W
hat if we made a place where you could take risks, have whimsies, mess up, and invent? I decided to do a creative thesis in public art because I spent a lot of my time here wondering where the artistic soul of Amherst is. (It’s here, but it’s nearly invisible and always at mortal risk.) Last fall, I proposed a sculpture installation that would exist temporarily before giving way to other public student works. An advisor warned me this would be impossible—but I was interested in challenging the ethos of impossibility that seems to permeate the walls of this old place. Art is work: if we want to see it, we have to forge a culture that encourages its creation. By creating an environment for public art to thrive on campus, we could drastically change the way it feels to be at Amherst.

First I contacted the Mead, explaining that I had a proposal for public art. I found out that the museum had no knowledge of a working public art committee, and although one had previously existed at the museum, it has become entirely defunct. I then contacted and met with the Powerhouse Committee, whose members considered the proposal for an art installation in the Powerhouse and approved it in concept—but replied that they had no authority to approve its installation in the building. I also met with the school architect, Tom Davies, who voiced concerns that the process “wasn’t robust” enough to put student art in the Powerhouse. I contacted President Martin, but I was re-directed to meet with Dean Vasquez. His response was that, in fact, “no process existed” for student public art and that the administration was in “no position to create an ad hoc one in time for this project.” Effectively, I got a terribly frustrating, “Yes, but no” response from all across campus.

This led me to ask what the process for public art has looked like historically at Amherst College. The Noah Webster Memorial Statue, for instance, was the gift of Richard Billings of the class of 1887. The Henry Ward Beecher statue was a gift of class of 1914; and the Robert Frost statue was a gift of the class of 1957. Similarly, the kinetic sculpture, “Two Lines Extended Down,” the only sculpture located in the “Sculpture Court” outside of the Mead, “Archomage IV” (that terrible steel and stone sculpture next to Fayerweather), and the monumental painting of the white man playing pool in Val were all gifts presented to the college by alumni. Invariably, the works of public art on campus have been dropped here as gifts with little consideration for the present reality of the College. They have been reviewed reactively by the Trustees or by ad hoc committees. All of the works of public art, with one exception, were created by men. Their creation, politics, and legacy on campus ignore the current reality of the campus community.

There is one exception to the alumni-gift pattern: Graydon Parrish’s painting, Remorse, Despondence, and Acceptance of an Early Death, which was the product of Parrish’s senior thesis and which was purchased by the Trustees in 1999 when they saw the painting at the senior art thesis show. The painting is an allegorical meditation on the AIDS epidemic. The Trustees purchased the painting with the intent to give it to the Mead, but the museum refused to accept the donation of a student’s work. Thus, by accident, the painting came to be publicly displayed in Frost Library—where students and community members have been able to live with the painting.

I am concerned about what this overall pattern says about the structures of power at the College and what students learn and internalize about them. Instead of collectively imagining the way our community values expression, we are expected to accept the symbolic language of our campus as it is mandated by unseen exchanges. It’s important that we ask how to constructively combat these power structures by re-imagining a different manner of creating community.

The Mead has long awarded a prize, called the Wise Prize, to one studio art thesis per year. The Mead purchases the work of art, which then becomes part of the collection. Although the museum has recently been awarding the Wise Prize to visual works that could be displayed publicly, these theses have never re-emerged from the bowels of the Mead. So what has happened to the perhaps dozens of senior theses that the Mead purchased with the intent of public display? Don’t they deserve to exist in dialogue with the community that shaped, informed, and contributed to their creation?

The first step toward encouraging the creation and display of visual art is to pressure administrators to create a forum for public art so that students with good ideas aren’t discouraged before they start. We need the Mead to be deeply involved in this forum, which would support the creation and curation of publicly-displayed works. We would need Art and the History of Art faculty to be involved, as well as facilities administrators who have specialized knowledge of buildings and grounds. Most importantly, we would need dedicated and passionate students who are willing to shake things up, to give voice to the student body.

Finally, we need to involve the Trustees. The Middlebury Committee for Art in Public Places is so successful because it seeks to include voices from across campus, from students to Trustees. With the Trustees’ involvement, we would have a process for accepting and integrating future alumni art donations. Working collaboratively, the Forum would be responsible for directing the installation, maintenance, and removal of public works created by students.

Our Public Art Forum would be a place to re-imagine campus and our orientation to the world. Relying heavily on its student voices, the Forum could propose a theme for that year’s Call for Art. It could aim to address current campus issues, or regional issues such as fracking in the Pioneer Valley, or happenings on the national or global scale. A theme could also be left open, with such prompting thoughts as “Public/Private,” “Gravity and Grace,” or “Why’s Waldo?” In the short-term, the Forum could make a huge impact by installing the pieces that were meant to be displayed for our community to think about, to talk about, and to live with.

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The Indicator is a journal of social and political thought at Amherst College. Originally founded in 1848, it was resurrected in the spring of 1996 after a 145-year hiatus. The Indicator’s primary mission is to provide a medium for discussion of local, national, and international issues within the college community. The journal appears four times during the fall and spring semesters.

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The Indicator welcomes contributions in the form of articles or letters to the editor from the community-at-large. For further information regarding submissions, contact us at:

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**Impressions is a new section that intends to capture concise perspectives on the issues and events that have all (or none) of campus abuzz.**

**Show & Tell**

Show & Tell was started in January 2015 by Meghan McDonough ’16, Khalil Flemming ’16, and Sarah Jordan ’16. We release our videos through our Facebook page and have a Vimeo channel.

In my three years at Amherst College, I have observed a blending process that takes place among the students. We involve ourselves with different facets of the community and identify ourselves accordingly. We meet someone new and ask, “What team are you on?” “What’s your major?” We build from our shared base of knowledge and assimilate this new person into our present understanding of campus life. We do this automatically, not realizing that we obscure important aspects of ourselves and others along the way.

In our dorm rooms, past and present collide. The objects within reflect a person behind the exterior. We all know what it feels like to hold a letter, how lipstick looks, what can be done with a toolbox. But personal objects are more than their function—they are relics of a distinct time and place in someone else’s world. Each one holds a story, one that we would not likely surface in everyday conversation. **Show & Tell** is a short video series that transmits these rich narratives we blindly walk past every day.

Most Amherst students enter the College at full speed, immersing themselves in activity after activity, adopting shared jargon, donning purple shirts. Is this not how communities are made? While it is important to embrace the existing structure, blurring one’s background detracts from our community’s richest resource: the diversity of its constituents. My own school pride emerges far less from impressive facilities and statistics than from a single story told by a classmate or faculty member. The stories that Show & Tell attempts to bring to light are personal, and anything but political. They are purpose-averse, something that may provoke shock or disbelief from the average Amherst student. But in order to feel a stronger sense of community, the answer does not always need to come from the administration. Sometimes we just need to pause from our daily sprint around campus and listen.

**Meghan McDonough ’16**

**Doppelgängers**

Freshman year, it felt like all my friends and I were doing nothing but trying to build ourselves into “real people.” That meant experience: voraciously developing connections with other people, unending discomfort, constant catastrophe. We were all pure, unchecked potential. It was mad intense. It also probably wasn’t that wild—my SWUGgy senior year has made that first year feel a lot brighter in my memory. But, regardless, it felt like we were uncompromising self-generators, spinning lives for ourselves from whatever we could grab at Amherst.

Then the first doppelganger showed up. You saw her in Val, and, from the back, you’d mistake her for my friend. They had the same curly hair, the same compact presence, the same bouncy energy. She wasn’t just similar—she was a check to our assumption of total uniqueness. The tabula rasa looked reused, redeployed. Of course, the two are completely different now—post-Freshman differentiation has destroyed that connection.

The next year another appeared, for a different friend. She had the same perfect posture, the same waif-y, vaguely distant way of weaving through the back room, the same slender frame. It’s eerie as hell to see your friend reflected in someone else. A piece of her, a way-of-being that you took to be hers alone, is taken and dispersed. I suppose it’s superficial to take someone’s appearance as representative of something so deep. Of course you could say that the thing that’s hers alone is not the way she looks but the way she is, or something. An awareness of that is why this was never that serious.

Until I friggin got one. Now it’s the end of the world. This poor kid has no idea—well, actually, my friend drunkenly told him a few weeks ago—that seeing him freaks me out. Think “The Nose,” think The Double. Rabinowitz primed me far too well for this weirdo terror. From the back (it’s always from the back with these freshmen) he looks exactly like me—the same big head, the same hair, the same way of hunching over in conversations. All my narcissism comes apart at the sight of this kid: I’m not unique, I’m not my own, I’ve been remade just in time for me to leave. Amherst will not miss me. He’s all the energy I’ve lost. Maybe it kicks my narcissism into overdrive—I’m remaking this kid as myself, after all, when I’m sure he’s actually completely different.

His presence is one of the hundreds of ways that senior year has severed my connection to this place. The ground has shifted: I no longer belong, but I’m still here. Email addresses are all numbers greater than 15. I recognize 30% of the faces in Frost. The football team is singing the National Anthem on the mezz in Val. Is all of that potential spent? I’m only 21, so why do I feel so old? It’s that kid’s fault. Nah, he’s probably a good person or whatever. Maybe, in the most optimistic terms that my jaded mind can muster, I’ve grown too big for this place. On the other hand, maybe I’ve just grown too big-headed for this place and I should stop being such a reclusive, self-aggrandizing fart. Maybe I’m just tired. Maybe it really is just time to go.

**Elias Baez ’15**
An uncertain bond with the city that never sleeps.

There I sat on a rock-like mattress in an amber-lit room that my relatives had kindly prepared, Elliot Smith strumming softly from my laptop. I stared hard at the screen before me: “Cheap things to do in New York.” An overwhelming list of museums, shows, food-drink venues, and descriptions scrolled in and out of focus—“Bad Dancing World Championship Finals,” “Coffee and Tea Festival,” and “Quiet Clubbing.” I held my pen poised above my notebook, ready to scribble out an intricate and meticulously crafted blueprint for each minute of the 72 hours I was to spend in Manhattan. I was ready for the lights, the beeping horns, the chatter of strangers in moon-lit parks and plazas.

But as I searched, I soon realized I wouldn’t be writing much.

At this point I panicked. I had seriously procrastinated on Spring Break planning, but sorted it out soon enough: I wanted time in the City. In the span of two days, old friends were contacted (“Whoa, it’s been awhile”), places to sleep were scouted, train tickets bought. Hooray! My little wish to visit New York was falling into place. Yet, there I was in my amber-lit room trying to find out what the hell I was going to do with the time I had pushed for. There was MoMA; there was that curly hair salon with decent Yelp reviews; there was the thrift shop on 84th East 7th Street that had an “Under $10 Rack” and boho pieces heavily scented by time’s musk. Sure. Art, hair, new clothes on the cheap are always exciting.

But something felt off. I was a nineteen-year-old, first year college student. I was from an island with a population of 953, 207 (which includes tourists in search of aloha), and I was headed for a city of 1.626 million. What’s more, this was a city I’d only spent a few years living in—Los Angeles, and welcomed Honolulu’s sunny-sided, sit-back-and-relax posi-vibes, but I’d always felt connected to New York. Its tempo resonated with my own, always on-the-go. Colorful. Sophisticated. Ready for the actual, and stands before you as an almost tangible object, or character. You are your own risk,” with a cynical smirk.

With all my heart, I want to believe that I ran right past him, straight through the doorframe. But I am sure that I was bothered—saddened, even—by the fact that my independence and responsibility, and a city I had once defied, had not extended to me a warm invitation, but a callous challenge. Enter at your own risk.

Facing the Concrete Reality

Its timeless avenues and towering prisms of brick and stone demanded a certain reverence, for they were wise and had seen it all.

Naima Moore '18 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.

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Learning to talk about race without fear.

With the end of freshman year approaching, there is a lot to do. Between navigating room draw, applying for summer internships, considering prospective majors, or maximizing knowledge absorption from the seniors before they graduate, I have found little time to reflect.

A few days ago, I looked up from my physics homework to my roommate, suddenly struck by the fact that despite 7 months of cohabitation, we haven’t had a conversation that extended beyond, “Man, that midterm really sucked.” This is not to say that I did not have things I wanted to ask her. Given how different we are culturally, academically, and socially, I have often structured questions for her in my head, but never asked them out loud for fear of making her uncomfortable and jeopardizing the calm of our tiny South corner-room. However, my recent acquisition of a single for next year gave me the kind of courage otherwise only found in the Socials on a Saturday night, and I began to speak up. I asked her things I had wondered about before: the Day of Dialogue, the BSU, her friend group. The honesty of the hour-long conversation that ensued gave me a perspective on the ubiquitous question of race that no other event or discussion at Amherst has, and I am still kicking myself for having waited 7 months to have it.

My roommate is black. I am brown. However, despite this shared ‘student of color’ label, our experiences with race at Amherst College could not be more different. She is involved with the BSU, will live in Drew (the black culture house) next year, and is friends primarily with people sharing these interests. Meanwhile, I spend my time doing problem sets in A-level, listening to Edith Piaf, or hanging out with my friends, scavenged from the rite of passage that is Freshman Orientation. Due to the events of the past few months, and the Amherst administration’s abuse of the term ‘diversity,’ race is a favorite conversation topic here. What is racism? How can we make our campus less oppressive to people of color? What is the quickest way to organize all 1800 of us into a circle to sing kumbaya? I am learning that my apathy towards these questions is unusual for a colored student at Amherst. Let me explain. Conversations about race on our campus seem almost always to be centered on the general oppression of black people (and sometimes Native Americans, ironic shout-out to Lord Jeff) by white people. Is this a gross oversimplification of a serious issue? Absolutely. But as someone who is neither black a.k.a. oppressed, nor white a.k.a. oppressive, these are not my conversations. Given how different we are culturally, academically, and socially, I have often structured questions for her in my head, but never asked them out loud for fear of making her uncomfortable and jeopardizing the calm of our tiny South corner-room. However, my recent acquisition of a single for next year gave me the kind of courage otherwise only found in the Socials on a Saturday night, and I began to speak up. I asked her things I had wondered about before: the Day of Dialogue, the BSU, her friend group. The honesty of the hour-long conversation that ensued gave me a perspective on the ubiquitous question of race that no other event or discussion at Amherst has, and I am still kicking myself for having waited 7 months to have it.

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The problem with discussing conflict points at Amherst is that there is no communication between the bodies that need it. Students who share opinions about an issue, be it race, sexuality, or the mascot debate, find each other. Cue frequent and lively conversation. The problem is that for the most part, the students within these groups agree with one another. They clap (and snap) every time a member says the same thing that was said the previous week. In this way, individual convictions are strengthened. However, this yields no progress. When a group of minority students gets together to talk about how Lord Jeff should be removed while the lacrosse team orders new beanies reading ‘Jeffs,’ this is stagnation. When non-athletes band together to criticize the Amherst Leads sweatshirt while athletes sit in the backroom of Val wondering if they are being criticized, this is stagnation. When the BSU, ISA, NASO etc. discuss the difficulties they face while non-members (a.k.a. the majority student population) continue their daily activities, this is stagnation. Events like the Day of Dialogue, created with the intent of breaking the barriers that separate us, succeed also in the paradoxical underlining, highlighting, and italicizing of these barriers. By hiding amongst people just like us, behind the easy words of “They don’t understand,” we create a self-fulfilling prophecy. We love to talk, but we are talking about the wrong things, in the wrong way.

There is a long way to go if we are to make Amherst the diverse place it claims and deserves to be. There is a difference between having a diverse campus and having a diverse campus culture. Bridging this difference involves breaking the numerous barriers we have erected, be they black/brown/white, athlete/non-athlete, domestic/international, or new/Val/old-Val. Achieving true progress on the question of race requires not only a continuous dialogue, but dialogue between different groups rather than the status-quo. It is only by trying to understand people different from us that we are given the perspective to challenge our convictions. By trying (albeit late) to understand my roommate’s experience, I am building an outlook stronger than the barrier I had to break in its construction. This is the only way forward.

Aditi Krishnamurthy ’18 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.
Facing Myself

Losing myself between irreconcilable identities.

When I returned home for winter break, I found myself divided between feeling as though I had never left and feeling totally alienated. I was quickly able to reconnect with my friends from home, most of whom were still high school seniors. I found myself visiting the same restaurants, watching the same shows, and driving the same roads that had once been part of my daily life, but that I had not experienced in over four months. Even my clothes and wallet changed, as I began again to carry my license and wear blazers to stay warm, instead of the pervasive Amherst ID and Russian overcoat that characterize my life in Massachusetts. In short, Amherst began to feel like an illusion. With the exception of one high school friend whom I had stayed in contact with via my Amherst-friends-only Facebook account, all of my Amherst experiences ceased to be relevant. These two spheres of my life were entirely separate, and it was with mild shock that I realized not only was I such a different person at home compared to Amherst, but also that it was so easy to revert to a personality that was no longer mine.

At the same time, I realized just how trivial I am to my hometown and environment. Life amongst my family and friends continued as if I had never existed, and similarly, Amherst College will continue to teach long after I graduate. Nothing about me is vital: I will adapt to the spirit of the community in which I reside. Whether this means I am a quarter Hispanic placed squarely into the “other” category, even though I speak no Spanish and I feel about as Hispanic as I feel Roman (and in Georgia schools, all students are categorized into three racial categories: if you are not Anglo-Saxon white and you are not African-American, then you are lumped into the lovely “other” category. Evidently, public schools in Georgia receive variable amounts of funding depending on the proportions of “white,” “black,” and “other” students and for this reason, we must raise our hands on the first day of each quarter to verify our funding status). By contrast, at Amherst, people would bat their eyes at me if I claimed to be anything other than American and white. What rationale do I have to say that this is me and that is not when I find myself spending a considerable amount of time in both roles?

It is fairly common for people to claim that college is a time when we develop as humans and find out who we actually are. But I must disagree. Neither my Georgia self, nor my Massachusetts self, is more authentic than the other. In both places, I am pretending. Even as I write this, I know I am not portraying any new, profound facets of myself. I do not know how I could, considering how flexible self-identification can be. Who am I to say what is and what is not essential to being “Felix”? I even feel that my friends might be able to define me better than I could myself—everything else aside, they are much more unbiased as to what my immutable qualities might be. I have to pity my friends, for they care about me even though they know almost nothing about who I could be.

Returning to Amherst after four weeks at home, I felt very isolated. All of my daily tasks began to feel very trivial, as if in every interaction I had with other humans, I was merely performing the role of “Felix.” After a while, this sense of duplicity began to fade. I became accustomed to being my Amherst self and without regular contact with my friends at home, it became less vital to balance the different aspects of my two selves. Moreover, I realized that just because I was split did not mean that either part was fake. Humans are more than simple bundles of facts and values: we are all versatile in the sense that, depending on where we are, we can express totally opposite characteristics. There have been times when I express that I am religious and there have been times that I have vehemently denied that I could ever know the existence of a greater being. At neither point am I consciously being untruthful. I find myself with different fundamental characteristics depending on who I need to become to thrive.

I am sure there are some parts of me that never change, but I will not attempt to list them: any list I make would easily contain characteristics that, while they might be constant between Amherst and home, would mutate wildly if I found myself in the army or studying abroad in Europe. While the degree of personality change may vary, as far as I can recognize, every single one of us changes to some degree when we are placed in new situations. Nobody is the exact same person when they visit their grandparents as they are when they go down to the socials. I am not trying to claim that I have made any profound realization here, but I do believe that this is one of the reasons why so many students feel lonely and disconnected at Amherst. We have all become new people, and sometimes this change is so profound that we barely recognize ourselves. Rather than despair, we need to interact with others and understand what new traits we now possess. So let’s go now and discuss, because soon enough we will find ourselves in a post-Amherst life and we will have to discover once more who we really are.  

Felix Edwards ’18 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.
Point

Continuing with the Divestment

Ana Ascencio
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I’d like to start off by saying that while I am not an active member of the Green Amherst Project, I have been impressed and inspired by the tireless and incredibly cohesive work its members have put into the divestment campaign over the last few years that I have been at Amherst. As an Environmental Studies major, I have gained knowledge to solidify my understanding of climate change as—in the words of the Board of Trustees—a “grave threat” and to recognize that “Amherst has a responsibility to match its convictions with behavior—to display leadership by taking steps that make a difference.”

While it would seem that the Board of Trustees’ recent commitment to sustainability is the perfect opportunity for action, the language in their statement fails to mention any sort of concrete timeline for how this action will take form in the immediate future. Rather, the Board makes several broad, sweeping claims, leaving the question of what the College is going to do to take action now, aside from simply making statements. Now, don’t get me wrong. Students on the Amherst campus should absolutely be interested in working collaboratively with administration, The Board of Trustees, and the Office of Sustainability towards a more sustainable campus. It is both a worthy goal and an important action plan for groups like the Green Amherst Project moving forward. However, we must recognize that the push for collective action is a tactic these administrative groups use to get student groups like GAP to wait, to delay action for just enough time to create passivity and, with it, failure. We as students and student organizers are only here (ideally) for four years before passing it, failure. We as students and student organizers to have an integral voice in where and a commitment by the College to work towards diversifying the administration.

The Green Amherst Project’s campaign on divestment has, in essence, “done its homework” to provide a solid case for divestment. As Ben Walker recognizes in his article, “Divest Nonetheless,” in The Amherst Student, “Amherst does not own any direct holdings in coal, and it is uncertain what portion of the endowment outsourced to fund managers is also invested in coal.” The fact that Amherst does not have any direct holdings in coal does not mean that the divestment campaign is pointless. We must keep pushing until the college recognizes that it must take an immediate action, and the gradual movement towards sustainability does not make the cut.

In her book, This Changes Everything, Naomi Klein encourages us to view “doing nothing” as a radical, detrimental act in the face of an increasingly-warm climate, as a form of turning our eyes away and acting as though continuing business as usual is not pushing us in the direction of continued environmental degradation. Publicly divesting from coal offers the college the opportunity to “exert an enormous push on the national conversation on emissions and climate justice” without having a negative impact on the College’s endowment. The problem with the decision from the Board not to divest—despite the fact that it will not detract from our endowment—is that it represents a refusal to act. Why is the College so hesitant to make this public statement to divest, especially when our motto “Terras Irradi” is all about publicly lighting a path for others to follow suit?

The approach that the Board instead wants to make on its investment policies is “developing a framework for incorporating environmental considerations into their investment decisions.” Members from GAP met with The Board of Trustees on Thursday evening to discuss what this system would look like. According these members, the Board has proposed a plan to release an annual statement describing the ways in which investment officers are making these “environmental considerations.” Therefore, rather than creating a systematized structure through which students can hold the Board accountable for its commitment to environmentally responsible investing, the Board is settling on a process of appeasement. This process lacks transparency and fails to recognize the work of these student organizers to have an integral voice in where and how the College puts its money.

After this meeting with the Board, members of the GAP expressed disappointment. If the College is truly committed to stopping imminent and devastating environmental harm, taking a public stance on divestment is the right way to do so. It is clear that the Board’s plan moving forward does not appropriately recognize the work students have done and their expectation for the college to act. Therefore, until the College addresses this demand, the divestment campaign must continue. The spirit for student activism is out there.

Here’s what I say: it’s time for Amherst students to take a stand. Stop asking permission to raise your voices in opposition. Stop waiting for administration’s approval to take action. And above all, stop allowing the search for the most “realistic” and “practicable” modes of action to cloud our vision of what can be done today: a continued drive towards divestment.

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A blinding focus on divestment ensures that Amherst students forgo realistic opportunities to achieve positive environmental results. I am a proud environmentalist and wish to end the coal industry's many harmful practices. But I cannot support divestment because it is either an inefficacious or a harmful policy that distracts from practicable environmental concerns. An environmentally-minded Amherst student needn’t ask if we should end mountaintop removal mining, our reliance on fossil fuels, or coals contributions to climate change. The answer is an obvious yes. Instead, we must always ask, how can we best achieve our goals? I hope former members of the divestment campaign continue to be passionate advocates for environmental issues. However, I hope this advocacy does not include a continued sidetracking divestment campaign. The Board’s recent announcement presents a perfect opportunity for these students to change course.

The divestment campaign muddles an essential fact: Amherst College already has no direct investments in any coal companies. The Board’s new Statement on Sustainability and Investment clearly states, “Amherst has no direct investment in coal.” Game over, the divestment movement has already won! But wait, you the careful reader of The Indicator, noticed that pesky word “direct.” Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of investments an endowment can make: direct or indirect. My two year internship in the Amherst Investments Office taught me that the endowment can be used to either directly purchase stocks and bonds or indirectly invest through managers. Because of the endowment’s size, Amherst opts for the indirect approach with no direct investments in coal.

If students were to continue its campaign for direct divestment and succeeded, they would have no impact in curbing climate change. Divestment campaigns are successful because they deny financial resources to an organization. Amherst cannot harm coal companies through the denial of financing it doesn’t supply and doesn’t plan to supply.

Even if Amherst is a small actor, some claim that an announcement of divestment from all direct investments could inspire other colleges and investors to divest too. It worked to end Apartheid, right? Well, no. This won’t happen. Amherst cannot meaningfully influence others to divest because a direct divestment announcement implies no real action, given that we are not currently invested. Stanford, with an endowment ten times larger than Amherst’s, divested over a year ago and nationally the divestment campaign has seriously stagnated. And although the apartheid divestment campaign started with college students, it only succeeded after the federal government sanctioned investment in South Africa. Divestment can only have an effect when the broader investment community is unified; otherwise, amoral investors will happily buy whatever Amherst sells.

And if students convinced Amherst to divest from all indirect investments, i.e. divest from all managers with investments in coal or who retained that discretion, many fewer deserving students would receive financial aid. The endowment enables Amherst to support one of the most diverse student bodies of any college or university in the world. With this version of divestment, the college’s investment options would be severely limited because the best energy funds continue to invest in coal or retain the right to do so. As a result, the endowment would be forced to invest with worse managers asking for higher fees, severely jeopardizing Amherst’s commitment to diversity. Furthermore, the college’s current investments in energy funds support alternative energy as the same managers also invest broadly in the energy sector. Thus, this version of divestment might deny financial resources to businesses developing next generation technology that could supplant the U.S.’s harmful reliance on coal.

Some argue divestment is a moral statement. Even if this is abstractly true, we should care more about stopping imminent and devastating environmental harms. Furthermore, divestment claims no moral superiority for washing our hands clean of coal; if Amherst divests, either directly or indirectly, the board will require fair market value compensation for the sale of any and all positions. Thus, divestment might actually mean profiting from investments in coal.

Let’s work with the board, not against them. We must hold them accountable.

Jeremy Rubel ’15 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.
Nostalgia and jadedness on the horizon?

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a prefrosh in possession of a housing questionnaire must be in want of Charles Pratt.

I was such a prefrosh and so, like a fourth of my class, I lucked into the Charles Pratt lifestyle. It's pretty much a given when I tell upperclassmen or other first-years that I live in the Regina George of the freshman quad, that I'm living la vida loca. Pratt could pull double duty as a ski lodge, the view from the third floor regularly elicits amazement from my fans/friends/loes upon first viewing, second floor Pratt post-socials on a Saturday night is a shit show in the absolute best way possible, and one time my floor had Chipotle for Tea Time. We're also one of the two freshman dorms with a vending machine, which honestly just speaks for itself. Apart from tour guides awkwardly editorializing me into their speeches on the regular when I walk through the first floor, Pratt is obnoxiously perfect.

Haters say Pratt has no community. You know what else has no community? Life, motherfuckers. Life. I'm kidding, but you know what, I'm also a little defensive, and for good reason. During first semester it felt like all I ever heard was how everyone in Appleton knew each other, North and South created these tight-knit floor communities, and sub-free housing established a deep, abiding, utopian brotherhood of man. I, on the other hand, ran into my next door neighbor for the first time a month into the school year at a Scandal screening in Keefe. But now, if you ask how I feel about my floor community, all I have to say is there's a dorm room in Pratt which is two stories. Whoever gets that room gets a floor to themselves. And stairs.

STAIRS.

You can probably guess that with five weeks left in Pratt I'm already feeling nostalgic. I've already started editing my freshman year into a cogent narrative to tell my high school friends over the summer, already begun looking back on Move-In Day and first semester wistfully and over the summer, already begun looking back on the Val question and decided it really isn't that bad. But freshman year is home to a host of other things, things which don't fit the 'happy-go-lucky, I'm having fun all the time, I've found all my soul sisters, and oh by the way classes? Killing it! Killing. It.' mold.

I have friends who've had some really, really shitty experiences at the socials. I have friends who struggled through classes and barely made it, and I have friends who skipped so many classes it was difficult to get it together enough to catch up. I've certainly felt lonely and morose sitting in my dorm room or walking to classes. I think it's normal. I'd go so far as to say that I think every freshman has experienced a period of time when they felt unhappy at Amherst, whether it lasted for a week, or a month, or more. And that's part of it all, isn't it? That discomfort, as shitty as it is—and it really is—is just as inevitable as that feeling of walking into a party with your friends and not knowing what'll happen.

So this May 10, when I move out, stick my boxes in storage, hug everyone good-bye, and have a nice, luxurious group cry with my roommates in front of our window and its amazing view, I plan to remember that. As scary as the future seems, I think if you can make it through freshman year, you can really make it through anything. And if college doesn't work, just marry rich.

Obnoxiously Perfect

Illem Asmerom 
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All Night(er) Longer

Andrew Willis

One student’s need to invest in a planner.

I think I peaked in second grade. It’s been nothing but downhill since then, including that time I pretended to be from UMass and got 90 upvotes on Yik Yak.

Up until the second grade, I’d always been one of the good kids at my parochial school, showing as much respect to the handful of nuns as I would have to God Almighty. I kept my clip-on tie clipped more tightly than any of the other boys and got nothing but gold star stickers on my Phonics worksheets and spelling tests. I certainly didn’t associate with any of the bad kids in my class, those perpetually in time-out, only referred to in tones which, if written down, necessitated both italicization and bolding. Least of all would I associate with Brittany, a girl known for not having her homework, slapping other kids on the butt, and throwing her butterfly hair clips at our space-out music teacher. I never thought I’d sink down to her level, that girl about six inches taller than me.

Until the day came, as it does for us all, that I forgot my homework. No excuses, no nonsense, no conveniently-timed printer malfunction. I just forgot. I could have confessed to the lapse, as Mrs. Galley checked our homework, received a light chastisement, and continued on the path of hard work and righteousness. But on that fateful day, I panicked. And upon Brittany’s quiet promise that she would “keep lookout,” I finished the problems with no time to spare. It was the first time that I had exploited my last name’s position in alphabetical order; it was not the last. In that moment, I learned that time I pretended to be from heaven. I wandered among descents, described as sublime or heavenly. I wondered among the shelves in amazement when put together, are best described as sublime or heavenly. I wandered among the shelves in amazement and found, among other things, three copies of Godzilla, Mothra, and King Ghidorrah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack, what looked alarmingly like bootleg copies of the first few seasons of The CW’s Supernatural, and an after-school special called Mr. T’s Be Somebody or Be Somebody’s Fool. Why had I ever wasted my time on this paper, or on anything else in the world, when this collection existed?

The back of the case for Mr. T’s special lets viewers know that, in the video, they’ll get to see Mr. T tape over all brand names on his clothing, demonstrate “Zen-like logic,” and run in the Pacific Ocean fully clothed to “get into shape.” A picture shows him wearing a tank top, baseball cap, and compression shorts—all in camouflage style, of course. At some point in time, the award-winning staff of Frost Library chose to include all of these films in their limited space, perhaps because they are essential components of the history of film or necessary for the filmography of any respectable College. Through this, I had found the artistic inspiration to resume work.

Time passed in the manner it does for the exhausted: impossibly slowly and then all at-once. I had reached the point of the night in which my success seemed quite likely and the pain of the early AM was behind. Now running on adrenaline, I became the embodiment of conviction, utterly convinced by my own sloppy arguments and shaky evidence that the US was an imperialist aggressor or that Albert Camus just really got it, y’know man? A moment later, still high on adrenaline, I suddenly realized, with horror, that I had no idea how early Frost staff came in the morning. I embraced the flight response immediately, throwing everything into my backpack, and, pausing for a moment before the exit desperately hoping it wasn’t locked into my backpack, and, pausing for a moment before the exit desperately hoping it wasn’t locked from the outside, briskly burst out into the cold night, checking behind my shoulder for angry police officers until I reached my dorm. Looking back, I do recognize that fleeing the scene of my crime was probably not necessary at 4:50 AM. But the memory of me running into my dorm, afraid that a K-9 unit might be waiting for me, makes me realize changes in my work habits are necessary.

Just like with anything else, the first step is admitting you have a problem. The back of the case for Mr. T’s special lets viewers know that, in the video, they’ll get to see Mr. T tape over all brand names on his clothing, demonstrate “Zen-like logic,” and run in the Pacific Ocean fully clothed to “get into shape.” A picture shows him wearing a tank top, baseball cap, and compression shorts—all in camouflage style, of course. At some point in time, the award-winning staff of Frost Library chose to include all of these films in their limited space, perhaps because they are essential components of the history of film or necessary for the filmography of any respectable College. Through this, I had found the artistic inspiration to resume work.

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Just like with anything else, the first step is admitting you have a problem. I hope that the audience of this article can be my support group, its editors my sponsors, all of the above my testimony. I admit I am powerless over my own procrastination, my own laziness. I strive, moving forward, to not wait until the last minute, to work harder, to be better. Right after I hand in this article, though, of course; this shit was due like six days ago.

Andrew Willis ’17 is a Contributing Editor for The Indicator.
Amherst’s refusal to accept student-built community.

If Amherst College is going to remain relevant as a residential institution—an institution designed to provide an immersive and supportive community for students—it must take the rampant unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and loneliness of its students seriously. That means providing spaces wherein students can assert their individuality, feel at home, and share their internal worlds.

One way of creating this type of space is to formalize the process to publicly display student art, institutionalize funds to support student artists, and the like; but to do so we must first recognize and learn from past errors and mistakes. It is out of a desire to remember the past that I relate the story of the studio art thesis project created by Cherry Kim ’14.

As a first-year student and amateur poet, I was inspired and a little confused by Cherry’s philosophy toward art. She was incredibly devoted to her art, and seemed to view art as a pure means, or an end in itself. Cherry’s dorm was filled with her paintings and sculptures; she loved being surrounded by art and she wanted to share her love and her art with everyone.

I remember having dinner with her one evening in the spring, when she said that self-love carried more value than anything else. Money was never as important to Cherry as love, art, and self-expression. “I can’t agree with academic art…more specifically, art-in-schools as geared towards an economic career as artist-in-society,” she explained to me recently.

At Amherst, Cherry saw her art not as an occupation or hobby, but as an immersive way of life: “I never thought of myself as an artist first, people just started calling me that.” Cherry was unused to working in a studio. Her life was her studio, her bedroom and common room were her gallery, and she treated her life as a constant, continuous artistic endeavor. “Like the fact that I’m writing this with my feet up on my window sill, my toes leaning against the window pane,” she wrote to me. “When I’m done and I get up to go get lunch with my roommate, my toeprints may have gotten more than she bargained for: “I got a car stuck in a ditch twice trying to build that house.”

Cherry worked with the College’s Grounds Shop to get permission to conduct her work in the bird sanctuary. Bob Shea, the grounds supervisor, was especially helpful to her. “I actually still love them, because individuals in Grounds and Facilities departments really supported me and even helped me STAKE the house into the ground!!! after it fell!”

Cherry filled her house with drawings, paintings, a few books, and quotations. She envisioned it becoming a fixture in the bird sanctuary, thoroughly integrated with the non-human world surrounding it.

“Grass grows tall around it and new flowers blossom, maybe even inside it—I imagined creative people coming and going and feeling free to destroy/create anew/collage with what was there. I loved even finding a peanut butter jar in there that my friends had left once. Because it was just evidence of life.”

Cherry completed her house in the spring. All was set for her house to become a creative destination and to welcome its first visitors. Come the end of the semester, though, Cherry ran into another obstacle. Her advisor informed her that her house would not garner the title of “thesis,” on the grounds that the department felt she had not spend enough time on it. Cherry describes the disclosure as “infuriating” but emphasizes that the label “thesis” wasn’t very important to her: “I don’t even know where it [my B.A.] went now, so lol,” she wrote.

A few weeks after Cherry graduated and left Amherst, she received word from a friend that her house had disappeared from the bird sanctuary. Confused, she contacted Grounds and Facilities. Though they were “really friendly,” they all merely directed Cherry to higher-ups; the bureaucracy shielded Cherry from finding out what had happened to her

It was “terrifying,” she said, to learn that the school prioritized the prim stateliness of its campus over the artistic expression of its students.

It was at the beginning of the thesis project that her dysfunctional relationship with Amherst’s art department and staff began. Cherry requested that her thesis project count as two credits, which is commonplace for some majors, so that she could truly devote herself to the construction of the house. Her advisor denied her request, though, and she was forced to balance a heavy course load with her thesis.

In any case, Cherry began to work on her house. She chose to build it in the bird sanctuary, desiring to keep her work outside of a white-walled studio’s sterility. The house’s location would be a statement against the containment of art in galleries. She wanted her house to be a lived experience and she wanted to spend time in nature while she built it. (In that regard, she may have gotten more than she bargained for: “I got a car stuck in a ditch twice trying to build that house.”)

Pursuing art and developed a dream to build a house, to fill it with books and art, and to share her space with others. So when she returned to Amherst for her senior year, it wasn’t surprising that Cherry embarked on an art thesis project based on her dream house. The formal titles weren’t terribly important to Cherry; as she put it, “I took a bunch of art classes and called it a ‘major’ and I called my project ‘thesis’ so I could get the $1000 grant to build my house.”
A call to reconsider assimilation.

During college application season, I had a Latina rebirth. As if emerging from a deep sleep, I felt a renewed sense of pride in my Mexican heritage. I conquered the initial speed bump of checking a box on the Common Application: White? Hispanic/Latino? Other? I had struggled. I wasn’t sure that “white” quite encapsulated the mix of origins—German, French, Spanish, Italian—that made up the “white” half of my identity.

What is white? I didn’t feel white. Perhaps my whiteness manifested itself in a seemingly inborn appreciation of cannoli, stuffed, and flamenco dance. Though this idea of white was in my genes, I felt more Mexican. But, as a third generation Mexican American, how connected was I to my Mexican identity?

Would I be lying if I checked “Other”? Who was to say? Should I feel oppressed? Should I feel like a minority? What are these labels? How relevant are they? Aren’t we just people?

Fast-forward to my first year at Amherst, and the same questions have persisted. During the Day of Dialogue breakout sessions, I remember a fellow Latin American student cry out in exasperation, “But aren’t we all people? I don’t see why it’s such a big deal. Why can’t we just get along?”

“I agree, Carlos,” I thought, “but we’re not there yet.”

And that’s just it: when will society approach a state of ethnic neutrality? When will race or ethnicity hold no prejudicial meaning? Is the existence of a culturally homogeneous population possible?

In the 2013 film Her, protagonist Theodore Twombly lives in a near future in which no problems exist, save for the struggle between man and technology. Characters talk about the present, and they make no mention of current events or history. In this society, race is but a physical manifestation. It holds no more significance than appearance.

This society seems strange and sterilized, but also utopian.

As English becomes the most widely-spoken language in the world and American culture continues to permeate foreign airwaves and cinemas, will cultural differences and differences in ethnicity cease to exist?

And I thought of Carlos. After all, weren’t we just people?

I have interests. I am a person before all else. I enjoy writing, I enjoy running, I enjoy laughing. Oh, and I’m Latina.

When will society reach a point where ethnicity is no longer a source of inner turmoil?

One might preach impossibility, but I have hope. We’ve passed legislation for gay marriage. We’ve become less racist as a whole. We’ve progressed.

But how will we be able to exist simply as people? Is this dependent on a certain erasure of cultural ties? To attain peace with ethnic identity, do we have to become homogeneous?

The thought of Her-esque ethnic homogeneity is indeed tempting, but also scary. Difference is beautiful; difference is interesting. Is peace with ethnicity worth the loss of diversity that comes with tradition and expression of cultural pride? I think not.

A future without enchiladas and the corny Mexican pop songs I make fun of to no end is a future in which I will not partake. Even if this future is glorious, well-scrubbed, bright, and metropolitan—like that in Her—is it worth it? Vale la pena? Creo que no.

The real question is, how much will minorities continue to identify with their roots?

In a country where assimilation seems to increase inevitably, we move further away from our roots with each generation. As a second generation Mexican American, my dad grew up in Los Angeles feeling more American than Mexican. Of course, he would never cast off his Mexican heritage, but the man’s visits to Trader Joe’s clearly outnumber his visits to a Mexican market to buy tamales and pan dulce. As a third generation Mexican American, I am even more guilty of this.

But what about rebirth? I have faith in future generations. Just as cultural movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance and the Pan-African Movement, have existed throughout history, will there be movements of increased interest in one’s culture? Just as one might say, “My family originally came from Italy. Because of this, I’d like to start learning Italian,” I have hope that the third generation or so of Mexican Americans will reclaim their heritage.

Flavia Martinez ’18 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.

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Siraj Sindhu ’17 is a Contributing Writer for The Indicator.
On the third night, my frustration grew as I became hyper-aware that leaving was not an option. I was stuck. I stopped trying to be silent and cried to my group leader, best friend, and soul mate, Anna. I asked her for help. She gave me black market drugs* and outside. We played games and poked fun at each other. We found the humor in the situation in order to continue enjoying the trip. Sometimes you just need to find the humor.

But at Amherst, it’s not easy to deal with our problems. There are so many interesting distractions. Missing home? Val-sit for a couple of hours. Overwhelmed by your classwork? Attend club meetings. Frustrated by the awkwardness caused by last week’s hookup? Attend talks hosted by academic departments or resource centers. Feeling lonely? Val-sit some more. It’s so easy to busy ourselves by moving from activity to activity to the point where we lose time to face head-on what’s making us unhappy. It was near impossible to do that in Utah. Because I had a lot of time to write, I had a lot of time to deal, uninterrupted, with things that I avoided while at Amherst. I could think deeply about what I was truly passionate about and which direction that I maybe wanted my life to go in, without constantly being given advice by my family members and peers. I dealt with my feelings towards my new and old friends. I thought about people who mistreated me this semester and about people whom I mistreated. I could finally deal honestly with the baggage I was carrying and begin to unload it.

Upon coming back to Amherst, I was immediately sad. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted. I missed the warm weather and the opportunity to spend my days writing, thinking, and talking about whatever I wanted.

I tried to brace myself but ultimately failed because preparing for the unknown is an impossible task.

\*Benadryl.
My Trip to Spring Break

By Liz Mutter

I wasn’t the only girl lucky enough to enjoy a beach vacay this Spring Break, but I am my favorite. It rained on the second day we were there, which is a huge bummer because I didn’t pack my rain boots so that I could make room in my suitcase for my statuette of Samantha, from Sex and the City. (Boy, if that statuette could talk… well, matter-of-fact it does talk, to me, just not out loud!) I did remember to pack sunscreen though, and thank god—what with the skylight in the hotel room, we needed to slather ourselves in the stuff. Did you know that you can still get U.V. radiation through a window, even when it’s raining? And yeah, in the winter too. Turns out, the only way you can avoid skin cancer these days is to pay tribute to the Coppertone baby or live underground for five days a week, like Anne Hathaway. Lucky Anne! Real estate in underground LA is sooo expensive.

So anyways, there we were in the hotel room—and by “we,” by the way, I mean the recently unpacked Samantha and me (I know what you’re thinking, “How could you be so cruel as to pack your friend a suitcase for the duration of your travel?” Well back off, bitch, don’t JUDGE me.) —and I looked over to the family of four huddled in the corner, and I said “Put down the phone! There’s no need to make a call, these accommodations will be very comfortable, thank you.” Then, Sam and I walked over to the fireplace and tipped over a few of the photos on the mantel. “I know that they think it’s like welcoming or whatever to leave photos of the staff family in the room, but Halloween pictures of the kids, really?” I mused quietly to Samantha as I brandished her in the direction of the family. “I was not raised in a Halloween household, so that feels a bit pushy for my taste,” I said, louder now, and pushed the smallest child for emphasis. “I’m gonna pop the little ones first,” I told Sam, changing the subject to skincare. Sometimes Sam and I pop each other’s pimples—we’re that close.

While I was busy being angry, the family started trying to make an exit out through the kitchen (I know, a full-sized kitchen in a hotel room? Unbelievable, love it. That’s the kind of perk you get when you don’t make a reservation ahead of time, and instead just open the front door of a nice-looking place), so I say politely, “Leave the boys with me,” since I like to call the tiny hotel shampoo and conditioner set “the boys,” and continue, “or else I’ll have dirty hair soon.” But I had realized that I didn’t actually see “the boys” anywhere—I didn’t see a cleaning cart either, come to think of it—so I actually trailed off after saying “or else.” Seemed silly to continue, second of all, shut UP, I know, it’s like, I can’t care. And we’re talking about party plans anyway—I didn’t see a cleaning cart either, come to think of it—so I actually trailed off after saying “or else.” Seemed silly to continue, you know.

Anywho, I thought it was the perfect time to reapply some sunscreen, so I got to work slathering it all over my body, all the while locking eyes with the family, because hey, they were looking at me and it’s rude to avoid eye contact. To put myself at ease, though (they were making me a *bit* uncomfortable), I picked a song to sing in my head. I chose the one that goes “Get ready, ‘cause here I come.” Those are the only words of the song that I know, so I just repeated them over and over, and since I’m not good at following instructions (even my own), I sang them out loud instead of in my head. Have I mentioned yet that I’m tone deaf? So by singing, it was more like talking with rhythmic emphasis. It must have been quite the performance, though, because the family was moved to tears.

After three more days in the hotel room waiting out the rain—now that I think back, that hotel staff never did leave, they just sat there and clung to one another the whole time…must’ve been some sort of promotional gimmick about 24/7 service, and I respect that but it’s like, let the people eat a meal, goodness! I even offered them some water from my “Danger Zone” flask but they refused to drink it, probably because of some wretched corporate policy. Don’t let the boss man get you down, people! Anyway—after those three days, Samantha and I hit the town! We painted it red! We received many complaints from people with red handprints on their clothing, pets, and mailboxes! Don’t you just love how vibrant cities are? I sure do, that’s why I’m going to name my kids High-Rise, Gutter, and Guy Fieri’s Chophouse.

Speaking of kids, intercourse. And speaking of intercourse, parties! You must be dying to know what the party scene was like, because like Spring Break, after all. Well, first of all, grow up, okay? Don’t you think we’re a bit too old to care so much about such infantile frivolities? And second of all, shut UP, I know, it’s like, I can’t even—parties!!! Did you see that guy? He was hot. Did you see his brother? I didn’t either, he said his brother isn’t here but he does own a hat stand and is 47 years old—isn’t that neat? Did you see the kegger? Was it at the rave? Did my invite get lost in the mail? You seem 21, have you voted lately? How interesting, my middle name is Rutherford too! We should figure out if we’re relat—Hey, get your hands off of Samantha, she is a statuette, not an object! People are disgusting.

That’s the moral of this story. Liz Mutter ’15 is an Associate Editor for The Indicator.
POETRY

The Claw, “my favorite poison”

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Life is like the stuffed animal vending machine you see at arcades. And you’re the frozen doll—body brushed with white powder, cheeks painted deep red, and face plastered with a big, fat smile—counting the seconds, days, weeks, and months until the day the claw drops down. And when that day comes, you hold your breath as it slowly descends. It’s arms like metallic razor sharp knives. The claw gnaws at you, pierces your plastic skin, and breaks your fragile bones. You may be drenched in your own blood, but it’s ok. The claw promises you freedom. Right?

You feel the pull from the center of your body as you heavenly float swinging sideways, arms and legs lifeless and dragging behind. The flight higher and higher terrifies you—paralyzes you in excitement and fear. Blood rushes to your head; light blinds your eyes. Then the claw suddenly jolts to a stop. You’re at the top. Congratulations.

“I’m here!” You scream. “Finally!” You contort your head to look at the other dolls left either frozen or dead at the bottom. “Pathetic.” You sneer. “Losers.”

The claw slowly and steadily pulls you leftward. Just beyond you see the black hole at the edge. The end. The answer. The hole you heard whispers and secrets about—the hole that promises a way out. You don’t know where it’ll take you, but at least you won’t have to spend another fucking day in this boring, cold, dark, and lonely box.

Suddenly you’re so close to being right above it. You’re almost there. But the claw moves so fucking slow. “GO! GO! NOW! LET ME GO! I WANT FUCKING OUT.”

A loud snap wrings in your ear. The razor knives release.

Then you fall. And fall. But fall—fall too far. Fall too short. Fall too soon.

You grab the air. Scream. Cry. NO. NO. How can this be? But I thought…They told me…I thought…

You thought wrong.
“Hubble,” “Hibernation”

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Hubble

The man who stands alone in thought
And thinks himself a galaxy
Shall once remember the world is fraught
With many larger things than he

To scale, there is the Ocean’s shift
A tide bound to the looming Moon
A man alone would cease to drift
Seized into a lifeless swoon

And should the Earth begin to quake
Disturbing all who dwell above
What will remain in its vicious wake?
A nothingness no man conceives of

We are fragile to Fire, and Water, and Air
Though we inhabit the Earth, we are but its guests
Yet we give ourselves titles and name our sons heirs
And settle too comfortably in temporary nests

All that matters is matter which mattered before
We are stars recycled into different forms
Descendents of the universe of yore
A planet refined, a cosmos reformed

But star stuff does not a galaxy make
And we are mere blips in the scale
It is possible no single step you take
Will leave behind a significant trail

The man who thinks himself a giant
And does not see he is a flea
Will call his sands a mass of diamonds
And regard a raindrop as the sea.

Hibernation

Winter moves too slowly to do much good,
the sloth in a tub of molasses, the dark drip
d of tree sap untapped. All the world is asleep
one way or another. Branches fall and split trying
to hold onto gray and cracked leaves, a useless grip.
The anomalistic shrew

lifts its head from tufts of snow. Mortality reaches out
its pale dactyls to the first thing it can touch
and blinds it. This darkness is an elemental white,
embracing ground and sky and pointing all
thoughts northernmost. Huddling in a hutch
of suffocation, the garter snake

forgets what it means to be warm. Phantasmagoric summer
makes an oasis out of sunlight; these are but
memories. Roughness is in season, the jagged
rock is at home. The angelonia will lose its wings.

Still, listen closely for the steady susurrus, glut
with the stirrings of disquietude.
Midterms. Ugh. FML. Go suck a bone. Let me level with you ‘kids’ out there, midterms suck. Majorly hard. Like a diamond, but not as pretty. But just because they’re bad, that doesn’t mean your GPA has to suffer. To help you through this difficult time, we at The Indicator have compiled 11 tips to ACING those Midterms!

1. **The “Blue Book” technique** - If you have to write your answers in a blue book, make sure you rip off the blue covers before you begin the exam. Blue paper may prevent you from focusing on the exam questions.

2. **Call your professor** - just breath heavily into the receiver until they start revealing answers to the midterm. If this doesn’t work...

3. **Write a strongly worded letter to your professor** - Make sure to state your intention to “destroy the midterm.” Anthrax optional.

4. **Have your smart friend take it for you** - As long as he/she shares your same name, this is perfectly legal! Sorry, Timanthaghanistan!

5. **Chang brane wif yur smarnt frend** - dey dun tink betta.

6. **Ask for the professor to translate the exam into “Simple English”** - This works particularly well in a language class.

7. **Answer only in rhetorical questions** - Ya think?

8. **Create a haiku out of the midterm questions by selectively circling letters** - that’s how most haikus are written anyway.

9. **Bring a deck of cards** - Remove all the Aces from the deck. Staple them to your test. You just ACED the test!

10. **Take your test inside an aquarium** --Hydration is important!!!!

11. **BYOE** -- Make an exam yourself and bring it to the test. When the professor hands you the ‘real’ exam, say, “no thanks, I got my own... Cheers!”

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**Do you like to have thoughts? If so, write, draw, or edit for The Indicator.**

theindicator@amherst.edu

“SANDWICHING MY KNUCKLES...SINCE 1848”
### The Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nintendo to bring Mario games to the iPhone</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>If the game freezes, just blow on the iPhone and try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost wins prestigious library award</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C-level wins prestigious prison award.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Cruz to run for the presidency</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>“Now that’s who America needs!” -Lord Jeff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorbachev cancels Amherst speaking event</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Walls around Amherst breath sigh of relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton amid controversy over deleted emails</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I hear she’s trying to conceal her affair with a Nigerian Prince!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students come back from Spring Break</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>Spring yet to return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama proposes plan for free community college in America</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Why am I in this shithole?! We’re only getting 2 seasonal carnivals this year!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESCAC Alcohol survey finally completed</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I read the whole report, but I don’t remember... I was blackout #fratstar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Kendrick Lamar album drops</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>CATCH IT!!!!!!!!!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| March Madness rages on                       | A-    | Why are these guys playing basketball??? Don’t they have to go to class??!
                                                                                     |
                                                                                     |
                                                                                     |

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Submit a caption to theindicator@amherst.edu
Think about how great it would be if you won!
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