

PERSONAL ESSAY

Old Campus: A Diatribe

// BY LUCAS CASTILLO-WEST

Picture little old me. I had just finished my hours of volunteering for Focus. Beat, I returned to my faithful home on Old Campus. I found my bed unmade — perfect, no need to feel guilty about messing it up. I had to jump a bit to get into my bed because, for some reason unbeknownst to me, they set that thing four feet above the ground. That jump took everything out of me, but I was in my final resting spot at last. Deep into the folds of my covers, a sudden warmth wrapped around me. My open windows let in a breeze, and I turned off my fan; no need because the weather has finally chilled. My eyelids fell, consciousness fading.

Bum bum bum.
What's that? Bum bum bum. Is that bass? Bum bum bum. I checked my phone. "Did I leave my music on?" I thought. No. My screen was pleasantly empty. Bum bum bum. There it is again. My head turned. Bum bum bum. My eyes locked with my window. A shrill voice sliced through the silence of my dorm room. Of course, they were testing the speakers for the Bulldog Bash. I sat up, harboring the knowledge that my nap was ruined.

I absolutely hate Old Campus. I hate it during the day. I hate it at night — maybe especially at night. And I definitely hate it in the morning. As a proud Piersonite who was "gifted" the opportunity to live in Vanderbilt Hall this year instead of Lanman-Wright Hall, I hate to say that I'm not sure that I'm any better off. I've seen L-Dub; my room is not bigger than theirs. I feel lied to.

"Oh, you hit the lottery?" "You should feel blessed that you're in Vandy." Blessed my ass. My room is so small that I'm basically kissing my roommate when I wake up.

Even though I live on the fourth floor — don't get me started — I can still hear everything. If someone is taking their trash out, I hear it. The conversations outside of Bingham, I hear it. The bathroom door opening and closing, I hear it. There are no secrets on Old Campus, because I hear them all. When was the last time I slept entirely through the night? Good ques-

tion! I don't know!
The eternal dilemma is as follows: close my window and enjoy the slightly dulled noise or open my window and not die of heat exhaustion, because what they don't tell you about Yale is that you will be in a dorm with no AC. A dorm that, of course, is on the highest floor of your entryway. And, if you paid attention in physics for even the slightest second, you'd know that heat rises — a fact I have become quite accustomed to.

When people visit my dorm, they note that the metal handle is quite hot. Oh, I'm aware. I walk into my room, looking for respite, and I am met with an unnatural heat. What gets me is that this is not a shared experience. I was truly given the short end of the stick. Even the people in Vandy on a lower floor are having a better time than I am. And don't get me started on the Ben Franklin kids with their air-conditioned dorms.

I hate that everything is always going on here. I hate the tour groups I have to weave through to get to class. "Oh, goody! Another old statue!" is what I can only imagine they are saying. I hate being stopped to take people's pictures. "Hey, will you take this photo real quick!" "Oh, wait, can you try this angle instead?" "Oh, the lighting is kind of bad, let's move over here."

I hate the constant events. I wake up already late for class. Oh dear! I run down the stairs, shoes half on, backpack unzipped, my shirt tucked awkwardly in my pants. I bust through the doors of my trusty Old Campus dorm. "It's a straight shot! I just have to get across the courtyard," I think. Tsk, tsk, tsk. I have too much faith in Old Campus. What I didn't account for is that they are setting up tents for an event next week. And those tents, obviously, block the path to my class. By the time I make it down, I accept my fate. I take the long way around the tents, dragging my feet, having abandoned the hope of getting to my class on time. "But this can't happen all the time!" you might be exclaiming. You're right! But if not the courtyard, then it's Elm Street with orange barriers stopping you from jay-walking, or a permanently

locked gate that taunts you with a deceiving veil of convenience.
And most of all, I hate that damn porta-potty. I thought, after the Bulldog Bash, that the porta-potties would soon fall as the decorations had. And they did. One gone. Two gone. Three gone. Four gone. Oh! But not that one. That one is there to stay.
"It's not that bad," you're probably saying. And I'd agree, if people didn't use it. But no. People use it. Constantly, I'm watching people trail in and out of a porta-potty. This fact truly baffles me. Linsly-Chittenden Hall is right there! Free bathrooms! Hot to go! No need for

is eating chips on a bench, and you are in hot pursuit of them. You can't blame them for being here. They have the same right to exist here as do you. But the anger begins to swell up inside. What do I do now? If I turn, it would be so noticeable. If I don't, I'm screwed. Instead, you choose the worst out of all the options: you stop.
Oh no. Oh no. They're approaching you. Oh, dear. Oh, dear. This must be hell. And, scene! That was just a little example of the nightmare encounters you can have on Old Campus. If I were asked to describe that situation in a few

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the smelly plastic box! You could have an air-conditioned, nice, normal bathroom. But I suppose it's not convenient enough. I suppose we are just too lazy to take the extra few steps. Come on, people! Stand up. There is no need to use a porta-potty EVER.

"Wait!" you might be saying. "Old Campus has such an amazing community! You're surrounded by all your fellow first years!" I fear that's the problem. Every person I don't want to see is lingering. Every person I don't want to see lives 20 feet away from me. "Ah, I'm so hot, let me go on a walk," I say innocently. I climb down 50-some-odd flights of stairs from my dorm and enter the cool air. It's so nice out, wow! Absolutely nothing could ruin this night.

Oh, who's sitting on the bench over there? They look kinda familiar. Oh. Oh, dear. And there they are: the person you hate, the person you despise above all else,

words, I'd say revolting, trifling, evil, despicable, never-want-to-experience-except-I-definitely-already-have.
Now, don't misconstrue my words. I love Yale. I am forever grateful to be here, but I am nevertheless human, and I can't help but have a few pet peeves. So, I loathe Old Campus. And, I know this is premature hatred. I've lived here, what, a few weeks? But I do hate it, no matter how much I love Yale. And nothing will change my mind.
I suppose I'll just have to daydream about next year, when I get my dingle and life is good — when I get to enjoy Yale and all its beauty. But until then, I'll continue writing from hell-on-earth: my sweet, lovely Old Campus.

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