

DE QUADAM AREA HARVARDIANAE PORTA

Praeses Faust, Decani, Professores sapientissimi; familiae, amici, hospites honoratissimi; tandem mei condiscipuli carissimi, ex instituto ac more maiorum in hanc priscam consuetudinem nos revoco et hac lingua antiquissima omnes vos salvere iubeo—salvete!

Spectatores quidem adestis nostri laudandique causa honestandique gratia, id quod gratissimum est nobis, et vobis haec narrabo ut discatis atque intellegatis qua de causa nos ita colatis.

Sed nunc meos condiscipulos animadverto. Aliis gradum suscipere gradatio vitae est, reliqua via prona. Reliquam vitam teretis semper recordantes saepeque monentes circumstantes vos cooptatos esse in quoddam collegium Bostoniae situm, re vera Cantabrigiae.... Alii iam prospiciunt ad superiores laudes, ad maiores laetitias, ac forsitan et maximam laetitiam et summam laudem, conspiciere filium suum ex Universitate Harvardiana olim gradum suscipientem. Meum igitur est admonere vos unde veneritis, qualia hic feceritis, quo vadatis ut tanto honore digni sitis.

Hoc apertum unicuique est, credo equidem, qui frequens in Area Harvardiana versetur, cum litteris quadratis ac perspicuis super portam Dexterensem sic inscriptum sit:

INGREDITE·VT·SAPIENTIA·CRESCATIS

EXITE·VT·MELIVS·PATRIÆ·ET·GENERI·HVMANO·SERVIATIS

Hoc mihi liceat brevi atque adeo una sententia explicare.

Quattuor abhinc annos ex togatorum numero hominum sapientium sapientium sapientissimi electi, alii nostrum ex extremis terrae partibus, longinquis nationibus, remotis sedibus, alii proximis, primum per portam Iohnstoniensem in Aream Harvardianam, VT SAPIENTIA CRESCEREMVS INGRESSI novi homines, nam nemo est quin ignoret omne collegium divisum esse in partes quattuor, amicitia cum unoquoque coniuncti, Foro Harvardiano explorato, *Actis Rubris* certatis, simul

intra portas huiusce areae magistratibus a quibusdam petitis, simul foris Obama, alumno clarissimo, consule creato, tum illo die festivo ac fatali alii beati admissi in Hortum Quadratum, alii beatiores ad domus Flumini Carolo adiacentes, alii beatissimi ad Domum Dunsteriensem, tum sapientes stulti facti, fastis correctis, bellis cum blattis ferociter gestis, ientaculis coctis abiudicatis, labores fandos infandosque passi, deinde iuniores, tandem seniores hoc anno mirabili, libris lectis, amantibus amatis, carminibus cantatis, memoria tenentes permultas lectiones auditas, quasdam fortasse inauditas, multas studio actas vigiliis, paucas horas et antemeridianas, theses scriptas, rescriptas, postremo submissas, Yalenses non modo in Illo Certamine verum etiam in Illa Naumachia nec semel, nec bis, nec ter quidem sed quater victos, attestati Linsanitatem, Aream Harvardianam quondam occupatam, tum liberatam, denique nunc hunc theatrum augustum Trecentenarium ingressi, gratulantes unumquemque inter nos de rebus gestis simul ac rebus gerendis, evasuri alii in alias partes orbis terrarum, alii ut rem quaerant, alii ut rei publicae serviant, alii ut reis adsint, alii ut aegros medicent, alii ut aedificia extollant, alii deos, alii ut dentes instruant, alii ignaros, alii non ut vias tritas sequantur sed ut vias nondum munitas patefaciant, omnes ad amplissimos honorum gradus assecuturi, nunc, mei condiscipuli, hac oratione paene perfecta per portas huiusce areae, sic periti VT
MELIVS PATRIÆ ET GENERI HVMANO SERVIAMVS, EXEAMVS!

OF A GATE TO HARVARD YARD

President Faust, Deans, most learned Professors; families, friends, most honored guests; finally, my most dear fellow-students, in the tradition of this institution and following the custom of our predecessors I recall us into this hallowed practice and welcome you all in this most ancient tongue—salutations!

The former of you, as onlookers, are here to honor us, and we thank you for such flattery, and it is so that you might learn why you are doing such a thing that I will speak to you.

The latter of you, my peers, I now address you. For some of you, this is the climax; life is only downhill from here. You will spend the rest of your life always looking backwards and often reminding those around you that you went to college in Boston—well, actually, in Cambridge.... Yet some already are looking forward to higher honors, to greater joys, and perhaps even to the greatest joy and highest honor: to watch one day your own child graduate from Harvard. It is for me, therefore, to remind you from whence you came, what sort of things you have accomplished during your time here, and where you are going that you might be worthy of so great an honor.

The answer, I believe, is obvious to anyone who daily frequents Harvard Yard, since it is prominently inscribed above Dexter Gate:

ENTER TO GROW IN WISDOM

DEPART TO SERVE BETTER THY COUNTRY AND THY KIND

Allow me to explain briefly and, what is more, in no more than a single sentence.

Four years ago, having been chosen as the most *sapient* of *homo sapiens sapiens*, some of us hailing from distant lands, others from down the street, for the first time through the Johnston Gate and into Harvard Yard having ENTERED TO GROW IN WISDOM as freshmen—it being

given that there is no one who is unaware how college is divided into four parts—after making new friends, exploring Harvard Square, “comping” *The Crimson*, and both holding elections among ourselves in the yard and at the same time also witnessing outside these gates Obama, himself an alumnus of this institution, being elected president, and then, having been sorted on that festive and fatal day into Houses, a fortunate group to the Quad, a more fortunate group to houses overlooking the Charles River, and the most fortunate group to Dunster House, then, having become sophomores, coped with calendar changes, waged pitched battles with cockroaches, suffered the loss of hot breakfasts, and endured countless other unspeakable hardships, and then having become juniors, and finally seniors in this remarkable year as we cherish together memories of books we read, lovers we loved, songs we sang, the many lectures we attended, the few that we might have possibly maybe not quite exactly attended, the many nights we spent studying, and even the few morning hours cramming for tests, the senior theses we wrote, re-wrote, and finally submitted, Yalies whom we beat both in “The Game” and “The Boat-Race” not once, not twice, nor thrice even, but four times over, how we were all witnesses to “Linsanity,” Harvard Yard being occupied, and then liberated, and now finally having gathered into this august venue, Tercentenary Theater, as we congratulate one another on our past accomplishments and future prospects, on the verge of dispersing across the globe, some of us to work in business, others to become involved in the business of the government, some to be lawyers, others doctors, some to raise up buildings, others praises to God, some to straighten out teeth, others petulant students, and still others to follow paths less travelled by, but all destined to excel in every field, now, my dear fellow-students, with this speech finally coming to an end, SO THAT WE MIGHT BETTER SERVE OUR COUNTRY AND OUR KIND, LET US DEPART!