

Coz McNooz

Dear Johnstonians near and far ~ All is well here in Redlands. The Johnston life cycle has come around to spring, which means that our first year students have shed their nerves and are figuring out their place in Johnston, sophomores have experienced the ritual of the Contract Committee meeting, many juniors have left us for a while to study abroad, and seniors are meeting every other week to plan their graduation celebrations. One of the most exciting decisions the senior class has made about their graduation thus far is to invite Kevin O'Neill, beloved founder of Johnston, to be their commencement speaker. Kevin is thrilled, and we anticipate a spectacular performance. As we also plan to honor and celebrate his retirement from Johnston with an official Graduation Review and reception on May 7th. Spring is really turning into all things Kevin! Of course, all alumni are encouraged to come back for this event (see below for details). Beyond this, life on complex is just plain good. As I sit here and type, I think of the Nutella crepes that students in "Daytime Java Coffeehouse" made for faculty this morning, and I realize it doesn't get much better than this. We're all in great spirits these days, and reading below, you'll know why. There is much to be happy about and much to look forward to. We hope you are all feeling the same.

Buffalove,

Kelly Hankin



Upcoming Events:

BULLDOGS BUFFALOS IN SERVICE: APRIL 9TH 2011

In the best tradition of the Buffalo spirit, you can join Buffalos around the globe and take a day to give a little back to your community. After the University's first trip to New

Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, Redlands developed “Bulldogs in Service,” an alumni led community service event that unites alumni, parents, current students, and friends. We may not be Bulldogs, but never let it be said that Buffalo don’t know a thing or two about community! So, when you get the mailer for “Bulldogs in Service Day,” don’t put it aside. Instead, run ...don’t walk ...to your computer or mailbox to sign up. There will be service projects across the country (and one in Salzburg) where Buffalo can be represented. Get together with a fellow Buffalo or four and volunteer on April 9, 2011, or create your own local volunteer event. Let us know how it goes. Questions? Email judycrowell@yahoo.com or Alisha_aguilar@redlands.edu or check the University website for project listings.

Retirement Party for Kevin O’Neill



Kevin is officially retiring (although, like Bill McD, he will continue to teach for the Center). To celebrate him in style, we’re having a big party. But first, Kevin will have to pass his Graduation Review. His advisor Bill McDonald will read his précis, to be followed by serious questions from his academic committee! The committee will then assess whether or not Kevin has completed everything

he promised in his Contract with the College and Center. Kevin's Graduation Review is scheduled for **Saturday, May 7th at 4pm**. If, and only if, the Committee decides to recommend that he be graduated (pending all outstanding work), the Grad Review will be followed by an on-campus reception from 5:00-6:00pm. This event is open to the campus and alumni community. Please join us for this special afternoon.



Kathryn Green Alumni Speaker:

When nervous students ask us “what will I be able to do with my Johnston degree?” we like to send them to the next upcoming Kathryn Green Alumni visit on the schedule to see just what the amazing possibilities are. This past year has been no exception. We’ve had wonderful visits from (Claudia McCabe, Gabriel Thompson, and David Wicker) and we are looking forward to our upcoming visit from Darrel Rhea on Wednesday, March 16, 2011. Darrel Rhea graduated from Johnston College (74) with a degree in “Creative Expression in the Visual Arts,” and since that time has been at the front lines of innovation with the world’s top corporations, helping to drive growth strategies through the development of critical insights on their customers, markets and businesses. Darrel’s talk is entitled: "From Johnston to the Board Room; the pathway, perspectives, and the possibilities" and it will address the following questions:

- What path did a JC hippie take to become a leader in the world of design and international business?
- How can studying design and the humanities help you influence the direction of the world's largest organizations?
- How can a Johnston-style education be relevant at the highest levels of business?
- Are there really people in business committed to having a positive impact on the world, or does operating in the commercial world require you to sell out on your personal values?
- How is "Design Thinking" changing how governments and non-profits are approaching social change to address global problems?

Darrel coaches senior leaders of some of the world’s largest organizations on

how to build cultures of innovation and drive change. From the boardroom of big business, the leadership of governments, the non-profit world, to the World Economic Forum and the global Design industry, Darrel has inspired people to think more creatively about designing their futures. He is currently building a new strategy consulting practice in North America as CEO of 2nd Road. He recently left the world renowned innovation consulting firm Cheskin Added Value, where he was CEO and a leader for 31 years (working in close partnership with JC alumni, Davis Masten).

If you are in town, come by and see Darrel at both Johnston and at ESRI, where he is an invited speaker for their lecture series on March 15, 2011.



Bill McDonald Takes it On the Road for a Chicago B-Graze!

That Bill McDonald just can't stay put. Not only is he taking a group of alumni to Greece this summer (see below), he's also heading to the windy city of Chicago on April 9th for a special Buffalo Graze organized with the lovely Sarah Sapperstein (2005). It's a two-part Johnston gathering, and here is what is planned:

3:00 PM: Meet at Chicago's famous Art Institute. Sarah Sapperstein has arranged an exclusive tour just for Johnston. The cost of the tour will be paid for by Johnston: all the more reason to come!

After our tour and some time looking around the Institute's remarkable gift shop, you'll head north to the home of Lee Goodman ('75), who has offered to host a dinner for Johnston. This will give Bill a chance to talk with all of you about Johnston today, and the Johnston to come, and for Johnston alumni to meet alums across the generations:

If for some reason you can't make the afternoon tour, please try to come to the dinner and discussion. The Megabus service between Chicago and surrounding communities makes travel cheap and the possibility of spending the weekend in the city even more tempting

If you are interested, please e-mail your RSVP to Bill or Sarah. Since Lee lives in the suburb of Northbrook, we're hoping that several of you will have cars that can transport us all: if you can drive, please let us know in your RSVP.

bill_mcdonald@redlands.edu
sarah.sapperstein@gmail.com (Chicago, IL)

Buffalo Grazes:

In addition to the B-graze in Chicago, we've got an upcoming B-Graze in Denver at the home of newlyweds Matt Gray and Lindsay McNicholas (both of 2005). They are graciously opening up their home on Friday, April 15th at 6pm, and they ask that folks bring a dish that reminds them of a place they traveled while at Johnston or shortly after. If you live in the Denver area, expect an Evite invitation shortly. If you think we might not have your email, let us know!

Look for additional B-grazes this summer in the Pacific Northwest when the Director takes it on the road.

More Travels with Bill McD: Summer in Greece

lane, can you add the Greece flyer that you made for Bill's summer trip here?



Johnston and the Consortium for Innovative

Environments in Learning in San Francisco

Johnston continues to be a part of the Consortium for Innovative Environments in Learning (<http://www.cielearn.org/>). This past January, Director Kelly Hankin gave a presentation with faculty from two other Consortium schools—Prescott and New College at the University of Alabama—at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (<http://www.aacu.org/>). The presentation--Making Experiments Matter: Local Risk Taking Units, Global Institutional Transformation—addressed why experimental, risk-taking colleges embedded within larger institutions are not expendable luxuries but, rather, are incubators for learning and institutional change.

Johnston students are also making great connections with students in the CIEL consortium. This past February, first year student Eli Kramer and senior Brendan Mead travelled to the New College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama to attend their version of our GYST retreat. They had a great time and brought back lots of ideas for further collaboration in the future.

Student taught courses

As you know, Johnston may be the only undergraduate program that empowers students to teach their own courses. We have a great list of student taught classes this semester and in May term. Each Friday, these students meet with the Director for a “Pedagogy Workshop” where students reflect on the successes and challenges of the previous week.

Brian Pines: Introduction to Continental Philosophy

Ellen Parkin: Books that Make you want to Cook

Lauren Hohle: Revolutionary Cinema

Tavi Steinhardt: Neurobiology and the Philosophy of Music

Darci Daneshvari: Anthropology of Retail

Owen Galipeau: Hero’s Journey

Eli Kramer: Indonesian Martial Arts



Brian Pines prepares for his class on Continental Philosophy



Eli Kramer (in black) teaches Indonesian Martial Arts



Sophomore Ellen Parkin (in purple sweatshirt) and her group of hungry students during their weekly cooking “lab” for Books that Make You Want to Cook.

Greeting from a Student!

My name is Rafael Fernandes, I am a Johnston senior with an emphasis in Urban Agriculture. This semester I have been working extensively with the department of Community Service Learning on starting S.U.R.F. (Sustainable University of Redlands Farm). I am have contracted all of my classes to aid CSL on their endeavors to make SURF a real part of the Redlands campus. I have written a twenty eight page business plan, an eight page marketing campaign, designed a 90ft. x 46ft. demonstration garden, and built a GIS map of S.U.R.F. I am also in the class Jameson Colloquium in which we discuss current events. On Friday nights, I meet with my peers in Buffalo Food Collective to hone our cooking abilities and challenge us to expand our food knowledge. I applied and received funds

from the Discretionary Grant in order to build a demonstration garden for S.U.R.F. All of my hard work on S.U.R.F. paid off when I was able to present to the Board of Trustees and the William J. Reed Foundation. On top of all of that I have been working with Johnston Director Kelly Hankin as the Alumni Relations Intern. In this position I help promote the Kathryn Green Lectures and other events, and update the Johnston Alumni display cases. I have also spruced up the memorial garden by fixing the irrigation system and the fountains, planting jade and lining the paths with rocks. The last project for this semester is to build garden boxes on the balcony of Bekins for Johnston student use.



Raf takes a break from working on his sustainable garden to pose for the camera.



Julie Townsend (and twins in her belly) and Karen Derris

Featured Class: *Johnston, the Karmapa, and Sustainable Compassion*

Thanks to Professor Karen Derris (Religion) for bringing a once in a lifetime opportunity to our students. This May, she will take a group of Johnston students to Dharamsala, India to spend three weeks in conversation with His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa. One of Tibetan Buddhism's highest lamas, or monastic teachers, the Karmapa is the head of the Karma Kagyu lineage, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Only twenty-six years old, the Karmapa was identified as the reincarnation of the 900-year-old Karmapa lineage when he was seven. Despite his young age, the Karmapa is already recognized as an important religious teacher whose concerns for gender, social and environmental justice has much to offer to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist communities. His invitation to our students is a part of his hope for ongoing dialogue about living with compassion for the world and for oneself with young adults in Western cultures. The sessions with the Johnston students will be the basis of a book written on "Sustainable Compassion" by the Karmapa for Western

audiences. We'll have lots of information about this trip in the summer edition of the *Coz*.



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and His Holiness the 17th Karmapa.

Featured Student Essay

In this delightful essay written for the Johnston First Year seminar, Rachel Thomas takes us through her first semester journey in Johnston.



Johnston: A History of Living

The creativity of others has been seeping through the walls since I got here. Like an osmosis sponge, it saturates me completely but quickly bleeds out, rainbow pigment leaving my brain throbbing and unstained, filled with a longing that isn't mine. I began to speak in music and see in poetry, picking up the discarded scraps of personality that my fellow Buffalo would leave behind them and sewing them to the patchwork fabric of my identity. Is it plagiarism to be so flooded in other people's ideas and styles that I adopt them as my own, my very own illegitimate love children?

I am constantly disoriented. The walls are melting around me and the floor buckles beneath my feet. I am bumping into walls, into people. I forget that I have to open the door to go through it. I don't know how to fit into this world when my mind has turned cloudy and words are dancing on the tip of my tongue, but here they understand. Here the pipes talk and electricity is sparking off the tips of everyone's hair. They have been electrocuted and lived to tell about it, but they're still smoking slightly. This is a dangerous life, not for the faint of heart, a

sacrifice of sanity to the gods Bekins and Holt in the hopes that something amazing will result ... and shockingly, it usually does.

We are explorers, experimenters, evangelicals; misfits and rejects, movers and shakers, leaders of the free world, free spirits resting here ever so briefly before the next adventure. We do not consume information to regurgitate it in the form of the filled in bubble; we create education, every mark of the pen or brush, every strum of the guitar strings ripped from our very soul, the depths of our mind. This is writing, this is college, this is creation ... this is Johnston.

I never liked Johnston, from the first time I heard of it. My traditional background in indoctrination – excuse me, public education – left me feeling ill-equipped to take charge of my education to the extent that Johnston requires.

But the level of involvement I function best at and the variety of my interests made me take a second look when a Johnston senior told me I could easily combine my anticipated double-major-double-minor without the specificity of major requirements. I was skeptical until I read my first graduation contract. Then, I was hooked.

But I don't feel a flicker from a course contract. My fingertips don't curl and start to smoke every time I fail to get a grade on an assignment and get written comments instead, though these are definite perks. What really lights me up from the inside is the community, when living and learning collide - those are the sparks that ignite a fire in my heart.

- I. Buffalo: The Community
 - a. Captain Underpants Rock Attack

You make think it's silly
But I call it Johnston pride
Capes around our necks
And underwear on the outside

I see no evidence of
The shy attitudes I saw before
I am besotted with this freedom
These fast friends, the joy galore

We join together in battle
And leave in soaked victory
This is how you make friends, memories,
Life and community

Orientation Week is stressful, to say it mildly. Every minute of every day was scheduled; new faces got jumbled with new names in an endless stream of carnival colors, and I was consumed with registering for my very first college classes – so much packed into just a few days. It is during all this that I learned just what I got myself into as a member of the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies.

Johnston is distinctive in so many ways. Though a fairly integral part of the University of Redlands now, it began as a separate College, only loosely

affiliated with the university and its constituents. 1969 saw its birth from a bunch of hippies climbing a mountain and coming to consensus that the current educational model was ineffective and that they had to start from scratch.

This “sermon on the mount” became the basis of the Johnston College. Consensus-based, student-run, interdisciplinary studies, this was what Johnston was founded on. Unfortunately, the 1970s “witnessed economic recession and retrenchment, and much reduced interest in political activism” (Ogren 21) that caused the College to be absorbed into the university, though they didn’t come willingly, as the legend says, passed to each generation at The Fire Pit. But we’ll get to that later.

I began to learn the secrets and traditions this community has cherished since conception; why everyone keeps clapping in sign language and what to do when someone walking by yells “Buffalo” and what an opaque cup is and how to connect with people on a level I haven’t before, even when they’re strangers. I learned about college; how to take a shower with my shoes on and why people swear by energy drinks and what marijuana smells like and why midnight is considered so magical.

Midnight Buffaloes were the best.

The best Midnight Buffalo was Captain Underpants Rock Attack.

I borrowed Mary’s underwear and cut a bright swatch of cape from a tablecloth. Armed with a can of spray paint and my fellow freshman at my back, we skipped across campus, grass and mud squishing between our toes. Excitement and anxiety twisted in our stomachs. Our leader, Gaelan, wore antlers, and I would’ve followed him anywhere. We rounded the corner and found ourselves face to face – holy crap, that’s a LOT of people! Fairmont Dorm had armed itself with two balconies full of soldiers, equipped with more water balloons and hoses than we could count. We had a single tarp and a maybe bucket of balloons.

Suddenly the meat shield charged forward, and the whole world sparkled, flinging water lit up by streetlamps and moonlight like shooting stars. But there was no time to soliloquize about enemy fire when water was sluicing off our backs as we glued tiny underwear to a rock. They tried to trick us with a fake spray-painted cover, but ripping it off revealed a rock face, beautiful in its blankness. Our tarp-holders were screaming and we were tagging as quickly as we could. I scrawled something on the side just as the orders were called.

Sopping wet, we splashed back to the dorm.

“Oh my God, you’re bleeding!” someone shrieked.

I looked down at my leg – I’d been hit! But it wasn’t blood. Monty got a little frisky with the spray paint and a spot bigger than my fist shone like a beacon, even in the starless night. It took a month before it flaked off, but I wore my red badge of courage with pride.

In the sunlight, you could still see it in stark black paint, amidst red spots and underwear.

“Buffalo!”

b. The Fire Pit

Lightning splits the sky
Rain sizzles on skin of fire
Falls in open mouths that scream
Pagan dreams to darkness

Shadows whisper dance moves
And dangerous antelope leaps
Of faith
Through smoking deceit

Trailing heartbeats of history
Hundreds of hands beating drums
Creates a rhapsody of
Community

“In my time at Johnston,” Greg Van Hyfte (JC '99) reminisces, “I came to see us Johnstonians ... [as] dedicated at times to extreme individualism, while attempting to harmonize with a cohesive consensual community. This tension only in miraculous moments achieved equilibrium, but for the most part existed as a constant flux, a dance around the GYST fire pit, of distinct souls searching for belonging amidst isolation, intimacy, and all our imperfections” (308).

GYST – Get Your Shit Together. Four weeks into the semester, GYST is an entire week devoted to study parties ... and study breaks. One of these breaks was called simply the Fire Pit. It was the first time I shed my inhibitions. Dressed in shorts and a sports bra and smeared with the paint of many hands; we danced across campus screaming “Buffalo” at the top of our lungs, bodies bumping and swaying as we packed together, a true herd. The fire sparked and crackled, our sinuous movements making the shadows flash across faces contorted with wild delight. It wasn't long before people began to take long leaps over the fire, feeling the heat singe and lick their ankles before the bone-rattling crash mating them with the solid ground once more. Hands clasped and drums ripping through the air, we danced. Lightning flickered in the distance and the thunder crashed to the beats of our hearts.

Then, the stories. The actual words have been distorted, smoke in a memory that's already gone up in flames, but the feelings have remained smoldering in my heart. There was one about the first fire pit, when the Johnston College became a Center and the students were hanging the college in effigy and using desks as kindling. Tossing their half empty liquor bottles into the fire, they were mildly worried about what was actually in them when the smoke coalesced into a buffalo, and from that buffalo an old woman appeared.

She surveyed the situation and asked the students, “Why are you so upset? Passion is like this fire – burning brightly, even when it finally burns itself to nothing the particles fly through the air, meeting other particles, creating an infinite network of passion and love that will spread through the universe forever.”

She disappeared in the smoke, and the students knew that as long as they lived, in some form, their passion would burn higher and brighter than any fire and they would stay connected as a community.

Then another, about the Buffalo. A tribe wanted to learn more about the beautiful and mysterious Buffalo, so they sent their three best and brightest sons to cull one from the herd so that they could study it. The first son separated one Buffalo from the herd and built walls around it, but the herd broke down the walls. The second son built walls around the herd and left one Buffalo on the outside, but the Buffalo jumped the wall to be with the herd. Finally the third son attempted to drive the herd off a cliff, but the herd refused to go.

When they returned to the tribe, they offered these three insights: the herd lives for the Buffalo, the Buffalo lives for the herd, and the Buffalo roam where they will.

These words are tattooed on my soul. The upperclassman groan to hear it repeated again and again by excited freshman, but it puts into words this feeling, this excited anxious trembling-on-the-edge-of-a-razor-blade enthusiastic yearning, this love of learning, this desire to make real connections with the people around us in some way, through music, art, poetry, conversation, adventure. We are Johnston, and this is what it means to be a Buffalo.

c. Kissmas

Shadows dapple the music that shivers each leaf
On the vines that snake across my skin
Watch them tumble one by one
To the floor

Lips meet and part like butterflies
Flitting from flower to flower
Each petal a different texture
Each pollen a different flavor

Hands clasp and bodies bump
Not just in romance but in friendship
Every root snaking and tangling from the same tree
Intimacy in community

It was nearing the end of the semester. I finally felt comfortable on complex and I love my friends, my new extended family that just enhances the family I already have. I was happy and busy and oh goodness, my very first college finals were only two weeks away!

In the midst of this all was Kissmas, the highest security event in Johnston. Usually, guest policy is very simple: stay with you guest(s) at all times, make sure they are following community consensus, don't have more guests than you can handle, and understand that by bringing a guest on complex you are accepting responsibility for them and their actions.

At Kissmas, guests must be submitted and approved on beforehand. If someone is not comfortable with your guest, they are not allowed to come. Guests will have the name of their host written on their hands in permanent marker, and all other guest policies apply.

This is because Kissmas, if you haven't already guessed, is a make out party, and the herd lives for the Buffalo. We take care of our own.

When you walk into Bekins, before you go up to the party you must first select one of three tags. Red – don't ask me. Yellow – please ask me. Green – just kiss me, you fool. From there, amongst the shots of Emergen-C, candy and mints to “flavor your kisses”, dims lights, pulsing music, decorations, it happens.

“A community has to be able to party together. Sure, it's important to have meetings to discuss civic responsibility and hygiene in the common spaces, but if a community can't get together and celebrate,” Autumn Nazarian (JC '98) declared, “it's less likely to achieve its more serious goals, or even last very long ... [There] were people who could explode in earnest and dispel the tension that built over a semester” (345,349).

I was one of those people. I kissed four people in my first hour. After my blue tag shift, I lost count. The stresses of spending eight hours setting up, late nights, early mornings, homework, my job, the irritants of living with other people, and trying to make sure I was doing everything I was supposed to, the right thing in the right way ... it all just melted away. After awhile, I changed my tag to green, living the moment to the fullest.

Kissmas was difficult for me. As a survivor of sexual assault, I was afraid. Dim lights, swelling crowd, sexual tension – I thought it would be too difficult for me to handle. In the same breath I was excited. I mean, making out is fun, and I hadn't romantically kissed anyone since I broke up with my boyfriend in my junior year of high school. I was also nervous. What if no one wanted to kiss me? What if I had bad breath? Ah, the woes of the teenage existence.

I didn't want it to end. As it wound to a close, I found myself desperate for that one last song. That one last kiss. Kissmas let me be comfortable with my body, my sexuality, my desire and desirability. It gave me a safe place to explore, a comfortable space to be close with my friends in ways I wasn't before. Electricity coursed through us, a current connecting each person to the next, the connection cherished no matter the length or the type. The intimacy of a kiss, even at a make out party, was not lost. The importance of that first joining was elevated to incredible heights.

Isn't that the paradox of the important events of our lives? Even as we reach milestones, gain experience, lose the naivety of the unknown, we become so much more sensitive to the significance of these events. Each kiss is burned behind my eyelids, each memory cherished; each connection gained binding the community closer together as a unit, keeping the current connected and alive.

I feel it still.

(Even being diagnosed with both bacterial tonsillitis and pneumonia afterwards, it was still worth it).

II. Living and Learning in Johnston

a. Chilifest

The spice burns my tongue
But your performance soothes my soul
I snuggle up in my seat

Scrape the bottom of my bowl

Colors shift behind my eyes
When I see what you have to say
Sing it, paint it, preach it –
I'm with you all the way

Mixing media and genre
Living and learning as one
This is what Johnston's all about
Thanks for making it so fun!

I never chose my first year seminar. That may sound odd, because we were all given the choice, but I was automatically placed into FS-038 because of my housing assignment: Bekins/Holt. I wasn't originally excited about this class, because it was the only one I didn't pick, but it turned out to be one of my favorites. I loved the pure collaborative style of agenda-building, the free form discussions, the absolute control that I had over what I did. I loved that the class began before the semester even started during orientation week, when we read Alice in Wonderland as a group. I learned not only what my professors wanted to teach, but also from my peers, which was a new and exciting development.

This all culminated in Chilifest, the end of the year celebration and presentation of the work the first year seminar students did. I was still recovering from illness that had laid me flat on my back for the week before, but I couldn't help but perk up when I saw the hard work my peers had done. I felt proud watching them, seeing what they had accomplished. Even if I didn't have anything directly to do with their projects, their successes and struggles were something I shared. I felt connected with each person I saw, with each project presented. Even though I couldn't present, and I was definitely disappointed about it, I couldn't possibly feel negative in the face of all the hard work and beauty my peers had produced.

I also ended up expending a lot of energy I didn't have to make my own projects ready. It seemed silly, but I painstakingly drew a border for my poem and agonized over the description of my painting. It wasn't for a grade, or because anyone expected it, or because my professors would see them. It was because my peers were going to be there, and I wanted them to be as proud of me as I was of them.

It was this experience that transformed my concept of living and learning. We like to banter that term around, discuss it, wring it dry of each slippery meaning it could hold. But I truly understand now. It beats like wings inside my heart; when Jordan sat down at the piano, when Michael V. squeezed his paper between his hands, and when Hans shook like a leaf in front of our burning eyes. Mary held up her cardboard box and I thought I would burst, Carlie began to dance and I just about melted out of my seat, Nick picked up his Marimba sticks and I sucked in an anticipatory breath. These are my friends, my peers, and I love them all. But I also learn from them.

I learn from them every day. Michael H. talks philosophy to my politics and Carlie's calculus. Music plays in the background almost buried under our screaming voices. We argue and fight and play and flirt, but each day I'm surprised. I've never been around such brilliant people, and it affects me. Every time I start to bullshit a paper, I think of my friends and my roommate gluing tiny pearls to a board way past her bed time. And instead I research and I work and rub the grit from my eyes and work and research and think some more. Then comes time for the sharing, passing laptops and papers and look at this! Look at me! And my eyes feast on the treasures it beholds.

I pigged out at Chilifest. No matter how tired my body got, my mind whirred faster and faster. I thought and reasoned and listened and *learned*. It's not anything that I could reproduce, regurgitate if you tried to test me, but I learned the sound of a saxophone when someone's poured their heart and soul into it. I learned that no matter my penny pinching ways, I cared more about passion than money and that you can interpret something in a way that doesn't include words. I learned that a hula hoop can be a loom, my roommate has friends after all, and Emma can sleep through anything. I learned that other people's successes could be just as exciting as my own. I learned that Mica could rap and Tyler was more inspiring than he lets on. I learned Monty has an uncomfortable shoulder, but Sophie's is the best to lean against. I learned you could fit four people on a couch. I learned faculty can cook pretty darn well.

"And how awesome, too, is Johnston – filled with memories, rituals, community, and friends who were messengers of vision, who imagined the heights to which we might climb, who held our dreams, and allowed us our mistakes, [and] cheered us along the way" (Karlin-Neuman and Parish, 138). Pretty freaking awesome, if you ask me.

"In my end is my beginning." ~T.S. Elliot

The fire is banked and my history comes to a close. I have brought you to the terrifying present – magical midnight, with two other essays to complete by five p.m. tomorrow, self and course evaluations unfinished, a doctor's appointment in the morning.

But who am I kidding? I'm a freshman. I still have an actual emphasis to create, grad contracts to write, grad committees to attend. As transformative as these few months have been, as stressed as I've gotten, I ain't seen nothin' yet. Tonight Michael Vavru taught me about the four stages of culture shock, and I'm far from mastering this strangely exciting Wonderland.

But these are the memories I will cherish, frame and hang and brush the dust off lovingly when I have visitors. I will dump these scrapbooks in their laps; babble enthusiastically about times gone by while they politely nod their heads. When I grow up, I'll be a crazy Buffalo lady for sure. I will demand evaluations instead of receipts, inappropriately holding up the line at the grocery store. And yet this is just the beginning, no telling how crazy I will get in the meantime. My adventures stretched out before me, I can't wait to tell you all about them.

Here they come!

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