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when september ends

Inside: Celebrating the start of fall.

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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.

For publication information, email subscriptions, and general inquiries, contact President Daniel Um (president@harvardindependent.com). Letters to the Editor and comments regarding the content of the publication should be addressed to Editor-in-Chief Caroline Cronin (editorinchief@harvardindependent.com).

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The Indy wakes me up.

Cover photo by
Francesca Cornero '19.

<i>President</i> <i>Editor-in-Chief</i> <i>Vice-President, Publishing</i>	Daniel Um '19 Caroline Cronin '18 Hunter Richards '18
<i>News Editor</i> <i>Forum Editor</i> <i>Arts Editor</i> <i>Sports Editor</i> <i>Podcast Editor</i>	Pulkit Agarwal '19 Megan Sims '18 Hunter Richards '19 Tushar Dwivedi '20 Kelsey O'Connor '18
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<i>Staff Writers</i>	Emily Hall '18 Hannah Kates '18 Hunter Richards '18 Sally Yi '18

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INDY FORUM

Why Run if you Can Speed-Walk (or Shuttle)?

Seniors running for Class Marshal hope for their classmate's votes while never fully explaining what a Class Marshal does.

Having the Senior Class Marshal elections, complete with Facebook events pleading for your votes and texts from the kid in your freshman entryway guilt-reminding you of how they taught the whole floor how to do laundry in case you planned to ever repay them. One of the most surreal moments is when all the Senior-specific profile picture filters and posts you ignored last year now apply to you. That's not about to stop you from filtering them out, though.

The kid from your Expos class freshman year is running for Senior Class Marshal and you're more than a little startled that they even still go here. Freshman fall section classmates have less function than non-playable characters in video games because at least NPCs can hand off fast travel packs when you pass them on your way. You know that sophomore year was rough for everyone, you're sure, but you'd like to think that time hasn't been as cruel to you as your old classmate.

You likely wouldn't be this critical if you had any idea what a Class Marshal does. How does the phrase "Senior Class Marshal" come off as incredibly ominous while remaining entirely aloof? Although you've already cast your endorsement for someone and swore you trusted them to fulfill the designated duties, you don't really have any idea what the role entails. It sounds like the person tasked with wrangling together the seniors during commencement while they're waddling around like riled-up geese and craning their necks, except they're seeking out their lost parents and not stray bread crumbs.

Even though you've been itching to graduate since Opening Days and social interactions leave you increasingly anxious, you start to wonder why you didn't run for Class Marshal. To be fair, you're still not fully convinced that there's only one 'L' in "Class Marshal" but maybe that's why you didn't run to begin with. While you recognize the majority of your peers listed, you're less than surprised when a flurry of friend requests start pouring in. They're supposedly in the Class of 2018 but you've got your doubts. Candidates who spent more time studying abroad than they did in the science center by senior year are the most viable. No one else can honestly say they escaped Harvard and chose to come back to not only spend their last year suffering in a confusing climate, caught in an eternal arm wrestle between a heat wave and blizzard. Spoiler alert: both extremes of weather events have been lifting and are too swell to be in the middle of this.

Get yourself a candidate that's more reliable than the shuttle. Transloc taught you what it feels like to be ghosted as you saw the tracker disappear from the map just as it was meant to head towards you after you waited more than Harvard time. Is this what it feels like for the section kids you text for help on the PSet the night before it's due but hastily walk away from as soon as the professor excuses the class to avoid small talk? Don't let your Class Marshal do you like that. Hold them accountable for their promises while campaigning. Did someone say the comeback of HBOGo? You're awaiting its return more than you did for Frank Ocean.

By HUNTER RICHARDS

Here's to the Senior Class Marshals doing a good enough job that you won't even notice what they're doing until it's done!

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) is looking forward to forgetting about all about Senior Class Marshals again until graduation.

INDY NEWS



By ALAYA AYALA

To have a summer job or to volunteer? That is the question – whether 'tis nobler to work to pay your bills, or to work in public service without an income, is the never-ending battle that low income students must wage within themselves when spring term rolls around.

For many of us, the answer is unavoidably the former. We need to work over the summer, we often don't have a choice. Something that Harvard is rather good at is helping its students find lucrative summer jobs.

Unfortunately, finding funding to support one's living expenses while they volunteer is not as easy. The Philip Brooks House website states: "Each year, these programs provide opportunities for more than 200 students to gain experience working at non-profit and public interest organizations." Compared to the roughly 22,000 students that attend Harvard University, this is a rather small number. Public service summer funding programs, such as the Presidential Public Service Funding Initiative and the Arthur Liman Public Interest Law Summer Fellowship Program, are extremely competitive, with less than 20 students benefitting from them combined.

We Want to Give Back Too

Public service summer funding and the difficulties that come with being low-income.

Other options are Federal Work Study, the Institute of Politics Summer Stipend Program, OCS International Internships and Volunteer Opportunities Funding and the Harvard Clubs Community Service Fellowship. However, those are also, if a bit less, competitive, and their funding is limited as well.

The reality is that many students with noble intentions apply for these programs, and not all of those that require the funding they need to carry out their public service dreams receive it. As a result, not many students, especially low-income students, get the opportunity to even try out public service as a possible career path. This is unfortunate for many reasons, but as President Faust said in her 2010 commencement speech, it's mainly because "...the most important factor drawing students into public service is the opportunity to try it out. Students involved in public service during their undergraduate years are almost twice as likely as others to enter a public service job upon graduation."

This statement led President Faust to vow to increase the funding for these programs with her statement, "Given the strong connection between such opportunities and later career and life choices, beginning next year, I plan to create the Presidential Public Service Fellowships program to honor and to fund 10 outstanding students from across the University for a summer service opportunity. Additionally, as part of an anticipated

University fundraising campaign, we will include as our explicit goals doubling the current amount of funding for undergraduate summer service opportunities, and a significant increase for graduate students as well."

Hopefully, the increase of funds for undergraduate summer service opportunities will be one of the many promises President Faust keeps before she finishes her tenure as Harvard's President.

In the meantime, applications for public service funding can be found at the following:

- publicservice.fas.harvard.edu/mission
- iop.harvard.edu
- ocs.fas.harvard.edu/summer-funding
- service.harvard.edu

Alaya Ayala (alaya_ayala@college.harvard.edu) wishes, "May the Funding Application Odds Be Ever in Your Favor!"

INDY FORUM

DACA and Protest

The discussion continues.

By PULKIT AGARWAL

The campus has seen an appreciable increase in protests following the Trump administration's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiated under President Obama. The Indy got a chance to speak with protesters about their motivations and the responses that they have received from the student body.

One student, Anwar Omeish '19, who was at the forefront of these efforts, pointed out that the "protests and discussions [have] unfolded really well, and our messaging [has] really [come] through. We wanted to affirm the belonging of students of color, especially Black and Latinx students, and low-income students (and workers!) on this campus, and hold Harvard to a higher standard than the junk science that Charles Murray advances. The feedback we got about the rally and the event afterwards was positive, and I think we accomplished what we wanted to."

There has been a concerted effort to try and sustain the levels of energy that protestors have shown in the past two weeks, especially immediately following the rescinding of the policy. Further, as a student from the Islamic Society, claimed, "I can't speak for the Black Caucus, which I worked with on this event



The Yard: freshman dorms and forum for discussion. *Francesca Cornero '19*

[protest], but I think as a general strategy social justice groups and groups for students of color on campus are going to continue building relationships to generate action that addresses all of our issues intersectionally and stand up for every member of our community."

Meanwhile, this past week saw events organized by various other groups to also help students and faculty on DACA more directly. On September 20, the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program and Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion organized a DACA renewal clinic and 'Know Your Rights' informational session with attorneys who gave advice on renewing of DACA applications.

The Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Counselling and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have jointly also initiated a "Reclaiming Your Narrative" support group that meets weekly in front of Memorial Church. The group meets every week at 5:00 pm, and seeks to employ narrative

therapy to provide DACAmended students to cumulatively process the toll Trump's policy is taking on their emotional health, families, and communities. The central theme of this support group is to counter the popular narrative of oppression and provide a cathartic experience of recovery for those affected by the uncertain future of DACA.

The Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program at Harvard Law School continues to encourage students who have DACA to set up a free consultation with them; those whose DACA is set to expire before March 5, 2018 must apply for renewals by October 5, 2017.

Pulkit Agarwal (pulkitagarwal@college.harvard.edu) encourages students to take part in these discussions as the term continues.

INDY ARTS

The Watch

By JASPER FU

It wasn't very important, I suppose. A two-dollar watch probably worth half that; an impulse purchase as I waited and wondered for the hundredth time how much time I had spent waiting and wondering. Besides, it matched my jacket: an ugly, bright red gift from a well-meaning cousin. I put it on as the cashier was ringing it up, staring at the chrome-ish bezel. It felt comfortable, at least.

By the time I lost it, the rubber was worn, the strap too loose, the face stained and almost opaque with scratches. I was playing with the ragged rubber strap, killing time as I waited for the bus to roll up to the stop. The strap itself, bleached to an almost pinkish color, was fraying in a half-dozen places. The sky glowered a dull grey-black, an hour before sunrise, and the snow was an almost dizzying shade of white. I was still mostly asleep when I leaned back against the bus stop. The shock of frozen metal on my neck jolted me forward, and as my arm rose the strap tore free, sending it flying into the brown mush by the road. I must have looked a sight — scrabbling in a slush that was more dirt than snow for a candy-red rubber watch, dressed in a cheap suit and off-black slacks, two coffees short of asleep. I could see people staring at me as I squatted in the snow, awkwardly fumbling for a watch with hands that would barely be able to feel it.

I left it there in the snow, with my shoes damp and my hands numb. I didn't think a cheap, convenience-store watch was worth the curious stares, the soaked everything, or missing the bus hurtling towards me. I stepped onto the bus, brushing snow and water off of my sleeves. The steps were wet where the snow had melted, and I clambered on to the nearest seat, still shivering. I stripped off my damp gloves and rubbed my hands together in a hopeless attempt to warm them. The shapeless grey cushion dug uncomfortably into my back. Around me were a half-dozen freezing, exhausted commuters, clinging to chilled metal bars or perched on

colorless plastic seats like a gaggle of depressed geese. I sat back on the grey seat, pushing back my sleeves to try to keep the damp fabric from my skin. The rustling cloth drew bored stares from other passengers as I settled back.

The grey sky ambled past, but it was too dark to make out anything specific. As I was staring out, my phone vibrated, a muted buzz that shook me out of my stupor. I hurriedly snatched it from my pocket and read the caller id: the bright letters spelled out the name of my artificially perky boss.

"Hey, we expected you twenty minutes ago," he said, his voice altogether too bright for the time of day. "What's holding you up?"

"Uh, there's a lot of traffic in this area." I replied, still drowsy. The lie was so barefaced that some of the other commuters turned towards me with wry smiles. I quickly corrected myself: "The snow's pretty bad, too. The bus is running a bit late."

My fellow travellers returned to whatever they were doing as I continued talking. "I'll be at the office in a ten or twenty minutes, max. See you there."

I fumbled at my phone with frozen fingers. The screen faded to black as I tucked it into a pocket. The grey sky was turning brighter as I passed vague shapes blurring into frost-covered cars and empty office buildings. I rested the side of my head on the window, ignoring the chill of the glass and metal, and tried my best to remain awake.

By the time I stepped off the bus, I was mostly if uncomfortably lucid. The shock of the cold had, at least for a time, brought me to my senses. I glanced at my wrist before I caught myself and turned to my office. As I stepped forwards, a man rushed up to greet me.

"Where have you been?" he asked, heatedly. "You told me ten minutes half an hour ago. I've got people waiting on you, people waiting on them, and it's all just a big mess. Do you even know what time it is?"

I stared mournfully at my bare wrist as Derek chattered on. It was going to be a very long day.

Jasper Fu (jasperfu@college.harvard.edu) is in need of sleep.

Tell Me More!

New season,
new questions.

By KELSEY O'CONNOR

Next Friday the Independent will launch Season Two of its inaugural podcast *Tell Me More*. This season *Tell Me More* will continue to share the stories of the people we walk by each day in the Yard, but we will be asking about childhood dreams.

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Many of us know what our friends, and even strangers, are interested in now. Whether it's the arts, medicine, finance, law, or journalism (to name but a few), it's not hard to put people into categories. But how did they get there? When everything was possible at the age of five, what were the possibilities for Harvard students? Now, the possibilities are still pretty endless, but sometimes our imaginations aren't quite as big as our five-year-old selves'.

In our first episode of Season 2, I'll sit down with Kianna Goldsberry '18, the first of five fantastic undergrads this season, who will tell us about her pivot from books to medicine. Tune in next week and every other to hear answers to the questions you didn't know you had on new episodes of your favorite Harvard podcast, *Tell Me More*.

If you know someone who has a good answer to this question, if there's someone you'd like to hear from, or someone you just really like talking to, please reveal them to us (don't worry we won't tell)! Send their name to Kelsey at podcast@harvardindependent.com.

You can listen to *Tell Me More* on Soundcloud and our website.

Kelsey O'Connor (podcast@harvardindependent.com) is waiting for you to out your friends as interesting.

Symposium of Culture

Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble.

By MARISSA GARCIA

I, nine-years a cellist, met and hugged Yo-Yo Ma, Harvard Alumnus Class of '73, after his concert with the Silk Road Ensemble Tuesday, September 26th at the Oberon.

I was hugging the Redefiner of chamber music.

It is not certain what now is the modern purpose of the Symphony. We for some reason are allured by the culture of symphony-going and all of its black tie. Perhaps it humbles us, giving us that elusive flavour of only a few decades earlier, when having a digital wealth of varying performances of Bernstein was unimagined. After all, there has to be a reason why we still experience an intense exhilaration (and procrastination opportunity) upon the delivery of a Boston Symphony Orchestra email to our inbox.

When the symphony – especially of professional level – is so revered, it becomes shocking to encounter a genuine criticism. There is a superiority in value attached to a Symphony, so much so that an attendee could almost feel foolish, ignorant, and uneducated if bold enough to criticize it. Before the moment of slander, the critiquer would wonder if he truly is familiar enough with the music to offer valuable insight.

We often go to a Symphony expecting to hear a somewhat familiar array of classical music, such as Bach, a pinnacle of Western music. Warmth overcomes us when exposed to familiar melodies. Nostalgia strikes. Recollection resurfaces. We become even more expert in Bach but still gawk at the possibility of becoming a true concert connoisseur. After all, it just would not make sense to involve



When the Yo-Yo Ma concert is closer to your dorm than the dining hall.

All photos by Marissa Garcia '19

ourselves with a kind of music that has been performed and perfected for centuries. And so, the Symphony becomes a sort of machine, breeding banal repertoire to please the audience in nostalgia, failing to assume the role of educator, reinstilling Western sounds, and failing to introduce the audience to novel pieces.

While sitting first row at the Oberon, I sonically submersed myself in the melodies of the Silk Road Ensemble, featuring Yo-Yo Ma, who is amongst the ranks of the most skilled cellists today. It is true that one's exposure to Yo-Yo Ma is usually through the Prelude to Bach Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, the archetype of classical music. The familiarity is strong, and my nostalgia was undeniably

struck when Yo-Yo Ma decided to integrate some of the Prelude's characteristic lolling themes-- the broken eighth note chords-- with his performance of Sarabande, a separate movement which is from the same popular Cello Suite.

And so, here is when Yo-Yo Ma could have assumed the role of crowd satiator, giving a conventional performance of said movement that would have left us all pleased and nostalgic. Instead, he took a departure from Bach's conventional Western instrumentation, dueling with Wu Tong, who, hauntingly playing countermelodies on his sheng, layered a fresh Eastern element to this suite.

This is the beauty of the Silk Road Ensemble.

INDY ARTS



Culture, continued.

It was founded with its name quite purposefully – while the Silk Road itself historically served as exchange in trade and commodity, the Silk Road Ensemble currently serves as exchange in cultural music, as embodied by the Eastern-influenced rendition of Bach.

This was a theme reiterated throughout the concert. The introductory selection was Purcell's "Chaconne: Dance for the Chinese Man and Woman" from *The Fairy Queen*, as inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* combined with an Iraqi Traditional Piece, *Fog al-Nakheel*. Bassist Shawn Conley led a smaller string ensemble in the performance of his own original piece, *Yann's Flight*, hoping to vicariously live – through its melodies – the life of his friend, who parachutes recreationally. They concluded the concert with another combination of a Vietnamese Trad's Lullaby and Zorn's *Briel* from *Book of Angels*. It is worth noting that the Silk Road Ensemble contributed the the original score for the now-airing PBS documentary film, *The Vietnam War*, of which the soundtrack includes "Lullaby." Instrumentation was as familiar as a violin, viola, cello, bass, percussion and as new as a sheng, suona, bawu, and guzheng. Therefore, diversity was ubiquitous, from the instrumentation to the repertoire to the performers themselves.

What the Silk Road Ensemble accomplished was immersion. This concert was only open to Harvard affiliates, and admission was free. This contrasts with the typical transaction of purchasing a symphony ticket in order to hear a certain piece; instead, we were willingly attending a concert for which we had no previously released program. All we knew was that we were about to experience Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, and that meant this would be foreign music to which we would have no previous exposure. And that was the point. They were the educators, ready to play for us new pieces that were not yet familiar, but hopefully one day will be... and definitely

would be in a culturally united and diverse world in all respects.

The Silk Road Ensemble may be onto something. How would the dynamics of symphonic music change if programs were to stop being placed on the ticket website? What if we began to pursue music instead with a fervor for new, eclectic sounds, ditching the notion of the playlist of repeated songs?

The Silk Road Ensemble is equalizing. It is a symposium of culture, celebrating both the Eastern and the Western, and, without our previous exposure to their music, dares us to converse about it, to critique it. There is no need to feel as if we need to be these classical music moguls – the Silk Road Ensemble opens up the discussion for music, arguably the most crucial component for community.

Marissa Garcia (marissagarcia@college.harvard.edu) is awed and inspired by the Redefiner and the celebration of culture!

INDY ARTS



After the storm. *Francesca Cornero '19*

When we were on our way home it started to rain. I ran off in my direction and you in yours while it started to pour. And, oh, did it pour! It rained like crazy and I was drenched. My glasses were impossible to see through; clothes were plastered to my skin; hair wet and wild and hitting me in the face and splattering me with water when I turned my head too fast.

I could have gone home with you. We could have gone in and changed clothes and had a coffee together in newly found warmth. But if we had run through the rain together, I wouldn't have run through it laughing to myself. I ran alone and squished and splashed and laughed and laughed! I would not have laughed so much.

We would run; we would stop. I would look up into your eyes and put my hands in yours and our eyes would meet. Our lips would meet. But a sweet kiss in the rain was not on my agenda.

in the rain

By ABIGAIL KOERNER

Running and jumping and leaping – I hopped through puddles. Mascara ran down my face like the raindrops that drip-dropped down my body. I should have been uncomfortable but I was too free to care. Giggles escaped my throat like the rain which escaped the sewer grates and gutters to flood the street. Now it was really pouring.

When I turned around, so close to changing my mind – running after you and catching up – I saw how you walked away. Your head down and headphones in as you went.

My grin from ear to ear squished down to its smallest form. The storm stopped overhead as if time would end momentarily and all there was to do was stand still. So I stood. Drenched and frowning, my hood fell down from where it once stood atop my head. In that moment, I looked like you. Head down, headphones in, walking and not running in the rain.

Turning on my heel, I stole one last look. All I could see was sadness.

The clouds got darker, thunder boomed. Heavy and heavier drops began to fall. My hood, once my protector from wet, became a bucket where water would collect. It was so heavy. My clothes were drenched and boots sloshed in the road. Any inch of space was soaked. The clouds were overwhelming.

With miles to go, miles and miles from home, I turned my face to the sky. If only I had windshield wipers on my glasses to wipe away raindrops that felt like tears! Thunder roared and wind whipped but my gaze was steady and my body was still, facing the storm that danced above me. I couldn't bring my

gaze back down to Earth where water ran and mud brewed in the grass underneath me. I mourned my time in dryness; when we were together. When my heart could breath. With rain pouring and in the stillness of the moment, my chest was wet and cold. My heart beat slowly like the pound of thunder every other minute. Thunder vibrated through my arteries and back through my veins.

My heart hated this moment. My toes were too numb. Blood had to pump faster or my poor organ feared we would not survive the storm...

When I turned my head in your direction, you were gone. Surely not dry but finally on my way to dryness, I walked. Slowly but surely down the road, I walked, like the blood which slowly began to flow again underneath the shell of moisture which encased my body. Faster and faster my boots hit the concrete. No water which flowed or clouds which rumbled with thunder that boomed could stop me from getting home. Home where my wet body and wet heart and wet hair would be back in the place that I used to love most: solitude.

Without you, I danced in the rain. Alone again, I found rhythm in the raindrops as they fell around me. Heavy clouds parted slightly to make heavy drops into mere drips. The pitter patter of drizzle as day turned to night was the perfect. It was still raining but I could feel my toes again. I looked forward to every puddle and in every puddle I would dance. I walked a thousand miles away from you. No, a kiss in the rain was not on my agenda.

Abigail Koerner (ajkoerner@college.harvard.edu) writes short fiction, but not always in the rain.

INDY ARTS

How to Come out as a Bisexual Lizard Person

You're a straight human. Straight-A, straight Asian, straight hair. You hear people talk about the lesbian in your high school class like they're whispering through a mosquito screen. "I saw her with her girlfriend at Starbucks," someone on the other side of the bathroom stall says. "You know she doesn't even tuck her tail into her skirt? It's like she wants other people to see." You are uncomfortable, but only in the way that you feel when you can't remember something that hasn't happened yet.

You know you like some things about high school—first period Lit class, music, the 3pm bell. Other things, like other people, are more unclear. You keep your head down, and vicariously live through your friends whose parents do cool things like let them date, and speak English.

One time a boy stretches in class and you notice the way the shirt reaches up and the window shade to your shame is pulled open. Your ears fill up with your own embarrassment, red like the candy you stole when you were eight. "Where did you get that?" your dad said, his face a taut rope. "Who did you take that from?" You cannot return the snapshot your mind has made to the store manager. Your dad's head bowed, his hand tight around yours tight around the crinkly strawberry print cellophane that burns in the center of your palm. You stopped eating candy after this.

In creative writing class you write about your family a lot because you haven't learned how to write about sex yet. One time you write about a dead kid and your classmate tells you it's your best work all year. When you start writing about sex you will remember that stories have to be sad to be good.

You meet the girl that the boy you like is seeing. She is bisexual, she says. "She reminds me of Ramona Flowers from Scott Pilgrim," says the boy you like. She is white and has a black bob streaked with blue. She wants to show you the British comedy she likes. In

math class, your math teacher—the cool one—sees the two of you on the beanbag in the corner, under the same blanket. "Get a room," he jokes. You laugh, because you know that you have to be white and look like Ramona Flowers to be bisexual.

You're in college now and meet a lot of people you like talking to. A few of them call themselves queer. "Some of us are lizard people too," they say. You like being around them.

On your first break home you tell your parents about your new friends. "How do they know they're lizard people? At this age? Aren't they a little young?" Your mom says. "I don't know Mom, how did you know you were human?" She touches her skin and looks scared. You say you're tired and go to bed. You lie awake for four more hours.

You enter your sophomore year. You grow into your newfound sense of independence, legs shaky with a sense of freedom. You make more friends. Some of them are lizard people and some are not. You walk on your new, free, legs into a relationship that you think will be short. A month later his body feels strange next to yours. You consider pushing him out of your bed. You tell him you need space, that it feels wrong somehow, that you aren't sure who you are. Your relationship is shorter than you expected.

You're in your bedroom avoiding homework and watching YouTube videos when you click on a video of a dancer. Her cropped hair flies as she pops her body to Destiny Child's "Say My Name." You feel that familiar window shade unfurling in your stomach. "Shit," you say. You're gay. Bisexual? Behind the window shade are a hundred hidden things. You touch the skin behind your ear, suddenly self-conscious. You feel scales.

A week later, on Coming Out Day, your best friend announces to the internet that she is bisexual. You delete the note that you were writing that starts, "Many of you may have

By JESSICA JIN

thought you knew who I was." You don't want to seem like you are copying a trend. You aren't even 100% certain you aren't lying? Could you be lying? Oh god, what if this is all just a chemical trick being played by your brain? The scales behind your ear are still there, bristling.

At a party some guy says,
"I had a friend once who came out but then they got back in the closet."

"What? How can you get back in the closet?" you say.

"They just did. Stopped seeing guys. Stopped talking to our friends. Started wearing these long-ass overcoats to hide their tail."

"Whoa," you say.
"Yeah. Like if you're not gonna act like a real lizard person, don't even pretend. Right?"

"Right," you say. You pull your hair behind your ears.

You start googling "How to come out as a bisexual lizard person" but do it in incognito mode so it won't show up in your browser if anyone needs to borrow your laptop. You start watching TV shows where girls kiss other girls and also turn into lizards. You get through the entirety of *The L-Word* in a week. Even though none of the characters look like you, you just want to know what being a lesbian means, and also what lizard people do with their scales. On spring break you're trying to find a show to watch with your mom. "L-Word? What does that mean?" she says, when the lesbian epic scrolls by on the screen. You panic. "L-lizards," you say. Her mouth is a thin, flat line. You end up watching *The Proposal* that night, sunken into the couch next to your mom, trying to calculate the least gay way to look at Sandra Bullock.

It's summer now. Being yourself is hard. Some nights you lie in bed looking out the blank rectangle of your window and wish yourself into nonexistence. It seems almost

INDY SPORTS

Why We Play

Lizard, continued.

easier not to have a head, or hands, or a body, or a tail. When you have sex you think of it happening to a shapeless, bodiless form lying somewhere next to you. You wish you were normal again. You wonder what normal means. You think about the strawberry print cellophane crinkling in your eight-year-old hand, the taste of red in your mouth, more chemical than fruit, something you weren't supposed to be eating.

You take more classes on women, gender, and sexuality. Switch your major from biology to gender studies. You don't tell your family until you come home with a tattoo. "This is my body," your mom says, holding your arm, your flesh red indentations in her grip. "What have you done to my body?" "This is a symbol of my life, you say. You think you see her cry behind her closed face. The scales behind your ear lie flat and smooth.

You start bouncing from therapist to therapist. Each one of them agrees that you are right that you are depressed. Each one of them thinks that it is related to your mother and to your sexuality. You think that they might be right but you still insist that you are fine every time you walk into a session. One of them says, "I think you should use this year to experiment with your sexuality." You say, "Yes." You end up cancelling every date you've ever scheduled with a girl, using excuses like "I agreed to this for all the wrong reasons." You lie in bed feeling more alone than ever.

Despite everything you feel more like yourself than you have in years. You let yourself go out on the weekends, and the weekdays. You go on long walks around ponds with friends, and you write. You start to understand that being whatever the heck you are is sort of like a long journey through a forest—dirty, kind of scary, but also wholesome and green. And the quiet part of yourself that has always held itself back takes a deep breath of air.

Jessica Jin (jjin@college.harvard.edu) promises she's human.

"Can't, busy," I heard, over and over again, to the same question I'd been asking around my house for the past few hours: "want to play IM ___ tonight?" The blank could have been soccer, volleyball, or any number of intramural that Harvard offers, but regardless of the sport, the answer stayed the same. Of course, I wasn't planning on playing either—I, too, was busy.

With just a single friend heading across the river to the stadiums that Thursday night, it became clear that intramurals, the supposed casual way to continue an interest in sports while taking a break from everyday bustle, seemed just as much a burden as a chance to step away. Here, I take a step back to understand why students play and don't play, where they get the information for events, and what they wish was different going forward.

In hopes of better understanding the nature of IMs, I conducted a brief survey, asking several students from each House how they feel about their respective IM setup and whether they themselves were active participants. Students were allowed to choose multiple answers for reasons they did not attend: "Too busy with schoolwork" and "too late at night" were common answers in tandem (70%), with most students just starting their work when IMs begin in the evening. On the other hand, "I'm terrible," or "I suck at sports" (37%) remained a fairly common answer, seemingly counter to the purpose of IMs at its roots. Finally, when asked when the next IM matches were or where, only the students who regularly participated had any idea of where, when, or even where to look to find out.

This speaks to the intrinsic nature of IMs and their purpose. Although intended to appeal to any student remotely interested in sports or just looking for fun, the casual participant seems to get left behind, with little idea of when, where, or how events are happening. Most students (85%) said that they would love to participate in IMs at some point this year, and came into the year hoping that they could play a quick match or game here or there. But just like classes, IMs appear to be intimidating to add weeks or months into the year, and it is easy to fall behind fast. My roommate tried the other day: "Soccer, 30 minutes that's it, can't afford much more." Come evening, the same

statement turned into: "When is it again? Wait its across the river? Maybe next time I guess."

In direct contrast, a student in Kirkland quickly pulled up a saved link on his phone, revealing a Google calendar with dates and times for each event. Synced to his regular calendar, the games he wanted to play fit neatly between classes, club meetings, and dinners. The wide variance in dedication to IMs, however, doesn't fit the general interest; almost everyone wants to play at some point, but the desire for the games to be much more accessible still exists. Taking a broader approach, blocking groups tend to react enthusiastically or uninterested as a group. This however, tended to alienate those individuals who were interested in playing, but had a blocking group largely uninterested – suggesting that there might be alternate ways to get groups of people involved.

The football game and tailgate this weekend are campus unifiers – opportunities to invoke the spirit of one school against another; House against House, however, presents a new set of challenges in trying to gather interhouse competition and incentive. Regardless of complaints or praises, and whether the solution is more structure or less, the state of IMs is not of disarray, and instead definitely one of open potential to bring a campus together.

Tushar Dwivedi (tushar_dwivedi@college.harvard.edu) intends to make the occasional soccer game or tennis match a higher priority this term!

captured and shot

The first traces of fall.

By FRANCESCA CORNERO

