This spring Harvard University Press publishes the five-hundredth volume in its Loeb Classical Library and, to celebrate that landmark, also brings forth a sampler of the library’s greatest hits, or, as the press calls it, a “selection of lapidary nuggets drawn from 33 of antiquity’s major authors.”

“As soon as early Dawn appeared, the rosy-fingered, he rekindled the fire and milked his fine flocks all in turn, and beneath each dam placed her young.” Thus the man-eating Cyclops, Polyphemus, begins his day, while Odysseus plots to trick him, and thus begins A Loeb Classical Library Reader. The slim volume offers selections spanning 12 centuries, from a taste of Homer’s Odyssey to Saint Jerome’s call in a.d. 385 for the simple life: “Let Rome keep her bustle for herself, the fury of the arena, the madness of the circus, the profligacy of the theatre....” Each text appears in its original language on left-hand pages and in English on facing right ones.

After Odysseus mutilates the Cyclops, readers move on to the cloud-gatherer Zeus, who is angry, in Hesiod’s account, because men have acquired fire and creates the first woman in retribution. Pindar tells of the first Olympic Games. Euripides’s Medea plots to kill her children. Herodotus explains why the Greeks and the Persians don’t get along. Aristophanes’s Lysistrata campaigns for peace on the horniness platform. Socrates says farewell. Livy has Romulus calm the Sabine women. Cicero preaches about duty. Pliny the Elder, an incautious scholar, dies in the eruption of Vesuvius.

The Reader is intended, of course, to entice ordinary folk to explore the richness of the Loeb Classical Library. Founded by James Loeb, A.B. 1888, in 1911, it was bequeathed to Harvard in 1933. It was hailed in 1917 by Virginia Woolf, who observed: “The existence of the amateur was recognised by the publication of this Library, and to a great extent made respectable....The difficulty of Greek is not sufficiently dwelt upon, chiefly perhaps because the sirens who lure us to these perilous waters are generally scholars [who] have forgotten...what those difficulties are. But for the ordinary amateur they are very real and very great; and we shall do well to recognise the fact and to make up our minds that we shall never be independent of our Loeb.”

Coming in May in two volumes—Loeb 500 and 501—is Quintilian’s The Lesser Declamations, a collection of specimen speeches to be studied by Roman law students. One speech for the ages attacks a proposal to equalize wealth. Another good one is an argument in the case of a youth who has forsworn worldly possessions but is suing his father for cutting off his allowance.

They contain some nuts? Visitors to the Marshmallow Fluff website will have noticed a recipe for “Harvard Squares” (www.marshmallowfluff.com/htm/harvard), made with semisweet chocolate pieces, canned flaked coconut, chopped walnuts, and a 7½-ounce jar of Marshmallow Fluff. Delicious, we’re sure, but why are these called Harvard Squares?

A nod to the trinity. Zachary Warren, a student at the Harvard Divinity School, set a Guinness World Record for the “fastest marathon while juggling three objects” (balls, in this instance) with a time of 3:07:46 at the Philadelphia Marathon last November. He squeaked to fame; the previous record for the event was 3:07:46. “Joggling,” Warren was quoted as saying, “makes the world a little more magical a place.” —PRIMUS V