considering health's increasingly central role on the global stage, and increasing appeal to undergraduates.

He believes the twenty-first century will witness a "human-rights revolution" that has already begun. It is "critical for the future of democracy," he says, that democratic societies demonstrate concrete benefits for their citizens: the right to vote is not enough if it is not accompanied by other fundamental rights—such as access to healthcare. "Even if you're not sick," Frenk says, "knowing that you have a place you can go if you need it creates a feeling of security."

THE UNDERGRADUATE

Life in Detail

by BRITTNEY MORASKI '09

ONE MORNING last October, I packed a suitcase and flew to Indianapolis. I took a shuttle to Bloomington and by afternoon I was seated before Sylvia Plath's papers at the University of Indiana's Lilly Library. I read through clippings on Plath saved by her mother, had a Burger King dinner in the student union, and left to check into my room at the EconoLodge.

I was in Bloomington to do thesis research at the Plath archives, and each morning I went to the library and spent the day sifting through clippings and Plath's own letters and college papers. I wasn't sure what I was looking for, only that I wanted to better understand Plath's decision to write *The Bell Jar*, her semiautobiographical novel of a young woman's breakdown. Slowly, I worked my way through file after file, typing for my records anything that seemed of interest.

I'M NO STRANGER to libraries. When I was a child, my town's Carnegie Library was my favorite place to spend a summer day, and I still like to stop by and say hello to the children's librarian. When I was in high school and took classes at the community college, I became acquainted with its research collection, and whenever I attended a summer program at a university, I'd visit its main library just to wander through the stacks.

I started working in the modern books and manuscripts department of Houghton Library last spring, mostly to earn money but also to gain a sense of how a rare-book library operated. I had already spent many hours studying and doing research in Harvard libraries: I even had my favorite carrel in Widener, where I went whenever I needed to complete an important or, more often, onerous assignment.

At Houghton I drafted letters, filed papers, and photocopied materials. But my favorite part of the job was not as preprofessional as I intended. I savored most the times I could indulge in my love of libraries: I'd walk through the underground stacks—restricted to all but staff—and, surrounded by the thousands of subterranean books, inhale deeply.

I'M WRITING this column during winter break, as I sit in my bedroom at home. Three years of moving in and out of dorms, up and down staircases, and in and out of cities has led me to dismiss sentimentality and prefer throwing away to saving my belongings, but in high school I felt differently. I spent much of the summer after my senior year collecting my schoolwork and old stuffed animals and storing them in files or tissue paper. I put up two new bookshelves and spent a small fortune buying containers and file folders.

I thought I was doing the right thing by saving every remaining scrap and object from my childhood and adolescence, including club agendas and extra copies of advanced placement U.S. government papers. I pictured myself looking through my papers again as an adult, marveling at my growth at an individual and repeating as true a paraphrase of a Thoreau quote I had on a poster in my room: "I've indeed *Gone confidently in the direction of my dreams* and *Lived the life I imagined*!"

But now, just a few years later, I find there is so much saved in my room that it's hard to find things I really value. My high-school essays and letters

Illustration by Chris Pyle

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from loved ones are mixed in with end-of-lesson worksheets and scribbled Post-It notes from my mom telling me that she and my dad have gone to town, call if I need anything.

As a result, I now try to clear out whatever I can from my room whenever I'm home, but I'm rarely as ruthless at throwing things away as I mean to be. A part of me would rather keep things as they are because the randomness of what I've saved is almost as telling as some of the items themselves: for instance, I recently found among a pile of papers in my closet a campus magazine I probably picked up at a college pre-orientation activity fair. Only by skimming it again did I realize that one story featured a Harvard student. When I looked closely at the picture of the student, I realized it showed him in his dorm room, probably in Leverett Towers, and that my House, Dunster—and probably even my window—were in the background. I ultimately tossed the magazine, but in a different mood, I would have saved it, for being meaningful in such a "meta" way. It was only by my saving and then rediscovering it that it had become prophetic: as Thoreauvian an experience as I can imagine.

But that's why we have to be curators of our own lives, because everything—or anything—can be meaningful if you feel nostalgic enough. I learned that lesson at Houghton: the curator of my department told me that the best curators know that refusing some materials is as important as acquiring others. And so I keep reminding myself it's probably good that I now want to clean out my bedroom. You sometimes have to throw away things from the past to be open to those yet to come.

But this brings me back to Bloomington and my room at the EconoLodge. Just as my research trip was coming to an end, I sat in the library's reading room, entranced by the letters Plath wrote home to her mother from England after her husband had left her and she was growing increasingly anxious and depressed. I had begun my research with Plath's wobbly-lettered childhood postcards from summer camp, and now she was a married woman typing messages full of anger but also hope and resolution on light-blue airmail paper. Plath became Sylvia as I handled these letters and raced to read and record them before the library closed for the day.

But minutes before the reading room needed to be emptied, the next letter in the file of Plath's correspondence was not blue but cream, and not from Sylvia but from her mother, written to Plath's husband, asking him to let her see her grandchildren. Sylvia was gone, dead from suicide, and it was time for me leave. There was nothing and everything more to read, but I had to pack up, leave the library, and wander Bloomington alone.

That night, the last of my trip, I turned on CNN and started watching biographies of the vice-presidential candidates. When the program turned to Joe Biden and the death of his first wife and daughter in a car accident, I choked up. Even as I turned off the lights and settled in bed, I felt an achy sadness that seemed excessive sympathy for Biden's loss. Then came a few sobs, and finally I realized that I was crying over Sylvia. After a few days spent with the papers of her life, I felt that I had lost a friend.

Sitting here in my room at home, among labeled college application files, homemade scrapbooks, and shelves of high school work, I am uncertain whether I am fortunate to have such a good record of how I've lived or if my belongings leave me too beholden to my past. I am no Sylvia Plath, and there is no need for me to keep my papers for posterity. But we all live lives of memories and choose to keep some things so we do not forget a past that is always receding. I realize now why I love libraries so much, and archives most of all: they keep treasures of this sort safe for the sake of civilization.

Archives are places where lives are carefully recorded, preserved, and shared. You can find postcards, love letters, and even locks of hair in such places. At Houghton, I learned how to process and collect these materials. And at the Lilly Library, thanks in no small part to the work of its librarians, I found Sylvia—a teenager with bubbly handwriting, a college student applying for scholarships, a woman telling her mother that she had just written the poems that would make her name. As long as archives exist, protecting the ephemera of love and loss and the details of life, I believe that we all share in a certain immortality, no matter what we may keep or save of ourselves.

Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow Brittney Moraski '09 is still writing her history and literature thesis.

SPORTS

Hoops Houdini

Basketball's Jeremy Lin draws on a large bag of tricks.

An historic basketball game was played on January 8 in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Harvard beat Boston College, ranked seventeenth in the nation, 82-70, recording its first-ever win over a nationally ranked opponent. What is more, BC had just defeated the University of North Carolina, then the nation's top team. (Harvard's last game against such elite competition, with twenty-third-ranked Stanford, was a 111-56 blowout, the opener of 2007-08's struggling 8-22 season, when the Crimson tied with Princeton and Dartmouth for last in the Ivies.)

That January night, shooting guard Jeremy Lin '10 put on a magic show, throwing in 27 points and making eight assists and six steals. On defense, he held BC's all-American guard (and projected NBA draft pick) Tyrese Rice, who had scorched UNC for 25 points, scoreless in the first half. When Lin finally fouled out with 40 seconds left, there were none of

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