The Fall* is Briuana's account of "five best friends from very diverse backgrounds. You get to see how that affects each of them personally." It's told from the perspectives of two sisters and of their best friend, and Briuana says, "They are all going through different issues with high school, questioning their spirituality—which you also see in play from their different perspectives. We talk about things like race, religion, peer pressure, and romantic relationships."

Undoubtedly, these are important issues that would be relevant to write about at any time; but Briuana felt an urgency to the project when her younger sister began to encounter the same struggles that many people do as

she started high school last year. She felt that her sister and her friends could benefit from reading a novel that addressed the important issues they were confronting and demonstrated a positive solution—and she recalled a Toni Morrison quotation that had prompted her aspirations before: "If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

During her sophomore spring, Briuana began the endeavor of writing a novel. In what felt to her like a very long process, she began by outlining her ideas chapter by chapter—an outline that considerably transformed over the course of the writing process. She wrote down her ideas of the characters in the story—their backgrounds, ages, likes and dislikes—and imagined their personalities. And then, she started writing, and revising, and writing again.

A year and a half later, now a senior living in Adams House, Briuana is a published author. She says that the reaction to her work has been positive, especially from those in her hometown who have bought and read the book. She has found that the most rewarding part of the experience is when readers tell her that they connected with one of her characters and were touched by the storyline,

and she even reflects on her own experiences through those of her characters.

While Briuana has already started her next book—a sequel to *The Fall*, which she said ends on "a bit of a cliffhanger"—she's also reflecting on her experiences and finishing her senior year here at Harvard, where she studies Psychology. She says that she constantly thinks of ideas about what the characters will do later in the series, and working on the sequel helps her to keep her thoughts together as she ponders bringing the story forward into college.

When asked about her biggest hope for the book, though, she says, "I want it to impact girls in high school. I feel like high school can be so hard and there are some things you don't really feel comfortable talking about to other people, and I feel like my book covers some of those insecurities we experience in high school and those secret things we don't talk about. If young girls can see how the characters handle these things and they can relate to one character, it might impact their life and their high school experience."

Emily Hall (emilyhall@college.harvard.edu) looks forward following the rest of the series!

Sleepy Poem

By ABIGAIL KOERNER



Nature, reflected. *Francesca Cornero '19*

Tired eyes and tired faces
Walk along to tired places
Early yet, we shuffle and sway
It's only the beginning of a boring day
But moments ago, or so it seems
We were all alone in dreams
Weightlessness and breathy breaths
Something close to bliss and death
Each night we lay our heads to rest
Or morning, noon, our eyes would suggest
"A nap" we'd say, and lay bodies down
"A nap" would end in yawns and frowns
For when you let sleep creep in
He'll consume you from within
Suddenly you're paralyzed
No alarm, sound, or push could revive
Those deep in sleep, once sleep deprived
It's not you it's me! I say
When I don't let him in
There are things to do
These things I'm knee deep in
And if I let my brown eyes close
He'd take my things and let them go
My coffee cup is all I know...

Abigail Koerner (ajkoerner@college.harvard.edu) writes poetry, but not always while sleepy.

captured and shot

The last traces of summer.

By AUDREY EFFENBERGER

