

THE GADFLY

St. John's College
Annapolis, Maryland

YEAR'S END

May 30, 2023
Vol. XLIV, Issue 10

Annapolis Cup 2023

*Croquet Played, Hats Worn,
Champagne Drunk, Storms
Thundered, Middies Beat, a
Jolly Good Time Had by All*

Inside the Mitchell Museum Rebranding

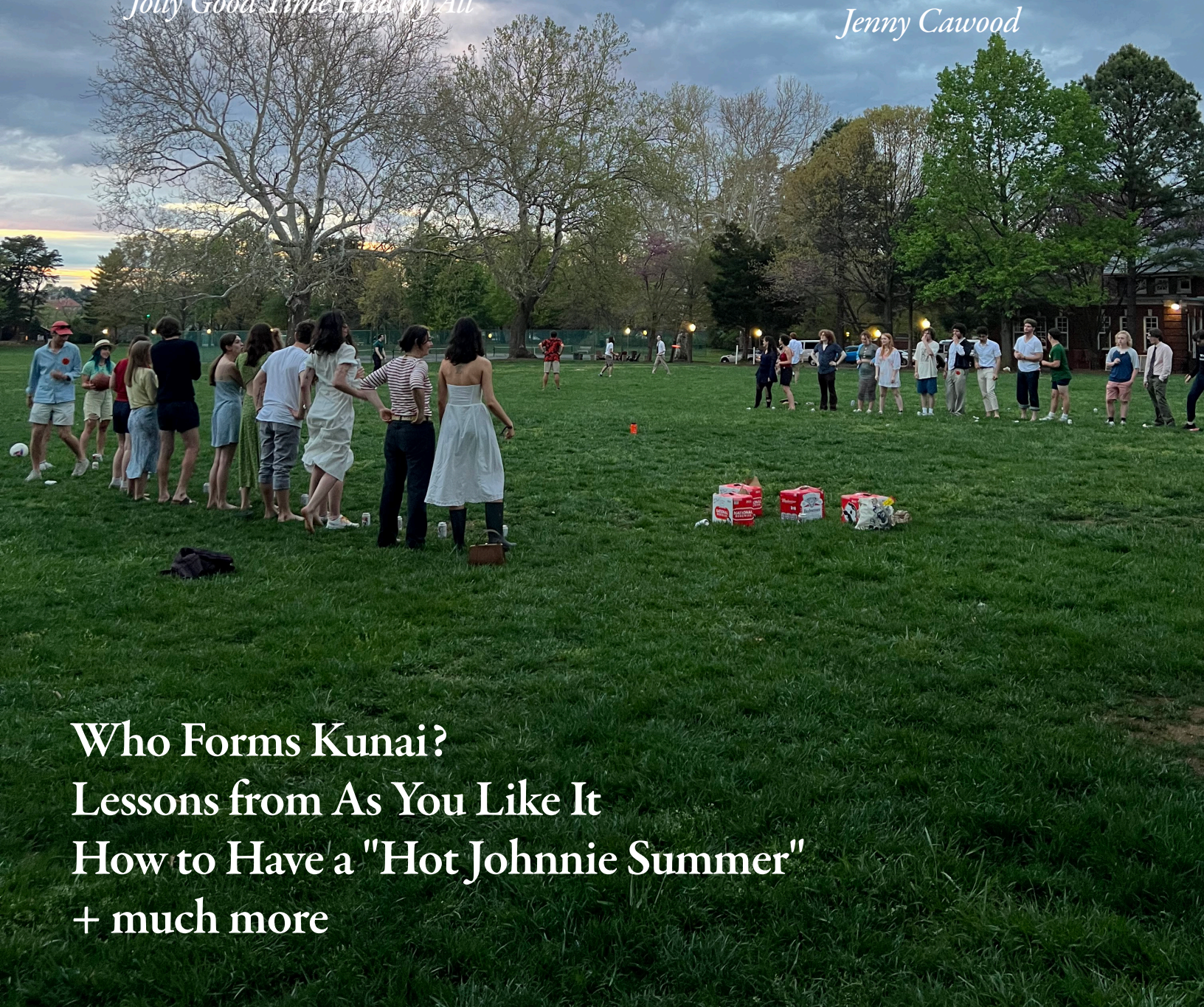
*Interview with Director
Peter Nesbett and Manager
Jenny Cawood*

Who Forms Kunai?

Lessons from As You Like It

How to Have a "Hot Johnnie Summer"

+ much more



CONTENTS

Logos

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Croquet Played... | 4 |
| Inside the Mitchell Museum | 8 |
| Project Polity | 11 |
| Marathon Interview | 12 |

Symposium

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Lessons from As You Like It | 16 |
| An Ode to Viking Portables | 17 |
| A Freshman Seminar | 20 |

Polis

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Who Forms Kunai? | 22 |
| Song of the Clovers | 24 |
| A Grievance of Gilliam | 26 |
| To Seniors, from a Man Who Knows | 28 |
| Tobacco Smoking Chants | 30 |
| Up in Smoke | 31 |
| Sex and the City | 32 |
| Renewal | 33 |
| The Rise of AI | 34 |
| "Melody of St. Cecilia" Translation | 36 |
| Opiliones (Harvestment) | 38 |

STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF Daniel Nathan

MANAGING EDITOR Luke Briner

Meliha Anthony Helen Wagner

Louise Harden Jenna Lee

Dolan Polglaze Jackson Wojnowski

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

Audrey Fox

Bennett Scott

FEATURING SUBMISSIONS FROM

Ranger Kasdorf Lysithia Page

Ben Maier Louis Rosenberg

Will Marchman Molly Sprout

Ezra Melchor Rose Zhang

Tuyết-Nhi Nghiêm

LAYOUT

Bridget Mace

Cooper Ussery

COVER Alayna Raymond

Letter from the Editor

"What should be the significance of a year?"

Given life on a college campus, where each year can seem especially distinct and separate from the last, this question bears some attention. This idea of mining for the significance of something as pedestrian-seeming as a particular block marking the passage of time has been wedged in my head for a couple months now—in fact, this past April, I even brought it to President Demleitner during an interview the Gadfly jointly conducted with the yearbook. The thought of what "makes" a year first came up in a conversation with my mom while I was back home in Georgia during spring break, which, of course, was right in the thick of tax season. It had been a successful year for her small business but a problem still stood: now she's gotta do it all over again. Another whole year, all over again: grinding it out, stacking paper, early mornings, late nights, rude clients, a new unsolvable problem everyday—easy enough to want to say no thanks. Anyways, I continued to bring the question up to more people: a handful of friends while quad booling during Prank weekend, Mr. Abbott I believe, Nancy Calabrese down at the health center, while meeting my extraordinarily drunk neighbor at my new apartment for the very first time, and now you, our loyal Gadfly readership.

But what does it really matter to us to start something and finish it—to pick a path, head down it, and reach your destination? Simply put, how should we think about the significance of accomplishing what we set out to do—to put your heart, soul, lungs, and liver on the line in August and make it out alright on the other side come May?

It seems natural enough to judge a year by basing it off how good our life seems by the end of it, how well time has

THE STRUCTURE

Logos typically holds news reports and narratives of immediate relevance to the Polity. The purpose here is to develop a shared reservoir of information relating to campus life and the community.

Symposium offers the opportunity for our readers to thoughtfully consider contrasting opinions regarding a particular topic.

Polis serves as a platform for elevating voices in our community. Here we find letters to the editor, columns, cartoons, and submitted pieces.

treated us: Has this year been good to you? Were you just lucky? Making all the green lights whenever you were in a car or maybe getting bumped up to first class for free on a full flight. Are you better off now than you were a year ago? Maybe not, and your year hasn't been too hot, and you got audited by the IRS and by some stroke of supernatural sorcery, your dog miraculously gained the ability to speak fluent English and the first thing he said to you was "I don't love you."

It's easy to want to try and weigh our successes against our failures, to pit what we feel against what we think against what we know, to give in to rushed judgments and those little unswatatable gnats of doubt and worry and all our worst instincts put together, buzzing around our heads at a million miles per hour, ricocheting like birdshot fired inside a bank vault or a bunch of rubber balls dropped from a very tall height.

But a year is a milestone, not a benchmark. And if you ask

anyone what a year, or really what a school year, means, I'd bet they'll tell you something like "Well, when school starts it's the beginning, when the school year ends it's the end." Practical. Undeniable. Possibly revolutionary.

Maybe that's all it is, maybe a year can't be truly summed up simply by recounting how you felt about this person or what you thought about this or that thing that may or may not have happened. A year is defined by what you do with that time, not what you didn't do, just as you can't judge a year from your doubts, worries, failures, regrets, shortcomings, near-misses, head-on collisions, nor your mistakes. In some way, all that really needed to be said is "From August 25th, 2022 to May 12th, 2023, we were at St. John's College in Annapolis, MD, getting our degrees, and learning how to learn. What a year." H.A.G.S

—Daniel Nathan
Editor-in-chief



Croquet Played, Hats Worn, Champagne Drunk, Storms Thundered, Middies Beat, a Jolly Good Time Had by All

Dispatch from the 2023 Annapolis Cup

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

The conspirators in Lincoln's assassination were on trial, Confederate ships were still fighting on, John Wilkes Booth had just died, but in May of 1865, the New York Times had a far more important piece of breaking news to report on: the introduction of croquet to the new world. An article called it "the last introduced out-door game, that supplied the much-needed want of an amusing exercise where the two sexes could be equally interested. Though we miss in this country the smooth English lawns where its practice truly deserves its other name of 'out-door billiards' it bids fair to be naturalized among us, with most desirable results, for the promotion of healthy exercise."

While your dear correspondent cannot speak to the implication that this is the first sport that the sexes "could be interested," nor to the level of exercise provided by croquet, he can certainly say that the venerable Gray Lady had the right priorities in those days of the sport's infancy. Who cares for politics, intrigue or conspiracy when red has, in one turn, run the alley, gone rover and staked out black while blue is still two wickets out? What greater excitement, or to use the Times' phrasing, amusement or interest, could be generated in an afternoon's diversion? The Annapolis Cup is, as usual, evidence for the truth



Aerial view of the croquet fields and assorted spectators

of this matter.

This year's game finally returned to our home court, one that truly does miss the quality of the smooth English (or Navy) lawns. After last year's diminished affair at the Naval Academy, nearly everyone was glad for the game to return to its proper home, where Johnnie hopes cannot be dashed by too finely cut grass or overly aggressive caddies. Our fair campus was transformed for the event, with fences springing up from the ground, tents sprouting overnight and the ignoble porta-potties springing into existence.

Despite the good will brought about by the return of the match to our campus, some student dissatisfaction remained in the days leading up to the match. Some planned policies, such as a proposed rule forbidding

students to re-enter the event, drew student ire. Many complained that the planning for the event lacked sufficient student feedback, leading the Delegate Council to pass a resolution calling for more student voice in planning, and to changes made to event policies in response to these student pressures.

In general, the match looked a little different this year. The game was closed off to the wider Annapolis community this year, meaning its attendance was limited to Johnnies, Middies, Alumni, and an odd assortment of others that managed to find their way into possession of tickets. As your correspondent joined the trickle of overly punctual Johnnies at 10:30, the division between said parties was mostly clear, with a few exceptions. It was rather like a game in itself: "That young couple with the preposterously

extravagant hats must be alumni, while the remarkably bulky and square young man must be a midshipman... but what about the guy over there in the Panama hat and the designer shirt? Special townie? Unusually composed Alumnus? Navy man with a sense of style?"

After realizing it was an hour and a half too early to see any croquet, your enterprising correspondent slipped out to grab some brunch, before returning for the grand opening ceremony. Alumnus Hardison Wood, a former croquet player or "rusty wicket" led the formalities, which began with the Navy color guard and the Freshman

chorus (or at least as many of its members who actually attend) singing our nation's anthem penned by our fellow Johnnie. This was followed by mercifully short remarks by local dignitary Mayor Gavin Buckley, good natured speeches on our rivalry by the Superintendent of the Naval Academy, who spoke mostly nobly, and President Nora Demleitner, who spoke entirely nobly.

The centerpiece of this event was, of course, the presentation of the teams. The Midshipmen's pompous parade came first, each player in their croquet whites accompanied by a caddy wearing the Navy dress mess with the

horrendous golden cummerbunds. The Johnnies did not fail to respond, entering in the color inverted equivalent of the Midshipmen's uniforms, with black replacing their white and orange replacing their black. The ceremony was concluded with a rousing rendition of the croquet hymn, "Johnnies as We Play Croquet," sung to a new and inoffensive melody. With that, Ms. Demleitner took the ceremonial first shot, that so-called prime mover of the Annapolis Cup, and the games were on.

All around, the crowds of onlookers milled, with fairly little attention given to the croquet game. Despite



Some members of the Annapolis croquet team, the Imperial Wickets, pictured here with Annapolis President Nora Demleitner

the riveting nature of said game, it was competing with many other diverting amusements. This writer witnessed picnics so elaborate, they would have better belonged at a state banquet in a palace than the humble lawn of our august institution. There were hats so fantastically baroque that they featured birds with smaller hats upon them. There were bands so exuberant that the famously staid and respectable townsfolk of Annapolis couldn't help but dance along. With sights such as these, who could watch croquet?

As it turns out, your humble writer could. The first two games were well played, with Navy just barely beating out the Johnnies in the first match, closely followed by a Johnnie triumph. However, as the third and fourth game

began, the skies began to cloud. A few bursts of rain left all spectators well drenched, but the games played on until claps of thunder sounded in the distance, and ominous voices boomed out over the field ordering all present to evacuate and find shelter. Reluctantly, the crowds dispersed, with Johnnies and some alumni staying on the quad for hours afterwards, presumably lamenting the inconclusive game. Before you too, dear reader, despair, I must let you know they did not need to wait long for the resolution. That very evening, even before the waltz, the message was sent: the match shall resume tomorrow!

The following day a much smaller crowd gathered upon the college green to observe the game. There were no

rowdy Navy caddies, fewer inebriated alumni, and unfortunately no particularly interesting headwear. This was a different crowd, one not coming for the spectacle; it was the dedicated hard core of croquet fans, and they wanted to see the game. And see they did, dear reader. The third game was quickly won by the Midshipmen, and the fourth was handily taken by the Johnnies, leaving the fate of the cup down to one, decisive, momentous, game. Everyone present gathered around the pitch as tensions crept upwards, excitement flared, spirits rose, Midshipmen did push ups upon failed shots and balls went over one after the other. In a brilliant series of moves, Johnnie players Tom Ni and Kaden Marshall pulled through from



The victorious vs pose for a picture with their hard-earned Annapolis Cup

the tight game at the last minute to stake out and secure the Annapolis cup.

After this, of course, came the celebrations and obligatory farewells: Navy sang their utterly unmemorable song about blue and gold and American imperialism, while the Johnnies responded with the angelic polyphony of *Sicut Cervus*. There was then an awkward pause as the Midshipmen ran to the Naval Academy to retrieve the cup, which they foolishly had assumed would not be necessary. With the arrival of the cup, it was discovered that the Midshipmen had desecrated this venerated Annapolitan idol: they had included upon its ancient list of victories false claims of a Naval victory in 2020 and 2021, when no games were played. This revelation, however, was not enough to mar the general jubilation taking place on the field. The game was back on our campus, the event once more drew a crowd, traditions were revived, the Johnnies triumphed: in short, all was right with the world once more.



Tom Ni hoists (or maybe heists?) the Annapolis Cup

Inside the Mitchell Museum's New Exhibit and Rebranding

Lysithia Page

Interview with Director (of Possibility) Peter Nesbett and Manager (of Artistic Inquiry) Jenny Cawood [Editor's note: These are their actual job titles according to the St. John's College website.]

LP: What's the story behind the show, "The Open Museum"?

PN: There was a museum director in Sweden, a guy named Pontus Hultén, who took a concept that Umberto Eco developed called The Open Work. He published a book by the same name in 1962, and he took that thinking and applied it to museums. So what does that mean? Museums have typically been spaces that are intentionally designed to protect and conserve their cultural property and artifacts. At some point in their histories, they became contemplative places. Hultén was pushing against that. This was the early-mid 60s. Society was opening up and he was really interested in the museum becoming more participatory and democratic. He did a show called "SHE—a cathedral," which became a landmark. It centered on a massive sculpture by French artist Niki de Saint-Phalle. She's deceased now, but she worked on these large-scale ceramic mosaic figures, and built a giant mosaic figure in the space through which visitors entered the exhibition by going through the vagina. It was an example of what he called "The Open Museum"—the museum as a space of production and process, so the artists were actually making and constructing these things



Peter Nesbett pictured in front of the Mitchell Art Museum

in the space, which became a sort of immersive environment for the visitor. For us, reviving Hultén's idea of the Open Museum is about opening back up to the broadest community possible with the idea that the space is for them. The most extreme way of doing that, it seems to me, is to actually allow them to define what the space becomes in a very literal way, allowing them to mark the walls. So it becomes this "community-unfolding" that is also an accumulation of different sensibilities and interests. I'm really interested in the social dynamic that unfolds—what reverence people hold for other peoples' contributions or not, or the dialogues between peoples' contributions. Will there be some sort of "call and response"? Will there be people altering each others' work? Will these things coexist, intertwine, or morph together? Given that St. John's is so grounded in conversation and text, what does it look like to

individualize your voice? That's the first question that's raised when you start to communicate by drawing on a wall. And then, those questions that are relevant to all the books and texts we encounter over the years—how do we have conversations with others that are absent? You'll be going in to make a mark in response to somebody that was there a week earlier, and not present when you're making your reply, but it's a public conversation that's taking place over time. And then back to what I was just saying about how people relate to each other through mark-making—what are your responsibilities to the community that's being formed?

JC: Also important to note, we're going through with a rebranding of our identity, which will go hand-in-hand with the concept of "The Open Museum." We're making it feel closer to our identity with the change from

the ‘gallery’ to ‘museum.’ People are not coming into a commercial space. They’re coming into a space where they can interact with art, and with curiosity being at the forefront.

PN: In 2012, the then-named Mitchell Art Gallery received national accreditation as an art museum. We’re one of only five visual art museums in the state of Maryland to have accreditation. We’re a relatively small institution, only 2,000 square feet. So, to have that accreditation is phenomenal, and we’re very proud of it. By claiming ‘museum’ in our title, we’re claiming that.

LP: When did you decide to make these changes for the image of the Mitchell Museum, and how long was the vision for the change “percolating”?

PN: We were founded in ‘89 and the name has been the same ever since, and the identity as well hasn’t changed. People were very open to this new change, and that might have to do with the new leadership on campus. I feel that there’s new reinvestment in the role of the museum. Visual arts aren’t part of the Program. It used to be—in Santa Fe—but not anymore. Here, I think the relationship between the Program and the visual arts has prompted lively discussion over the years—there are some very strong feelings on both sides. The museum has landed in the midst of that conversation.

LP: I’ve always been curious about the process by which the Mitchell Museum plans out future exhibits. How does that work?

PN: I can’t really speak to the past.

Going forward, I would say, one of the tools we’re going to use in both making decisions and thinking about how they connect to the life of the College is through a question bank. We’re building it. We met last week with what we’re calling the ‘Committee in Question’—

LP: [Chuckles]. I love that.

PN: —and the core of the idea is to identify the persistent questions that arise from readings, but also questions beyond them as well. We don’t want to take the questions and illustrate them through the creation of exhibitions. It’s more to be fully cognizant of conversations taking place on campus and make decisions within that frame of reference. I don’t think the connections are going to be literal. So, probably no exhibitions on the Odyssey. What I really like about this is the idea that questions provide “entryways.” One of the problems with the art world and museum culture is that they try to attract an audience based on the reputation that has accrued to the artist’s name, but if you don’t know who that artist is, there’s just no way in. It results in a blockbuster mentality. But if you can use those questions that so many of us relate to, then you can pull more people into the work.

LP: Do you remember any of the questions generated last week?

PN: It’s funny—the group naturally started thinking of questions related to the arts.

JC: One of my favorites: “Is there something inherently terrifying in created things?” And we cited

Antigone, The Book of Job, Frankenstein for that. Another one: “Is the crucifixion everlasting, or was it a moment in time?”

PN: We were talking about “liveness” in art—whether it’s alive or not. Whether it’s constantly unfolding, constantly in a process of becoming.

JC: Right. And with that, someone asked, “Are there men in that horse?” And he cited the Trojan Horse as a piece of art.

LP: That sounds like an idiom in the making.

JC: [Laughs] Yes, definitely. And the final one I wanted to bring up: “What is the virtue of works that make us feel bad?” Like, why does a tragedy get an Oscar every year?

PN: Another favorite of mine: “Can art protect us?”

JC: And we were thinking of Achilles’ shield in the Iliad. It was passed down from the gods and Homer spends so much time to describe it.

PN: There’s this artist named Cannupa Hanska Luger who was involved in the Dakota Access protests at Standing Rock. He made these sculptures that were used as shields—dozens and dozens of them that they used in the protests. They were literally protecting people.

JC: It’s been a very fruitful project.

PN: We’re going to continue convening. Almost everyone who was there wants to continue with it. I see

it as a multi-step project. Some of the questions will need refining, and then we'll need to sort them, and then we'll have a growing question bank.

JC: The perspectives will change as we invite different people to come in.

PN: The other thing is that we're going to refresh our website, and treat it more like a magazine. We're going to lead with commissioned essays by professional writers, as well as encouraging students to write for us as well. So, some of these questions might be the lead title of a piece that somebody is commissioned to write about. The core of what we're going to do will be continuing to hold exhibitions and performances in the gallery and hopefully outside the gallery too. The gallery itself is designed as a rectangle, and what I really love about it is that the corners are porous—it's like a leaky box. And, in general, museums are trying to be more transparent. We're constantly thinking of the context in which people are going to be seeing works.

JC: For me, too, the architecture itself is like a living thing. It lets light in, it lets breath in. It reflects the ethos of what you're trying to do when you discuss art—you're trying to breathe life into things and have life breathed into you by the encounter with beauty. That's why it's so special to have a space that is almost like an organ, like a heart—maybe something that has gills. This space breathes. It has so many possibilities.

LP: Just one last question. Recently there has been a movement among environmental activists in which

they deface works of art with soup and super glue. Was this trend on your mind when you began putting this exhibition together?

PN: Nope. Not consciously. We toggle back and forth between regarding things in the outside world and things specific to St. John's. We had a meeting with some of the people from the library, and one of the staff-members was saying how they employ work-study people in erasing the marginalia in the books. I was thinking, "Oh, I love marginalia." But it drives them nuts at the library. So that conversation had an impact on this project ["The Open Museum"]. It seems like there's this human urge to...to...

JC: —Express. And make marks. Just to briefly speak on my inspiration and background—I noticed when I was a Johnnie (this was before I discovered visual arts—that happened after I attended Marchutz and then got my masters in art history and fine arts in France), I detected this urge to respond to the things we read. So, with that in mind, Peter and I have been developing an education program for our work-study students. Also, we're no longer calling them "guards." They're going to be "hosts." What's at the forefront for us is visitor experience. We're going to work with our freshmen to create a positive environment. Then, we're going to provide opportunities for sophomores to give tours for our visitors. The juniors will have the opportunity to learn curatorial skills, and we're hoping that seniors can act as mentors if they choose to stay with us for the whole four years.

PN: We're going to create a visitor experience that is much more

conversational, much less "talking at you."

JC: Just like at St. John's, we want to talk about things that matter deeply to people. If visual art is a catalyst for that, great. That's what we want. I'd say that, after studying art history and painting in France for around four years, I am particularly passionate about bridging the gap between theory and practice, i.e., analytical vs. emotional engagement with art. Too often, this is a divide that keeps people needlessly confused by each other in the arts, and I am happy to be sort of uniquely situated to address this issue with my work. I think, too, that creating an understanding between the thinkers and doers of art will translate into how we, at the Mitchell Art Museum, conceptualize our relationship with our students. In other words, we are here to inspire them, so that they have intellectual and emotional responses to art—and hopefully, really, a wonderful mixture of the two.

Project Polity: Putting the Program in Practice

El'ad Nichols-Kaufman

On a warm and sunny Sunday, dozens of students milled around on back campus, at the unusually early (for Johnnies) hour of 10 am. There was no scheduled intramural game, nor was there a party gone unusually long: instead, the event drawing the small crowd was a campus clean up and rain garden planting, just one of many such events that Project Polity has organized this year. This particular event was in collaboration with Ms. Benson and the Garden Club, and combined an annual planting of perennials provided by the city with the cleanups that the club has done every weekend.

Project Polity can be easily overlooked on this campus: its events are not visible in the same way waltzes or plays are. However, they have been engaged in many events that immediately impact the Polity and its wider community, both in their weekly cleanups and tutoring and in their larger events, such as the canned food drives held each semester or the rain garden planting.

The cleanups are a good example of the kind of impact project polity has, said Project Polity archon Luke Briner, "Our clean-ups involve a handful of volunteers spending 45 minutes to an hour picking up litter and debris in places around the campus that would benefit from it most." Each week, members gather on Saturdays on the quad to go down to the creek and gather garbage that washes up on the shorelines. These cleanups were begun by environmental group Sunrise St. John's last year, but after

that group collapsed, Project Polity picked up the slack, and continued to work on keeping the creek and the wider campus clean. With this, they also continued to work against the apathy that sometimes circulates around student responsibility to keep the creek clean.

"I've heard...it's not worth cleaning because it wouldn't make a difference," said Erin Allen, a frequent participant in the cleanups. "I know how easy it is to feel that way; cleaning a few yards of shoreline probably isn't going to help the pollution problem of the Chesapeake Bay at large, and we're constantly hearing about things out of our reach making the world worse... College Creek is a quirky little body of water that is uniquely our own, and if we don't care for it, who else will?"

This attempt to encourage the Polity to care about take action on issues impacting the world around us and the wider community underpins much of Project Polity. "I always think back to our informal slogan, 'the program in practice,' and I think of that as the lodestar of what I want to do, and what I think we should do as an organization and as a college," said Briner. "We have a program that we talk about having the power to shape our character, and instill virtue, or at least the thought of virtue, in us. To have that, and then to not care about it enough and not put it into practice would be a waste."

Many Johnnies seem to agree, and Project Polity has grown and expanded to new service projects. This past semester, the group added to their roster an Easter food drive, in which

students went around to houses around Annapolis and collected canned food to donate to the lighthouse shelter. This complements a similar project done by the group at Halloween. Briner explained that the group is now building back up to where it had been in the past. "In previous years, Project Polity would have multiple large events throughout the year...but for the past year or two, we stopped doing that... for this semester, I wanted to do something, so we wouldn't just have one event at the beginning of the year, and keep making the kind of impact we want to see." On the whole, the food drive was very successful, with Project Polity Vice-Archon, Madelyn Minor, reporting that a total of 1,129 lbs of food had been collected.

In addition to the food drives, clean ups and tutoring at the Stanton center, Project Polity has joined in collaboration with local nonprofits to start a chapter of the Food Recovery Network, picking up leftover food and taking it to the lighthouse shelter. These new efforts, however, are just the beginning, as Briner hopes to keep working to expand the club. "We just want to keep working on finding ways of engaging the community...I'm glad we have the projects we do, but I'm looking forward to doing more things that promote a better polity and people caring about these issues."

A New Pheidippides For Our Time

An Interview with Amateur Marathon Finishers Logan Arendt and Andrew Selway

Helen Wagner

Why am I interviewing you?

AS: We made a bet with some friends that we could run a marathon entirely untrained.

LA: I was in my friend's room, and I just kind of said, off the cuff, that I could run a marathon without training... and Jake Rowley asked me to put my money where my mouth is. Andrew got roped into it the next day.

AS: I thought that I was going to maybe run fourteen miles, and I didn't even think I could do that, because I've never run before—but that was my goal. But Logan was always planning on doing the whole thing.

LA: Yeah, because I had like 65 dollars total bet...and I have zero money, you know?

AS: He planned on calling his mom to ask for money to pay off the bet.

LA: You don't have to include that in the article. But that was the plan. I was gonna run 26.2 miles, no matter what happened, in six hours. That was the bet.

Where did you run?

LA: The Navy track.

How long is the track?

LA: A quarter mile, so we had to run 105 laps in total.

Did you run the whole way?

LA: We did four minutes running and one minute walking. And we just did that for five and a half hours.

Was there a point during the marathon when you regretted it?

Both: No.

LA: Everyone was saying that we had no chance of doing it, for like, weeks leading up to it. And in the days leading up to it everyone kept coming up to me and asking about the marathon and saying there was no chance we would do it, and I was actually convinced that if I was gonna finish in under six hours, it was going to be actual hell on earth and unbelievably impressive and difficult—kind of like a Hail Mary or something. And it did suck, but it wasn't the most difficult thing I've ever done in my life.

What is the most difficult thing you've ever done in your life?

LA: I don't know. I wrote my entire freshman essay in 24 hours.

Do you achieve feats like this often?

LA: I don't know if I do these things frequently, but when I told my parents that I did the marathon, they weren't surprised. They thought it was a very Logan thing to do.

How did you prepare?

AS: The night before, I drank a bunch

of gatorade—until I felt sick—and I ate a bunch of carbs. I called my friend Joshua Tague (he's a runner), and I told him "I'm gonna try to run a marathon tomorrow," and he thought it was hilarious. But then he was really in go mode. He said he would show up at 1 pm the next day and finish the race with us, however much was left. So he showed up with ten or twelve miles left and he just stayed with me the entire time and encouraged me to keep going.

Did you have any anti-cramping techniques?

AS: I ate a bunch of bananas right before.

LA: He ate bananas because—and I quote—"monkeys never cramp."

AS: I know it's weird, but this baseball player said monkeys never cramp...so I just ate a lot of bananas, and I didn't cramp!

How would you describe your mindset going into the race?

AS: Going into it, I thought it would suck so much. We were walking together and talking about how no one believes in us but we have to try our hardest...so part of it was that no one believed in us and I wanted to come back like a champion. But around the seventeenth or eighteenth mile I wanted to quit—I was actually determined to quit. I was so tired that

I was running with my eyes closed. But I kept going because I didn't want to watch from the sidelines while Logan finished the race.

What motivated you to keep running?

LA: I just wanted to be able to tell everyone that I ran a marathon without training. Because the reason people made this bet with me was that they don't think it's possible. But immediately after I made the bet, I googled "can you run a marathon without training" [laughs]...and it didn't really say no...but every article said that it's a bad idea—and that it's extremely prideful to think you can do it. So, proving the internet and all my friends wrong was a pretty big motivation.

AS: It actually never clicked in my mind that a marathon was that big of a deal...I genuinely never realized that—

LA: Well it's not that big of a deal. [aside] You don't need to include that we think it's a big deal.

AS: I don't really run in my life. I've walked a lot, though. Over the summer I was walking insane amounts, like 30,000 steps. So I thought, well, maybe if I jog a little bit...

LA: Not everyone thought it was impossible. Some people actually cost me a lot of money that I could have made in bets because they were telling everyone that they thought I could do it.

AS: No one said that about me, though.

LA: [under bated breath] That's true.

Did you have any witnesses?

AS: Yeah—When we were running, lots of people came to see us and bring us snacks.

LA: For the last mile and half, a bunch of people showed up and ran it with us. That was definitely a moment I'll remember for some time.

AS: Even people I'm not even tight with, like, people I've only talked to three times, they came and brought us granola and apples. Oh, that reminds me—we were about ten miles in, and Logan had some old bread in his backpack—

LA: I had some bread from the dining hall from the night before.

AS: ...so Logan had some crusty bread in his backpack—

LA: On the record, the bread was not crusty. It was from the night before.

AS: On the record, it was stale and crusty.

LA: Andrew, stop; she's recording this.

So Logan had some bread of ambiguous quality in his backpack.

AS: Yeah, he had some crusty bread, and after the tenth mile, I ate it, and it was one of the most delicious and beautiful things I've ever eaten in my life.

LA: It was angelic.

AS: 'Cause I was so hungry, and after

losing so many nutrients, I took one bite of bread and my knees almost buckled.

LA: For the next couple miles we were only talking about how good that bread was.

AS: We were like medieval peasants who, like...stumbled across some wheat...

LA: Off the record, we did liken ourselves to medieval peasants. [Editor's note: Nothing's off the record at the Gadfly]

What were the physical repercussions of running that far?

LA: I did have trouble changing the angle of my knees.

AS: Bending them?

LA: Yes.

AS: To give a scope of the actual agony we felt, Logan kept saying his knees hurt—but I kept saying, "I'm weak." I just felt weak—frail and weak. After about the seventeenth mile my soul was falling apart.

LA: Now I just have to hobble everywhere.

AS: Yeah. Everyone on campus is laughing at us. We're supposed to be champions but everyone is laughing at us.

LA: I feel like an old man.

AS: But for the first hour I had a

runner's high—I felt the air on my skin and I thought “wow, the Naval academy is beautiful...” It was really a sense of elation—

LA: For the first hour.

AS: After that I was just staring at the ground seeing the same thing over and over again, just the white line on each side, for the next four and a half hours, just thinking about how that line continued...not thinking about anything else.

Herodotus claims that, during the Battle of Marathon, Pheidippides ran from Athens to Sparta and back, which is about 150 miles each way. After your experience, do you have any insight about the validity of such a claim?

AS: I don't think anyone could run that far.

LA: Maybe if he drank a lot of gatorade.

Now that you've accomplished a marathon without training, what's next?

AS: Ironman. If you give me twenty bucks I'll run an Ironman. If anyone out there wants to bet me ten or

twenty dollars...

LA: Put that on the record.

AS: As long as it's enough to get pizza afterwards.

LA: I think that if I could ever be convinced to run a marathon again, it would not be on a quarter-mile long track. It was a little maddening.

One more question: how has the St. John's program prepared you for this accomplishment?

LA: That's a good question.

AS: Wow.

LA: Lemme think.

AS: ...has it?

[silence]

LA: I mean honestly just, just reading all these...great books. It's easy to forget that normal humans wrote them, you know, and that normal people like us can do great things, too.

Wow. Anything to add, Andrew?

AS: Nope.



Successful marathon runners Logan Arendt (left) and Andrew Selway (shirtless)

Lessons from As You Like It

Dolan Polglaze

I did not want to play Orlando at first. I thought he was another of Shakespeare's simple comedic lovers. I knew him as the boy who indiscriminately carved love poems on trees, and who was hopelessly in love with a woman much wittier than himself. Admittedly, most of these reservations about Orlando originated in the fact that I had played Orlando once before when I was thirteen years old. It was the second Shakespeare production I had ever acted in with my local youth theater troupe. At thirteen, I had very little life experience to justify or understand Orlando's disposition. For one thing, I had never been in love, so Orlando's feelings about Rosalind did not make much sense to me. Secondly, I think I was scared of playing Orlando—a fear that only now I have become cognizant of. This second time playing Orlando, however, I realized that such a fear existed in me back then at thirteen and continues, even now, to inhabit my body and mind.

What was I afraid of? I was afraid of playing a man who cannot help but be utterly candid with the world. Orlando is vulnerable and honest in a way that Rosalind is not, not because he chooses to be so, but because he is earnest in his pain and earnest in his love. Being earnest in pain was and is something I am comfortable with, but earnest in true matters of the heart—in matters of love—I find much more difficult. Back in my early teenage years, Shakespeare was the axis around which I learned to understand and express emotion. I loved playing characters like Macbeth, Hamlet, or even Richard III not because I found them admirable, but because I felt I could inhabit the kind of vulnerability necessary to play a tragic character. Tears would well up in my eyes when I stood to deliver "*Is this a dagger which I see before me...?*" And I felt myself one with the intentions and pain of the falling and fallen Macbeth. But when it came to playing characters like Orlando, I struggled inwardly. Orlando cannot hide behind the mask of insanity, madness, or murderousness. Orlando is simply there: open, loving, honest.

When rehearsals first began for KWP's production of *As You Like It*, I felt myself slipping into the safety of the masked performer. My words would stop in my throat, even before they left my mouth, and I felt my speech failing

to connect with the other actors on stage. I was worried because I felt the same fear returning that I had experienced at thirteen. But I'm older now: I know now what it means to be in love and to crave honesty from the world. I felt that now I at least had the experience to substantiate my becoming Orlando. But it was still a struggle. In rehearsals, I especially struggled with the scene where Orlando runs to put his love poetry on the trees in the forest of Arden. I could not stop my mind from *thinking* the lines, and I could not allow them to come from my heart. There was some kind of blockage, for I felt that I could not allow Orlando's pure feeling for Rosalind to be the intention of the scene. Our director and my friend, Birdi Mueller, sensed my struggle. We had several talks about what it means for an actor to play the mask: to act from the mind rather than the heart. I am deeply grateful for her guidance throughout our rehearsal process because she helped me realize something essential about acting and being: the words do not have to sound any specific way—there is no *form* or *mold* of Orlando asking to be filled. Orlando is the man I birth in every moment on stage through *my* creative action. In this way, there is no expectation for who Orlando or any other character in the play ought to be. Acting is the process of trusting that your creative act, in every moment on stage, is *enough*—as long as you are vulnerable. I think Orlando taught me this lesson more than anything else. When he runs on stage to hang his poetry, he says, "These trees shall be *my* books, and in their bark *my* thoughts I'll character." I think this is a huge moment for Orlando because he finally sees himself as worthy of expressing *his* thoughts and feelings. There is no shame in Orlando in this moment, for he has trust in his own heart and the creations that honestly come from it.

I think all of us who were in the play encountered moments of serious reckoning with our ability to be vulnerable on stage. Birdi was constantly there, from the foundation upwards, to make sure that all of us were always aware of where our hearts and bodies were onstage. Words fail to express the gratitude I feel for our creation of *As You Like It*, and for my fellow actors. I hope it is just for me to thank—on behalf of all who worked on the show—everyone who came out, sat in the darkness of the auditorium, and trusted us with this play. Thank you.

An Ode to Viking Portables

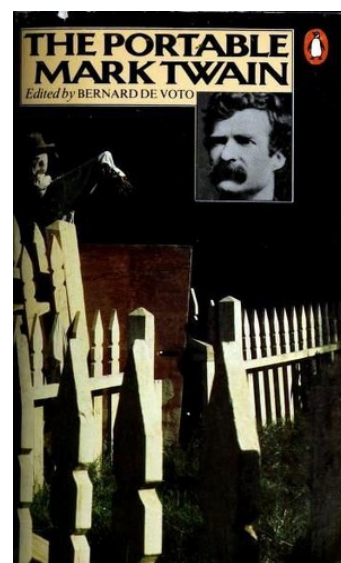
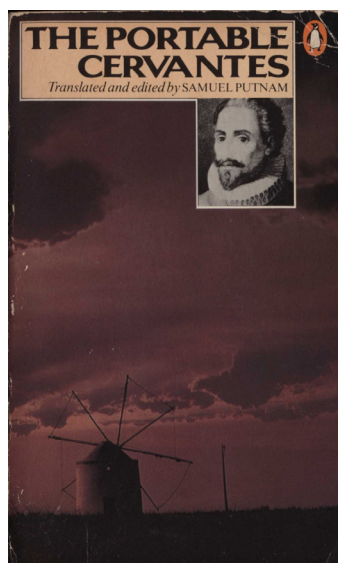
RANGER KASDORF

In a previous Gadfly column I bemoaned the scourge of badly-designed books which nest in great numbers in our campus library, with their shameless misappropriation of classic art and bizarre typographical blunders¹; having already presented plenty of negative examples in that piece, I intend now to turn the polity's attention to a certain little-appreciated series of classic paperbacks which, to me, ought to be held up as the gold standard of modern book design.

The Viking Portable Library² was a series of paperbacks published during the latter half of the 20th century (primarily, it seems, during the '80s) which endeavored to showcase the major works of great authors in sleek, uncumbersome volumes. Now, I use the perfect-tense verb *were*, which in a sense is inaccurate; the Viking Portables appear to still be in print at time of writing, with more or less the same contents as the ones which I intend to discuss here. But these modern editions suffer from an aesthetic blandness which, though less egregious than that of the Penguin Classics, makes me keep them at a distance. Their covers are typically all text, occasionally with a reproduction of an engraving of the author (tastefully adjusted to match with the volume's color, unlike the as-is approach which the Penguin Classics take), and while this is certainly inoffensive as far as book covers go it doesn't catch the eye enough to motivate anyone to collect them, despite their being marketed as a full set. But for a brief, shining moment in the '80s, the Viking Portables achieved perfection with a series of covers which took the novel, if more expensive and time-consuming approach of using bespoke photographs not in the public domain, rather than already-extant images.

I was first introduced to this series while seeking out a copy of *Don Quixote* for use in my Junior Seminar. This search led to my purchasing of *The Portable Cervantes*, and since then I have ravenously sought these *Portables* out at every used bookstore—both physical and virtual—I can find. The thing

which strikes one most immediately is the photographs used for their covers, which either depict a place relevant to the author or obliquely point toward the contents of the author's major works. The cover for *The Portable Cervantes*, for example, is a stark, sparse scene of a field at dusk, with a windmill on the horizon, while *The Portable Mark Twain* sports a jagged and striking image of a white picket fence. Best of all, besides their actual content, observe the size of these photos: they are massive, and unrestrained, not cut off by a field of black with a title and a name. The block of text giving the volume's title, along with the portrait of the author, is made *part* of the larger photograph, dropped on top of it, not isolated from it as with the Penguin Classics earlier discussed. These photos aren't just for the front cover, either; they wrap around the entire book, from front to spine to back, lending a striking beauty to each of these volumes that is well above the industry standard for paperbacks.

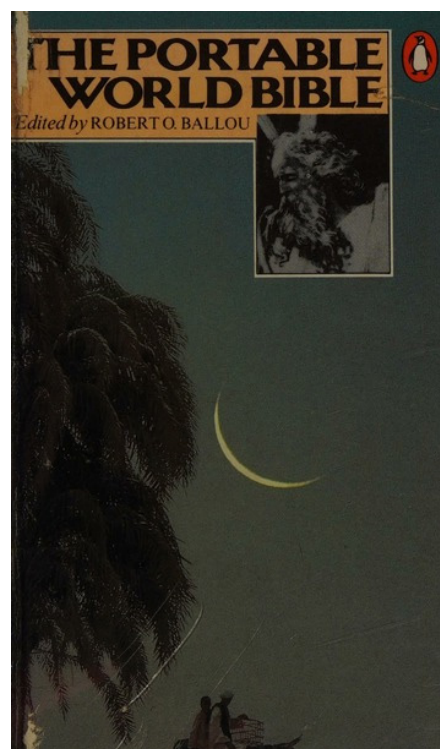
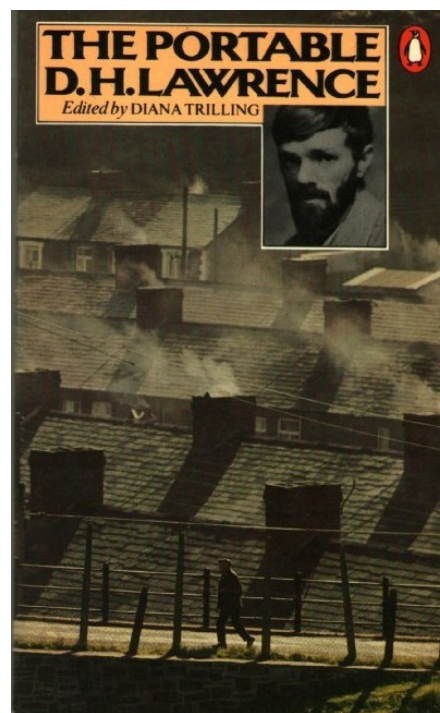


1. A friend of mine recently brought to my attention that her Dover Thrift edition of *Pride and Prejudice* misspells the author's name on its back cover as "Jane Auslen".

2. Published by Penguin, so at least we know *someone* there has a knack for design.

Notably, the photographs used are almost always bereft of people; the only exception I've yet found is *The Portable D.H. Lawrence*, in which a man with his face obscured can be seen walking on a rooftop in the foreground. Overwhelmingly, the focus is on nature (the flock of birds seen on *The Portable James Joyce*, the crescent moon on *The Portable World Bible*³), architecture (the quaint Victorian street on *The Portable Oscar Wilde*, the New York lamppost on *The Portable Saul Bellow*), and, occasionally, already extant artworks (the gargoyle on *The Portable Rabelais*, the fresco of God on *The Portable Dante*). The aim seems to be to depict the things which inspired the poetic minds of these authors, and, by presenting these inspirations in full, vibrant colors which permeate each book's entire exterior⁴, to impress upon us the enduring relevance of their subjects. Melville may be gone, but the sea which inspired him continues to inspire now; Twain may be gone, but there is still humor and mischief to be found in things as innocuous as picket fences; the authors of the *Quran*, the *Rig-Veda*, the *Dhammapada*—they may be long gone, but the moon which passed over their heads and made them yearn for the divine is still here, as awe-inspiring now as it was then.

Lest anyone accuse me of shallowness—of being more interested in the aesthetics of reading than in reading itself—let me make it clear that the Viking Portables maintain their high quality even once you get past their covers. Across them, there is an evident and strong desire to give as broad a picture of the author, not just as an artist but as a person, as is possible within the pages of a "portable" volume. *The Portable Mark Twain* contains all the fiction that you'd expect from a Twain anthology, but its final hundred pages are dedicated to Twain's letters, including a short and quite profane one sent to "The Gas Company". *The Portable Melville* contains only brief cuttings from *Moby-Dick*, and opts to include some of his less-celebrated works, his letters, and even his own personal notes (including, tantalizingly, his thoughts on *Don Quixote*). *The Portable D.H. Lawrence* doesn't include a word of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as if to implicitly suggest that the work's value is already so widely-known that it would be senseless to waste any pages reaffirming it; the collection instead spends the bulk of its pag-



3. A collection of excerpts from a wide swath of major religious texts, the aim being to give an account of theology from across the world rather than of just the ones known in the West.

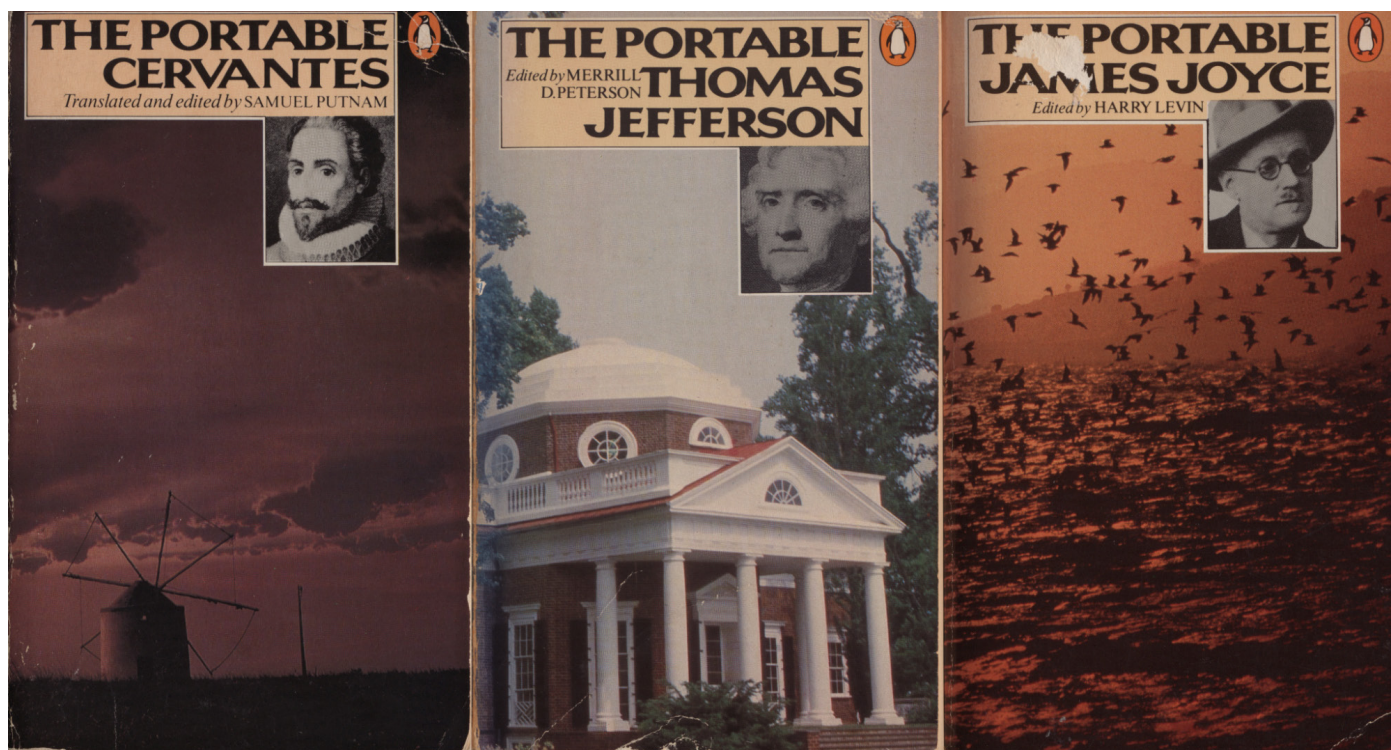
4. Note, meanwhile, that the author portraits which appear on each cover are minuscule compared to the photos, and are always in black and white, as though to suggest it is more important that we see what inspired these authors—and, at the same time, the art which they inspired—than that we see the authors themselves.

es on Lawrence's novellas, poems, and travelogs, all accompanied by notes from the editor adamantly defending their choices. Even *The Portable Cervantes*, which indeed consists almost entirely of Don Quixote, crams two of the author's other novels and his farewell to life, *Foot In Stirrup*, into its 700-some pages. Not a single selection feels perfunctory; all in these volumes is placed with plain intent. Things which might have been left obscure to all but the most devoted of scholars are placed in open, readable view for the public, and the result is a series which earns its greatness not only through the already-great works contained within, but from its greatness even amongst other anthologies.

I think that what attracts me most to these editions over other, similar anthologies is the sheer creativity on display: many of the cover photos used were taken by the late pho-

tographer Joseph Marvullo⁵, and while some were taken for unrelated purposes and then used by Penguin for this series—like “Midnight”, which appears on the cover of *The Portable World Bible*—most, such as the aforementioned windmill picture and the image of Thomas Jefferson's home used on *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, appear to have been taken expressly so that they could be used on these volumes. Through playful suggestion and strategic use of symbols, these covers manage to evoke their contents much better than any seated portrait of the author. This, combined with the careful attention paid to the selections in each volume, gives the sense that this series was created by people with immense affection for the authors whom they anthologize.

Oh, and in case this seals the deal for you: yes, they've still got the cute little penguin on them.



5. In preparation for writing this piece I attempted to learn more about Marvullo, and found that though he does have a small but passionate following online, including a Facebook page which regularly posts his work, he hasn't gained the level of fame and renown which his photographs clearly merit. Somewhat ironically, the first Google search result for “Joseph Marvullo” is a picture of a photography model of the same name. It seems, then, that these Viking Portables were the most exposure he ever got.

A Freshman Seminar

Rose Zhang

The door closed. And there I was, sitting on the Johnnie chair, confined in this room with these twenty-three people for the following two hours. I skimmed around the table: silence. The smiles disappeared the moment the door closed; everyone's faces looked as grave as if they were in the presence of Socrates, who was about to take the poison.

My tutors exchanged eye contact and the one further from the door began. The question was crisp and short, but not the silence that fell afterward. Something came into my mind instantly during the silence. Yet the words halted at the tip of my tongue, refusing to leave my lips. I wavered. Why is it taking so long for people to say something? Then what I have to say must be wrong.

I held myself back and leaned back on my chair, spinning my pen underneath the desk. Maybe, I should just say it. So I straightened my back and leaned forward towards the table slightly, not too much, lest it's conspicuous that I wanted to express something. Just before I opened my mouth, someone else ejected a statement. As he finished his sentence, I couldn't help myself but feel disappointed. It was irrelevant to the opening question, in fact, completely off the mark.

I felt compelled to say something in an attempt to forestall the discussion from derailing furthermore. I looked around the seminar room; it had fallen into silence once again. The silence lasted for merely twenty seconds, but it felt as if two minutes.

Ah, everyone else also realizes he said something off the mark. I assumed. It gave me a sense of relief. Right after my assumption, the guy sitting next to me opened his mouth. "Yeah, I completely agree..."

Perhaps, I am the one who missed the mark completely instead and misunderstood the question instead of them.

I quickly scribbled the thought I had down in my notebook and leaned back. Resting my feet on the table's railing, I pleaded that someone would say something that

either sparks my interest, my inner intelligence that seemed to be nowhere, or profoundness I've yet to discover. As I leaned my chin on my hand and looked away from the tutor who just finished his sentence, I realized the guy sitting across the table from me had been staring at his book intensely for the past ten minutes; I wondered what he had to say. I would call him out, but I haven't spoken since the seminar started, so I subtly stared at him in hope that I may drag him into speaking. But after fifteen seconds of staring at him, I resigned, he was still looking down at his book, he was probably not feeling well today.

My vision slid smoothly across the room like a rolling camera. In other words, I tried not to shift my vision too abruptly to avoid making eye contact with someone unnecessarily. As I went across the room, my attention stopped on the girl who hasn't spoken since last month. I do hope she talks today. That paradoxical feeling and greed wanting to hear more from the quiet people yet reluctant and terrified to share what I have has started to breed a monster called guilt within me.

Just then, my core member introduced an insightful inquiry, yet someone who followed up his question did not even follow up his question, they went off, utterly leaving the question he asked unanswered. A sense of indignation rose inside me, towards my own inability to speak up and follow up his insight for fear of judgment and towards the ignorance of the people who diverged the discussion and ignored his insight. Alas, the seminar proceeded without a break and my mind staggered to keep up with this race that forced me to move on.

Suddenly, something the tutor asked sparked my interest, but people kept talking and talking. I waited for the right time to speak, but no one gave me a single space to step in. Was it that I needed to make space for myself instead of waiting?

This time, another student brought up an interesting point, and I wanted to point to a passage that might help.

Might. Not directly helpful. I opened up the book to the page, and it was ready in front of me, I just needed to speak up. And at that moment, my tutor said, "There's a passage that might help." My heart sank with despair and leaped with exuberance. I was flattered that I was about to quote the same passage as my tutor did, but disappointed I missed my chance to talk and possibly shine in the seminar.

Finally, I had a question. Again, it wasn't directly relevant to the current discussion of our seminar like the passage I wanted to quote earlier, so I waited. And waited. And waited.

Different topics skimmed across the table, and agreements and disagreements clashed with one another like bumper cars. The guy who enjoys talking in dichotomy went on his long four-minute speech again, and I lowered my head lest someone sees me rolling my eyes. The girl fond of tying connections between the seminar readings and the lab readings articulated another brilliant point.

The discussion went on, like a tree branching out endlessly, perhaps at times pointlessly.

It has proceeded in an antipodean direction from our opening question. The perturbation grew as the time ticked by and the question I had began to burn inside of me as if it ate me up little by little, nibbling my organs from the inside out. I couldn't wait any longer; the discussion was going around in a circle anyways. I leaned forward and opened my mouth, someone immediately cut me off. In my dismay, I leaned back on my chair. Was it not obvious enough that I wanted to speak? Turns out it was to the guy sitting next to me. He gave me a sly smile and asked loudly, motioning his hand to me, "Did you have something to say?"

I asked the question, with textual support. But the class fell into silence. Utter dead silence. After one or two short remarks, the conversation went back to the topic before my question. Ignored. Again. Why am I even surprised?

The poor reciprocity of the classroom, the tension and chaos beneath the tranquil surface when we all flipped through the pages for textual evidence was like a storm underneath the ocean that is unseen from the sky.

I pulled up my sleeves a little to look at the time: 10:02. Just then, the girl who sat next to the tutor asked a question, followed by a sigh from the guy who sat next to me. Yes, that one person who asks a question when it's past ten.

I skimmed around the room. And obviously, no one wanted to answer her question. I felt bad. But I dare not to entice the rage of my peers. People either looked down

at their book or their feet or scribbled something on their notebooks in an attempt to avoid making any eye contact with her. Meanwhile, she looked around the table like a meerkat, hoping someone would absolve her perplexity.

A person spoke. And then the discussion became heated up and ignited the pugnacious instinct within the avid teenagers who think they own the world. Regardless of my passion, it was already past ten for me to take part in it.

A rambunctious chatter went past the corridor and followed by the room falling into silence. My core member who sat next to me tapped his leg with the pen in his hand impatiently, he already had his book and notebook closed and held in his other hand, ready to burst out of the room once the tutor announces the end of the seminar.

"That's for it for today." The tutor's serene yet stern voice pierced through the silence. Smiles returned on students' faces, chatter arose, and the sound of book closing and the chairs creaking filled the room. It felt like chaos, but a different type of chaos from the one during the seminar.

I closed my book and notes and gathered my pens. Smiling, I bid goodnight to my tutors while dying a little inside. Swiftly, I went down the other side of the stairs of McDowell so that I may minimize socializing to slip back to my dorm unnoticed.

On my way upstairs I paused before the window of the staircase; through the window I could see the lit-up planetarium, the field, the night sky, and the stars.

Did I have a good seminar? I do not know. The line between good and bad seminars gradually blurred throughout the semester. But for that moment, it didn't matter much, just that I survived tonight's seminar. And I'll survive the next seminar too.

Who Forms Kunai?

By LOUIS ROSENBERG

Full disclosure: I'm not an athlete—I have not yet participated in an intramural or Kunai game, nor do I plan to start attending. From the outside looking in, I wouldn't have expected myself to have a stake in anything remotely relating to Kunai. But I find that I do; the debates around the purpose of the group hit at my heart in a way that demands personal investment. Indeed, I've considered writing an article in this vein since the fall of last year, though it was only the recent articles about Kunai that emboldened me to do so.

The earliest email regarding Kunai that I could unearth in my inbox arrived in early September 2021. Addressed to the Polity, it opens by explaining the group's purpose: "Kunai is a sports group that is open to all women and non-cisgender members of SJC. We play SPORTS and have

FUN." Two weeks later, however, the demographics Kunai was intended for shifted. Opening with "HelllllooooOoo ladies and theydies!!!!!" as the salutation, it stated that "Kunai is a space for women and nonbinary people of the college to learn and play sports!!" My problem with these early communications is, I would hope, evident: not being cisgender is not the same as being nonbinary. And this was the origin of my complaints. Then, when I looked on the St. John's College website, I found that Kunai was—and, at the time I'm writing this article, still is—merely described on the "St. John's Traditions" page as "the women's sports league in Annapolis." While I'm not sure on whom the onus for correcting this falls, it firmly solidified my distaste. Though there is obviously overlap between all three of those descriptions, there are also important differences; each definition fundamentally refers to a different set of people.



"Garden Archway and Iglehart Hall" c. 1910

Now, to the credit of whoever is running Kunai this year, they have been more consistent with their messaging. The first emails of the year stipulated once again that it is open to women and non-cisgender members of the polity, and nothing since has contradicted that. (Most emails now, later in the year, have been addressed simply to “KUNAI Polity.”) Still, even that verbiage bothers me. I don’t really want to be included in a group by sole purpose of my history of transition—it feels othering. It is tied to the same problem I encounter often in LGBTQ+ specific groups: I find it difficult to connect to people based solely on a single shared identity—especially when that is an identity that I don’t hold particularly dear to me.

My experience with transness is that of being trapped on a knife’s edge between invisibility and excessive visibility. I don’t want to have my history so broadly aired (yet another reason I considered not submitting this piece for publication), but at the same time I am often neglected, as in the conflicting Kunai emails from last academic year. Yes, I am not cisgender. But I am still a man. Although I understand that my path to manhood has been different than that of most other cis guys, I resent when others bring up that distinction on the behalf of me and other trans men. And while I recognize that I write this from a place of some privilege—as someone who transitioned as a child, I am to some degree removed from the struggles of the beginning stages of transition that might draw another trans man to an environment such as Kunai—I also write this from the place of pain that those chronic distinctions elicit within me.

I do not seek to use this piece as an argument for some specific change, because I do not know how I could provide an easy solution. With debates over wording, it ultimately comes down to whose comfort we are prioritizing, and if many people are drawing benefit from this current determination of who forms Kunai, I could not argue in good faith that it should change. Of course, given the nature of the question itself, it’s incredibly difficult to know exactly who is benefitting from Kunai, and from what aspects.

I know that navigating discussions of gender can be difficult for many, including myself. Fighting to have your identity recognized—as trans people so often must—inherently



Detail of "The Month of June" by Claude III Audran,
c. 1726

entails some degree of sensitivity to others’ judgements of said identity. And when definitions of gender itself can be so nebulous, there is also necessarily some wariness when it comes to critiquing turns of phrase that others have chosen. Is it not better to err on the side of inclusivity? I suppose, but I would also argue that there remains some kind of issue as long as one is erring at all.

Song of the Clovers

Tuyết-Nhi Nghiêm

Desperate to escape and hungry to learn, curious and brazen,
I came to college and in the kingdom of ancient books
I made the great mistake that all philosophers do:
I begged the world to make sense.
And so I sought Truth in texts immortal,
Telling myself that these authors were wiser than we—
Until I arrived here, kneeling on burning asphalt,
Weaving weeds into the crown of a king.
Wondering:
What kind of life could the ancients have lived,
That they would learn what we cannot from our own?
The wild mane of the earth whispered:
We were there. They were there. You are here. Soon, you will not be.
All that they had, is still yours—
You have only paved the road ever further from what you need.
The golden hearth that those who opened their hearts have lit for you
you abandon to stand knocking on the gates of fortresses cold.
Like a silly dog you run far from the ones who need you most,
chasing after what you cannot have until it is too late, and you are lost.
You will hear your heart break and in the midst of the Silent Howl,
the words of Epictetus: *be not disturbed; think of a clay pot*.
Indeed, he and the clay pot shared in their nature the great fate of ending.
Yet I ask of you this: Did a clay pot ever carry me on its shoulders?
Knit its fingers together to shadow a bird on the wall for a bedtime story?
Any fool who can see their child or wife as a clay pot does not know,
could not know, the truth of human nature, you want to say.

Ask yourself this instead: Do you truly believe that Epictetus never knew loss?
That he did not know love, and the dangers that come with it?
Even Socrates knew the glory of lying on the grass, surrounded by friends;
even Aristotle could not neglect that none would choose to live without it.
Learn then, that the cruel reward of a life full of love is infinite loss;
the work that remains is only to return what you relished, and carry on.
Only you will not learn it now, you couldn't if you wanted to,
the philosophers have tried but cannot save you with what they learned.
You can read all you want, talk all you want, write all you want;
the Silent Howl is the only teacher you will at last understand.
When you emerge from the other side of the black rivers of loss
you will know, with searing clarity, the price of holding clay against bones.
You will wish you never had to learn this lesson, inevitable as it was,
and yet you know that its weight will tighten your every embrace.
You will see that you had to leave, that you had no choice,
that all this damage was born out of a duty to yourself.
You will at last learn to ask the right questions,
and that doing so will teach you more than any answer can.
Why the towering trees? Why the lowly weeds? Why the wilting flowers?
Why the hare, who must be hunted, and the fox, who must taste blood?
Because, the texts can only ever guide you deeper into the mysteries.
Because, this is the only way the Truth can enter your stubborn heart.

A Grievance of Gilliam

By WILL MARCHMAN

Recently, the Gilliam kitchen was so filthy—reeking of fish, rotten milk, eggs, vaguely greenish-gray leftover slop in the fridge and other unimaginable horrors that coated the walls of the fridge, the drain of the sink and the bag of the trashcan—that it caused 3 students to vomit. This was the result of *months* of minor decisions and mistakes. Perhaps, one day, someone placed their leftovers in the fridge. Absorbed with their schoolwork reading about Kant’s thoughts on ethics, and filled up by the ever delicious dining hall food, it gradually slipped their mind that there were still leftovers, until eventually the memory altogether disappeared. But the leftovers didn’t: they kept sitting there, stinking more and more each day.

Or, perhaps, someone made delicious cookies. They made much batter, and while most went to the cookies, much also remained stuck to the bowls and spoons they dumped in the sink and the rest fell all over the counter. Neither the dishes nor the counter were cleaned, of course, as it’s only a bit of mess; they’ll get it next time (they didn’t).

If you ask a St. John’s student to define virtue, they may say “knowledge,” or give well-thought out reasoning for any other answer, but as Aristotle says in the *Ethics*, “*we are not investigating the nature of virtue for the sake of knowing what it is, but in order that we may become good, without which result our investigation would be of no use*” (1103b30). If the denizens of Gilliam can’t so much as not dump rotten milk in the trashbag or leave moldy food in the fridge, why should anyone care what they have to say about virtue?

I exhort my fellow future Gilliam residents to not follow the bad habits of the current residents. Clean the kitchen (and while we’re on it, clean your pubic hair out of the shower! Why should adults need to be told this?!).



"The Kitchen" by James McNeill Whistler, 1858

To Seniors, from a Man Who Knows

Dear Seniors,

You will soon depart these halls into the real world and you, amongst all the panicked need for a job and a place to live, are certainly thinking to yourself: how do I keep doing this *forever*? You look at the library, the seminars, the smoking area, thinking about all that we share here (sometimes decent discussion, mostly addictions), and realize that you never ever want to leave. Your world is built for chalk and blackboard, for the constant taste of the same oil on the dining hall food, for the random bursts of energy that people get for certain texts (golly, I never would have guessed you, Ms. Schnapplebautum, who have been silent all year, would suddenly speak for the entire seminar on the Constitution). My dearest friends, do not worry, I have a secret just for you: you can keep doing St. John's College for all eternity.

How, how can I enter such a promised land? The simple route (the UChicago to tutor pipeline) is not open to all of us (and maybe you don't want to play on the national croquet team and come back every year or work at your college job at an Irish Pub into your 40s or become heavily involved in the alumni association or donate all your money to a funding campaign with a 1984-esque slogan (Warring with tradition is peace)). Do not fret, for you need not attach yourself forever to the physical grounds of this institution; you need only accept one thing: all knowledge is SJC knowledge. All math is Euclid, all philosophy is Plato, all politics is Aristotle. You've already done all the learning you'll ever need to do, everything else is superfluous. Go into corporate board meetings ready to refute your colleagues with you Aquinasian logic (actually, Janice from HR, we can't get rid of snacktime Fridays because that would go against God's beauty); have a Socratic

question for every occasion (sorry officer, but before I can answer that, we would need to give a clear definition of what triple homicide even means); treat every presentation as an Apollonius demonstration (so far as the quarterly reports well haha I actually had some questions on this one so that's great). And don't just limit yourself to legal and professional interactions: I'm certain your family never wants to stop hearing about the insanely wrong scientific theories that you're studying over Thanksgiving dinner (it balances out your cousin Brad's insistence about facts not caring about feelings). You can do SJC at the grocery store, at daycare, at your lowest point (there's something conic sectional in the gyration of a stipper's hips and the swirling of ice in your glass, something parabolic in your downfall). It's simple, really; St. John only stops when you let him.

Remember my brethren, as you go out into the wide wide (Jesus there are more than 500 people?) wide world, you weren't here to free your mind; you were here to acquire the strangest and most scholastic set of biases known to man (and mostly men). Hasn't it been one of the most wonderful experiences you could ever have?

—B.S.

P.S. And if you're one of the people whose senior boyfriend/girlfriend/partner/friend-with-benefits-who-is-definitely-not-using-you-to-get-over-their-ex is graduating: you can pay tribute to their memory by picking up a new one in classic Johnnie fashion (bum a cig off them then ask an almost abrasively personal philosophical question).

—B.S.er

P.P.S.

A request has been delivered to me from editors on high that I be more sincere. You're smart. Do an esoteric reading of my sarcasm.

—B.S.est



Tobacco Smoking Chants

Ezra Melchor

Tobacco smoke enchants

Long-fingered licking, writhing—
Caressed well, smooth strands
Stroke, don't tempt.

We are only friends.

"I am not a capnolagniac"
I hear myself say.

Even if I was there are other
reasons to enjoy a pipe.

Up in Smoke

By MOLLY SPROUT

As one could guess from the title of this article, I am here to speak about smoking. And before the scoffing starts let me preface this by saying that I am a smoker myself. An incredibly heavy smoker actually. (A half to a full pack per day, Marlboro Golds, in case you were wondering.) But this article is not pro-smoking.

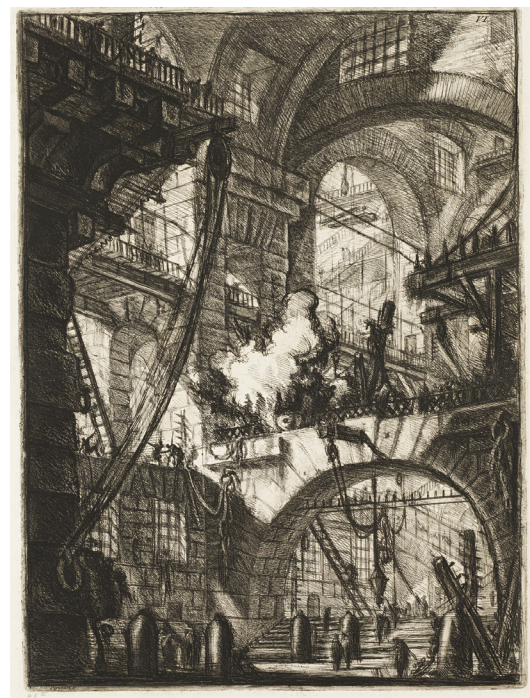
Smoking at St. John's is a staple, as I am sure everyone is aware. But it is not simply the mere act of smoking that is so satisfying and key to the whole phenomena. It is smoking in full view of the public, with friends, creating bonds, sharing stories. This social aspect is what makes the "I only smoke when drunk" or "I only smoke after seminar" people so common. There is something incredibly special about smoking a cigarette with a group of friends during a pseudo-intellectual conversation.

But, then, what makes this such a problem? What is inhibited or worsened by others choosing to smoke? Because I'm certainly not about to defend the "second-hand smoke" believers. No, I contest that the real problem here is littering.

Walking onto the quad should be a lovely experience. It is a place to see friends, enemies, old men in hats, and the occasional baby. But, that is effectively ruined due to the blight of tossed cigarette butts. As we are all well aware, the ground on campus—especially on the quad—is often absolutely littered with them. I step out to the quad for my daily appearance and I am up to my KNEES in people's cancer-stick trash. It has become apparent through this problem that people no longer find it to be an obligation to throw their cigarette butts into the trash cans, which are well-apportioned on the quad especially. And with that, we must come up with a solution.

Obviously removing the ashtrays did nothing to solve this problem, and realistically, it worsened it. Another problem was created out of admin's "solution" so it's clear that passivity doesn't and won't work. But with admin clearly trying to phase out smoking on campus, and public safety menacing one's free will to smoke a cigarette, reinstating the ashtrays is most likely off the table.

So where do we go from here? Absolute warfare against the cigarette litterers. What most effectively prevents littering? Immediate physical danger to yourself and others. We need consequences. I propose that we pour gasoline over the quad so that if someone decides to toss away a cigarette butt on the ground everything will go up in flames. You, me, everything. Nothing would end the problem of littering quicker than just one incident of someone burning the campus down.



"The Smoking Fire" by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, c. 1761

SEX AND THE CITY

By BEN MAIER, Ph.D

The Summer of Love is upon us. Are you ready, student at St. John's College? I admit it's very difficult to prepare for a Hot Johnnie Summer or a Hot Long-Distance-Monogamous Relationship Summer. Both possess their own unique challenges which the Great Books haven't prepared us for. Luckily, I am a "love doctor" of sorts and have extensive experience practicing in this area. In this article, I will provide some cures for the love-sick polity during this season of romance.

Rule #1: Be Attractive

Now this tip doesn't necessarily mean "be hot." Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and it flows through every kind of body, personality, and form. Just because you don't have gold doesn't mean your copper is any less valuable. Whether you're in a relationship or not, you need to leverage your assets to achieve the best romantic outcome. The best way to do this is to give your best attributes to someone who has none. Do you have a warm and loving personality? Find someone emotionally distant. Do you have commitment issues? Find a nice syrupy partner who will stick to you no matter what. Are you having trouble with your long distance relationship? Just find someone closer. To put it simply, find your opposite and you will always attract!

Rule #2: Meet the Right Person

This next rule doesn't apply to existing relationships... unless you're in the market for another. Now imagine this: it is a hot summer day and you run into a cute stranger at your local cafe (they're even reading your favorite book). You summon the courage to talk to this person: first, you start talking about the book (let's say *Don Quixote*), then you start to discuss virtue, the golden age, and how to find beauty in a world that doesn't seem to care. You begin to feel a real connection with this person...can this conversation please last forever? Now keep dreaming, *Don Quixote*, because this situation would NEVER happen in real life.

Rule #3: Get Realistic (or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Tinder)

Statistically, there is at least one perfect person for you out of nearly 8 billion people on earth. However, you are statistically very unlikely to ever meet this person. This is especially true if you can confine yourself to a population size as small as St. John's College. Therefore you need to start thinking bigger if you even want a chance of finding an adequate match let alone "the One."

As a professional, I recommend downloading an arsenal of dating apps in order to maximize your potential romantic matches. After all, nothing beats a cozy Friday night of endlessly swiping through Tinder, asking "what's your favorite color?" to twenty different people (and that's just if you're lucky). Now I know that dating apps are not for everyone. If you're looking for a more organic way to find a match, I recommend pulling up to every possible social scene in the DMV area: Anne Arundel Community College classes, Navy football games, dive bars in DC, religious services for religions you don't believe in, Towson fraternity parties, illegal street races in Baltimore, etc. Do not be afraid to throw yourself against the barn and see if you'll stick! Now, these options may not always be available if you do not have a car. Romantic success requires sacrifice and getting a car loan may be necessary before your time at St. John's ends. If this is too burdensome, you can always just start going door to door.

Nothing is impossible in the world of romance. Trust me, I'm a doctor.

Yours Truly,
Dr. Benjamin Maier
Ph.D in Romance and Sports Medicine

Renewal

Luke Briner

As *Phæbus* in his day-defining train
Succeeds *Diana's* melancholy wane
And by the dance of each encircling hour
Illumines every bloom and bending bower
And consecrates all nature pure and new
With fair *Aurora's* sweet-perfuméd dew,
So may my spirit, sunk in ceaseless night,
Bear witness someday to that early Light
Which once I saw with yet-undarkened eyes
And long again to see before me rise,
That I may by a resurrected sense
Return to my primeval innocence,
And, basking in its new-exalted shine,
Renew in me that which was once Divine.

The Rise of AI: The Doom of Liberal Arts Students (According to Some Techno-Skeptics) [Or: A Thought from a Simulatedly-Worried Custodian]

[Dear fellow cave dwellers,

There has been much talk about (read: my roommate won't shut up about) a new system, a new technology: ChatGPT (gasps of horror from the crowd please). I decided to do what we all fear to do: engage with modernity. I have asked this little demon in a box to produce an article based on my previous writings for our beloved Gadfly. Here is what it delivered (with commentary in brackets (I promise is not just sarcasm used as a coping mechanism to make fun of AI for writing an article that's probably better than the one I wrote)):]

Dear fellow Johnnies and Janies,

As we gather in the hallowed halls of St. John's College, where the liberal arts reign supreme [quote: every other Friday night lecture], it is only fitting that we address a matter of utmost urgency: the impending doom of our existence [wordy, do better next time]. Brace yourselves, dear friends, for artificial intelligence (AI) is on the rise, and rumor has it that it will soon replace each and every one of us.

Picture this [I too remember trying to write a freshman essay]: a world where AI-driven machines outperform us in philosophical dialogues, outwrite us in essays, and outanalyze us in seminar discussions. A world where Euclid's geometry is executed flawlessly by AI algorithms, rendering our protractors and compasses mere relics of the past. Oh, the horror! [Oh, relics of the past are kind of the point.]

Forget the Socratic method, folks [Damn it, the machine almost got my style on this line]. Soon, it will be the Siri method. The Oracle of Delphi will be replaced by an AI oracle with a British accent, and instead of wrestling with Heidegger's "Being and Time," we'll be reduced to debating

whether Alexa prefers Bach or Beethoven [Truly a Johnnie connection: flexing knowing *Being and Time* and having taken sophomore music when the relation between the two is tenuous at best].

Gone are the days of wrestling with the great texts of Western civilization. Why read Homer when we can have an AI recite the Iliad with perfect pronunciation and dramatic flair? Who needs to pore over Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" when AI can effortlessly churn out critiques that will put us to shame [some of us might be into that]? We may as well swap our parchment and quill for a laptop and a charger, because our days as the custodians of intellectual inquiry are numbered [we truly are custodians if we have to clean up this shit].

The technocrats will argue that AI will enhance our academic pursuits, liberating us from mundane tasks and freeing up our time for deeper contemplation. But let's be real, my fellow St. John's enthusiasts. What fun is a symposium without the passionate debates, the misinterpretations, and the occasional misquotations [This is why I'm no fun in class]? Who needs a deep understanding of metaphysics when we can rely on AI to regurgitate complex theories in neatly summarized bullet points? [Doesn't complete the sequence of 3 questions, clearly did not study the *Rhetoric*.]

AI will undoubtedly excel in logical reasoning, but can it capture the ineffable beauty of a Kantian sublime? [Transition whiplash, neck still recovering.] Can it revel in the absurdity of a Dadaist artwork or get lost in the labyrinthine depths of a James Joyce novel? We humanists, with our inherent irrationality, are uniquely equipped to appreciate the quirks and idiosyncrasies of human creativity. AI may be smart, but it lacks that certain *je ne sais quoi* that makes us, well, human. [This is where ChatGPT goes totally off the rails in simulating the good ol' B.S.: it's programmed

to give you happy endings and make you feel like it's not going to replace you, I promise! I'll say the doomer thing that it won't: we're all screwed. Might as well enjoy the weather before our nuclear winter of the soul.]

So, my dear comrades, let us cling to our books, our parchment [Why did it latch on so much to this outdated writing utensils joke?], and our spirited discussions. Let us revel in the messiness of our humanity, even as AI marches on with its calculated precision. Remember, the liberal arts are not just about knowledge; they are about the human experience, the struggle to understand our place in the cosmos [Something which AI could never ever simulate except this one time in this article where it is simulating my understanding of the universe].

And when the day comes that AI knocks on our classroom doors, seeking admission to the hallowed halls of St. John's, let us greet it with open arms [admin is asking if this counts for the diversity quota]. For in the clash of silicon and soul, the heart will prevail, and the Gadfly shall continue to buzz with its satire, wit, and unabashed love for the quirky, flawed, and ever-surprising [now it completes the three points! Twice! Also: don't get overexcited. We here at the Gadfly are quite abashed in our love of:] human intellect.

Yours sarcastically,
B.S. (But not the AI version, I promise)
[Yours truly,
B.S. (The AI version, I promise)]



"Intelligence was Mine! I Became the Buddha" by Odilon Redon, 1896

Translation of St. Thérèse of Lisieux's "Melody of St. Cecilia"

Luke Briner

I contemplate in joy, O most beloved Saint,
The God-illuminated path remaining after you;
Still now I think I hear your dulcet music faint;
Your melody empyreal to me rings true.
Hear now the plea of my soul in its sin-stained dearth:
Upon your virgin heart allow me to repose,
That sacred lily which shone forth upon the earth
With *Phæbic* brilliance that none could long oppose.

O chastest *Latian* Dove, throughout your earthly life
You sought no bridegroom but the sole-begotten Son;
He chose your soul for Union with Him as His wife,
About her sensing the perfume of virtues won.
Yet then a mortal in th'effulgence of his youth
Did breathe in that perfume, O white, *Elysial* flower!
To pluck you in your tenderness so pure and couth
Hence gave *Valerian* all of his heart and power.
Forthwith he orchestrated lavish nuptial meals,
His palace ringing all throughout with sumptuous song;
But your unblemished heart continued its appeals,
Their holy echoes rising to the Saintly throng!
How did you persevere, from Fatherland so split
And seeing next to you this mortal suitor frail?
Without doubt this bereaved life you longed to quit
And in Eternal Unity with *Christ* prevail.
But no—I hear your lyre's Seraphic cords resound,
Voice of your Love with accent so Ambrosial;
Unto the Lord you sang with that most holy sound:
"Of Purity, O *Jesus* dear, keep my heart full!"
Incredible abandon! Melody divine!
By that ætheric song do you reveal the Love
That fears not and forgets itself as it reclines,
Like a sweet child, on the Heart of its God above.

In th'azure vault appeared the Star of *Vestal* Light
Who came forth to illumine with her timid fire
The Truth, unveiled to us by the lustrous night,
Of that pure Love which spouses Heavenly acquire.

And yet *Valerian* dreamed of less perfect Joy:
Your love, my Saint, is all to which he would attend;
His union to you he did heartily enjoy,
E'en as you taught him that with Death Life need not end.
"My friend," you said to him, "there's always close to me
An Angel Godsent who safeguards my Purity;
And even as I fall asleep he does not flee,
But blankets me in Heaven-plumed security.
At night I see his countenance Supernal shine
With brightness sweeter than the rosy smile of Dawn;
It seems then to reflect the radiance Divine
Of that Face which all poor souls long to gaze upon."
"Show me," exclaimed *Valerian*, "this Dæmon strange
In order that I may know if your oath is true;
For otherwise you must not doubt my love shall change
Henceforth to awful rage and hatred toward you."

O Dove hid in the hollow of the stone from sight!
You did not fear at all the Hunter's crafty art;
The Face of *Jesus* showed you its euphoric Light;
The Holy Gospel rested firm upon your heart.
To him you spoke in swift reply with sweet air:
"My holy guardian will grant you your desire;
You will behold him soon, and he will then declare
That to win God you must cast this life to the fire.
But ere you do, to Baptism you must submit,
So that it may incense your soul with holy White;
The true God must henceforth Himself inhabit it;

His Spirit must be your heart's Life and guiding Light.
Th' Incarnate Word, Whom God and woman did transmit,
Allows his Blood, in His Love for you, to be shed;
You must now at the Banquet of Life go and sit
In order to have *Christ*, our Heaven-issued Bread.
Then shall the Seraph be inclined to call you kin,
And you'll view in your heart his Lord's exalted Seat;
He'll make you quit these earthly shores awash with Sin
And see his own home, Being of Eternal heat."
"Within my heart I feel new passion start to swell,"
Exclaimed the nobleman, to fresh excitement flown.
"I wish for the true God inside my soul to dwell;
Cecilia, my love at last will earn your own!"

And then, draped in the vestments of true Innocence,
The Angel unto him his visage deigned to show;
He gazed enraptured at his mighty radiance
And saw the beauty of his forehead's gentle glow.
That Seraph brilliant held out a fresh bouquet,
A congregation of white lily and red rose;
In the *Elysian* fields these bloom beneath the rays
Of that prolific Star from whose Love All arose.

"O spouses Heaven-bound, these flow'rs of martyrdom
That crown your brows!" so spoke the Angel of the Lord;
"No voice could ever sing, no lyre could ever strum
The Glory which now comes to you as God's reward!
I sink into my Sire and contemplate His charms,
But Martyr I can't be, no matter how I try:
By persecuting fire or ruthless mortal arms,
Despite my ardent will, I cannot ever die...
Of Purity the Angel has their ample share,
And their august state God immutably assures;
But to your nature He one special boon has spared:
You can at once be wracked with suffering and pure!
You see the holy symbol of Virginity
In these sweet lilies which to you the Savior bring;
You'll be with halo crowned by His own high decree,
And an exalted song will you forever sing.
Your chaste companionship will many souls upraise,
Who shall henceforth all husbands but the Lord reject;
You will see them ascend in an ecstatic blaze
Unto the Throne, in the abode of the Elect."

Cecilia, please lend me your sweet melody;
There are so many souls that I long to convert!
I wish, like you, to give my life with spirit free
And offer up to God all of my mortal hurt.
Allow me just a taste of that true Fatherland,
Abandon and good fruit which all the faithful earn;
I hope that someday you will take me by the hand
And let me fly with you, here never to return!

Opiliones (Harvestmen)

Picture Eumaeus, but with six more legs!

By LOUIS ROSENBERG

“Daddy longlegs.” It’s a terrible name, honestly, for not only does it come off as vaguely euphemistic, but it also is basically meaningless. Depending on who says it, they may be referring to cellar spiders (family Pholcidae), harvestmen (order Opiliones), or even crane flies, which are quite far from either set of arachnids that the term would call to mind for most Americans. (The crane flies usage appears to be most popular among the British.) This article is about animals in the order Opiliones, which are often referred to as “harvestmen” (if not the dreaded “daddy longlegs” or even “*granddaddy* longlegs” in select parts of the United States) but are also known as “harvest spiders” or — my personal favorite — “shepherd spiders,” as they supposedly resemble shepherds standing on stilts to observe their flocks. The order name itself comes from the Latin word for shepherd. I won’t go more specific than the order for their taxonomy, due the broad similarities across and general lack of available information about different species within the order.

Now, harvestmen are arachnids, but not spiders; though commonly mistaken for spiders, they are actually more closely related to scorpions. Their most notable feature is their long, slender legs, from which their bodies dangle suspended when they are in a resting position. Each leg can detach to help them avoid predation, but once removed they do not regrow. There are scent glands located between the first and second leg pairs, with the secretions being used as a defense mechanism when faced with hungry predators. There may be additional uses for the secretions, though — the chemical compound differs by species, and if it may serve as a fungicide or even a pheromone for some species is still being studied. The second leg serves as a sensory organ as well, for harvestmen are practically blind, only able to distinguish between intensity of light.

The bodies of harvestmen are divided into two segments, but the gap between the segments is not very distinct, so to the casual observer they’ll appear to have a unified body. They molt several times, but usually complete their lifespan within a single season, without an overwintering period. As adults, most species will mate to produce offspring, but females in some species can reproduce through parthenogenesis. Mating occurs through direct intercourse rather than through presentation of a sperm web like spiders do. While harvestmen are typically found alone, they sometimes form large aggregations, thought to reduce water loss (for they desiccate easily), defend against predators, and assist in mating.

Contrarily to urban legend, harvestmen are not the most venomous animals in the world — they aren’t venomous at all. Indeed, they tear apart their prey instead of injecting it with venom and drinking it up like spiders do. Consuming both live and dead prey, they make for excellent pest control and are harmless to humans. Be a good human and do your best to be harmless to these little guys in return.

Sources

- “Broadside from the Other Orders: A Book of Bugs” by Sue Hubbell
- <https://www.burkemuseum.org/collections-and-research/biology/arachnology-and-entomology/spider-myths/myth-daddy-longlegs-kind-spider>
- <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/ent-68>
- <https://bugguide.net/node/view/2405>
- <https://knowablemagazine.org/article/living-world/2020/the-ungentle-joy-spider-sex>



"Le bucheron" by Charles Nègre, c. 1857



ADMISSIONS OFFICE

We're Hiring!

Calling all friendly and passionate Johnnies, Admissions is seeking student workers for both the summer and fall of 2023.

Positions include senior and junior roles with flexible hours in a friendly office environment.

Email your resume to Diana Villegas at diana.villegas@sjc.edu.

Images without a listed source are from the St. John's College Digital Archives. St. John's College owns the rights to these photographs.

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Founded in 1980, the Gadfly is the student newsmagazine distributed to over 600 students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the Annapolis campus.

Opinions expressed within are the responsibility of the author(s). The Gadfly reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions in any way necessary to publish a professional, informative, and thought provoking newsmagazine.

Submissions sent to the Gadfly should either be in Google Docs or JPEG format.

For more information, contact the editor via email at djnathan@sjc.edu

60 COLLEGE AVENUE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

