

printed books after swimming in the phosphorescent shallows of a screen, I have to assure myself that this is in fact a way of reading. I have to convince myself again of the value of the old routine: clock faces occluded so I don't worry about the time; my

I'm quietly reading the products of a quiet reading, emulating how Nabokov must have sat.

feet up, my back curved, my chin downturned; a fan running, or the light just right on the page. I have to mollify my overexcited nerves and set about consciously remembering how to act as the sole reader of a text. The rituals help, of course; they remind me that I've read like this before. That I'll probably do so again.

And I always do remember, in the end. But it's still a shame I have to.

IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME, you can register for an account and submit a request and end up on a Friday morning in Houghton Library's reading room with a two-volume facsimile of a fifteenth-century Flemish illuminated manuscript (though given this description, general interest might be a limiting factor as well).

On the facsimile's first page—a glossy blankness—the book's previous owner has scribbled the following: “property of V. Nabokov,” and beneath that, “butterflies identified by him.”

The manuscript, as I discovered on just such a Friday morning, is primarily interested in hagiographic imagery: Saint Veronica displays a cloth on which the shadow of Christ's face is imprinted; Saint Anthony Abbot walks in the wilderness in the company of wild beasts.

But Nabokov, the inveterate literary trickster, has eyes only for the butterflies.

His indelicate scrawl, pressed into the page by what, it seems, had been the fine nib of a mechanical pencil, provides their scientific names: *Issoria lathmia*, *Vanessa atalanta*, *Abraxas grossulariata*. Occasionally a question mark appears next to a specimen, perhaps because the writer has been stumped, or perhaps (and this is more likely, as the marks are quick and cruel, almost sardonic) because the manuscript's illuminator has whimsically and irresponsibly confected from stray colors and patterns a chimerical species.

On this Friday morning, I'm absorbed

in my inspection of the manuscript. The reading room is comfortable and quiet, the air the perfect temperature and the light the perfect lambency to facilitate immersive reading.

On the few occasions that I do glance up,

I can't help but notice that there are no other undergraduates in the reading room. The desks are peopled by old men with frosty beards and willowy women in muted dresses; they inspect piles of letters and yellowed tomes with crazed leather bindings. The room is peaceful. The sibilance of turned pages rises occasionally out of the silence.

The thought occurs to me that I'm quietly reading the products of a quiet reading, emulating the very way Nabokov must have sat, the way he must have focused, his brow curled and eyes poised.

This, too, is a form of collaboration, albeit silent, protracted, and completely voluntary. I can consider the previous reader's presence if I want to—it is not forced upon me. Likewise I can ignore his annotations, the sediment of his prior perusals.

I feel strange pondering what must have been Nabokov's own thought process while inspecting this manuscript. He was, after all, a master of literary mystification, and so it's odd to find him impugning the playful creation of new breeds of butterflies that exist only in, and as, art.

He must, I assume, have fallen so fully into his reading that the whole vast mecha-

nism of his strong literary opinions and wonted modes of analysis fell away. In their absence, a very small and ardent aspect of his mind assumed complete authority. He must have read selfishly, passionately, and without a thought for anyone else.

After a while my phone buzzes (an alarm; an appointment) and I stand up to leave and realize, to my pleasure, that I've been doing just the same.

A LITTLE BIT LATER, I return to my room. There are many things I need to read: novels, tracts, monographs. They're stacked on my desk, passive as bricks.

Sometimes I feel a breed of dread when I think of the reading I've got to do. I worry if I'll be able to focus; I'm afraid that the pages and the words they bear will swirl into nonsense like the symbols and signs of an abstruse theorem.

Trained by the screen to consider the gazes of others, to react quickly and decisively to their smallest suggestions, I worry that they'll follow me into the book, that I'll hear their mutterings while I pick my way through befuddling syntax.

And of course, this feeling's worse today. I'm certain I'll have the shade of Nabokov staring over my shoulder.

But then I remember that he read alone, and right now my room is quiet and the fan is slued in my direction, and the light's coming nicely through the window.

I feel very alone.

He probably wouldn't have cared. ♡

Berta Greenwald Ledecy Fellow Bailey Trela '16 hasn't seen a real butterfly in a long time.

SPORTS

Rolling Along

Formidable early-season football

BEFORE the Harvard football team kicked off the school's 142nd gridiron season, coach Tim Murphy's toughest foe was a familiar one: his 2014 squad, one of the greatest in Crimson

history. This year, after all, could not end any better than last year's 10-0 campaign, which culminated in a heart-stopping 31-24 win over Yale last November 22 at Harvard Stadium. During the Ivy League's preseason

teleconference, when *The Harvard Crimson's* Sam Danello '18 asked how to keep this year's edition from resting on the program's considerable laurels, Murphy declared, "You have to get rid of those skeletons. At every team meeting, the first thing I say is, 'Hey, Zack Hodges isn't walking through that door. Conner isn't walking through that door'—references, respectively, to Harvard's all-time sacks leader and one of its best big-game quarterbacks, who both graduated last May. "We're *not* destined to go 10-0," Murphy's peroration continued. "If for any reason you think you're entitled to it because your teammates have won three of the last four Ivy championships, you'll get hammered. You can make the case that every team in the league is improved—maybe except Harvard." (See "Murphy Time," page 35, for an in-depth profile of Tim Murphy, and his place in Harvard football history.)

In the early going, either because of Murphy's message or despite it, Harvard kept right on rolling. Showcasing a strong all-around game, the Crimson demolished its first three opponents, extending its winning streak to 17. Nevertheless, the apparent haplessness of the foes raised questions about just how good this year's team would be.

The rest of the Ivy League could be forgiven for thinking that Murphy was poor-mouthing. (In the preseason writers' poll, the Crimson was favored to repeat as champions, if narrowly over Dartmouth.) Entering his twenty-second year on the Crimson sideline, the coach had retained an enviable nucleus, many of them All-Ivy in '14. On defense, seniors Jake Lindsey, Eric Medes, and captain Matt Koran headed the seasoned linebacking corps. The defensive backfield sported their classmates Sean Ahern, Asante Gibson, and Scott Peters (who made the clinching interception against Yale) and junior Chris Evans. Power-and-cutback runner extraordinaire Paul Stanton Jr. '16 spearheaded the offense, and the wide receivers included fellow seniors Andrew Fischer (who caught Hempel's winning touchdown pass against the Elis) and Seitu Smith. Ben Braunecker '16 and Anthony Firkser '17 were foremost in a flotilla of versatile tight ends. (Harvard spawns tight ends the way Britain produces actors.) The mighty offensive line had lost All-Ivy center Nick Easton '15 but retained such primordial blockers as Cole Toner, Adam Redmond, and Anthony Fa-



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Having picked off a Brown pass, defensive back Asante Gibson—wearing his team's new, Nike-designed home uniform—heads goalward during the Crimson's second-quarter onslaught.

HARVARD ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

biano, all class of '16. Moreover, there were intriguing freshman newcomers such as wide receiver Justice Shelton-Mosley and running back Noah Reimers.

Still...who would replace Hempel? The main candidates to start at quarterback were Scott Hosch '16, who as the primary backup in 2014 steered the Crimson to six wins, and Joseph Viviano '17, whom Murphy termed "probably as talented a kid as we have recruited at that position." In pre-season drills, the 6-foot-5 Viviano made a strong impression—until he broke his left foot in a non-contact play and needed surgery. By default, Hosch was number one.

Murphy continually lauds Hosch's "high football IQ," and the latter's intelligence as well as his touch were on display on September 19 during a 41-10 victory over Colonial Athletic Association member Rhode Island at Kingston. The 6-foot-3 Georgian completed 18 of 27 pass attempts for a career-high 336 yards, spreading the ball deftly among a half-dozen receivers while tossing for three touchdowns, a performance that won Ivy League player of the week honors. (It helped mightily that the offensive line allowed the Rams pass-rushers to get no closer than Woonsocket.) The first score, a 25-yarder to Ryan Halvorson '17 (yet another tight end), came on

Another Saturday, another victory for Crimson quarterback Scott Hosch '16, who passed for three touchdowns and a career-high 336 yards against Rhode Island.

ing a punt; cornerback Kolbi Brown '17 picked the ball up and scampered into the end zone. Then came some magical punctuation. In mop-up duty at quarterback entered Hosch's fellow Georgian Jimmy Meyer '16, who took a snap at the Rams 37, dropped back, and let fly. The ball sizzled like a howitzer shell and whistled into the hands of Shelton-Mosley in the end zone. It was Meyer's first pass in varsity play, and the first catch for Shelton-Mosley. A new placekicker, Kenny Smart '18, was six for seven on extra-point conversions.



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tackles and an interception that set up a touchdown), and a quarterback sack by Ahern that enabled Lindsey to scoop up the ball at the Brown 11 and run it into the end zone—the first Harvard fumble recovery for a score in five years. The blowout



KIT WUTTHE/HARVARD CRIMSON

In his first extended action, freshman Noah Reimers gained 60 yards and ripped off two touchdown jaunts against Brown.

(which completed an Ocean State sweep) also afforded Reimers the opportunity to strut his stuff: the 5-foot-11, 200-pounder from Virginia delivered with 60 yards on eight carries, including touchdown jaunts of 16 and 27 yards.

The following Friday, another night game yielded another blowout, this one over outmanned Georgetown, 45-0. The Crimson scored six touchdowns, all on the ground, the most impressive being Stanton's 37-yard, second-quarter scamper. Reimers got into the end zone thrice on short runs and flashed some nifty open-field moves, once even hurdling a would-be Hoya tackler. The defense made another fumble-forcing sack (by lineman Miles McCollum '17) followed by a runback (by Koran). And in what was becoming a signature, there was for the third straight week a punt block, this one by defensive back Tanner Lee '18.

Murphy pronounced this walkover

“the end of the pre-season.” Six Ivy games loomed, including all the top contenders. The outcomes would determine whether during next year's preseason Murphy would invoke as inspiration the names Hosch, Stanton, and Koran.

TIDBITS: With the victory at Rhode Island, Harvard is 117-23-2 in season openers....The win over Brown brought Murphy's record in Ivy openers to 17-5....The Georgetown victory ran the Crimson's mark in home night games to 11-0....Thirty states are represent-



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ed on the 2015 roster: California leads the way with 19; Texas is next (12), followed by Ohio (11) and Georgia (nine). Traditional suppliers Massachusetts and New Jersey have furnished six each. ~DICK FRIEDMAN

Taking Her Shot

Post-surgery, a top athlete reestablishes herself.

IN BASKETBALL, a three-point play (a three-point shot or a two-point shot, plus a free throw) is an accomplishment. A four-point play (a three-pointer and a free throw) is rare. A five-point play is virtually impossible—but that's what the Harvard women's basketball team accomplished last January, and Shilpa Tummala '16 initiated the action.

The Crimson trailed Dartmouth by 14 points late in the second half, and Harvard needed a comeback to avoid a 0-2 start in conference play to preserve its chance at an Ivy League championship.

Enter Tummala. After scoring a layup to cut the deficit to 12, she held the ball beyond the three-point line with just under six minutes remaining. Temi Fagbenle '15 set a screen to initiate a pick and roll, but instead of driving to the hoop, Tummala did what she does best: letting it fly from three-point range. The ball went in. Then the whistle blew, and everyone stopped. Dartmouth had fouled Fagbenle, sending the center to the foul line. The three counted, as did the free throws, slicing the deficit to seven.

Tummala wasn't done. During the next five minutes, she made a steal, a free throw, and then the go-ahead three in Harvard's 75-69 win. “I was in shock,” she said of her performance and the comeback. “People in the locker room [were] crying because they had never experienced a game so devastatingly weird.” But women's basketball coach Kathy Delaney-Smith took the performance in stride: “I'm never surprised when Shilpa does that,” she said. “I believe she just loves pressure.”

In fact, Tummala's scoring itself was deeply surprising. Having suffered severe shoulder injuries during her first two years of college play, her very presence on the court was amazing.

THE CRIMSON GUARD regards excellent three-point scoring as a byproduct not just of shooting but of complementary skills like dribbling and passing as well. Growing up in Arizona, she modeled her game after the Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash, an elite point guard who was considered one of the NBA's most creative passers and an excellent shooter. Tummala is a similar dual threat, capable of taking her shot or driving to the basket and finding open teammates. Several weeks after defeating Dartmouth, for example, when the Crimson trailed Columbia by

two points with just under a minute remaining, she again held the ball, but instead of shooting, she went to the hoop, drew the defense, and passed to Erin McDonnell '15, who hit the game-winning three.

Tummala likes creating scoring opportunities for her teammates, but she also recognizes that passing opens up her own arsenal. “That's what helps with my scoring abilities,” she said, “because people aren't necessarily sure if I'm going to attack to create or attack for myself.” Or, as was the case against Dartmouth, attack from three.

The five-foot-eleven player also makes use of her size: she is bigger than most shooting guards in women's basketball. According to her even taller brother, Sai, a six-foot-six forward on the University of Hawaii men's basketball team, this enables her to be more “aggressive” and “use her body to get to the basket.” It also means that she can shoot over shorter defenders.

Yet for Tummala, the key to great shooting is repetition. Growing up, she dragged her father, Sekhar, outside daily to work on her shot. They would start with layups and continue to take one step back, build her strength, and hone her form. To this day, her father's guidance remains influential. “When I'm at the free-throw line, I