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 telling 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 past to be open to those yet to come. It’s 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 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.

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 Ledecy Undergraduate Fellow BritneyMoraski ‘09 is still writing her history and literature thesis.

**SPORTS**

**Hoops Houdini**

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

A n 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
the mocking chants one often hears in college gyms at such moments; instead, the crowd made the air alive with applause. “That game was something I’ll never forget, an emotional high,” says Lin. “It was something our players and coaches deserve—we’ve all worked very hard. We earned it.”

In mid January, when Harvard was 9-6 (1-0 Ivy), Lin was the only college basketball player in the United States who ranked among the top 10 players of his conference in points, rebounds, assists, steals, blocks, field-goal percentage, free-throw percentage, and three-point percentage. That pretty much covers the game of basketball: it’s an extraordinary display of versatility. Lin was averaging 17.9 points and 5.5 rebounds per game, while hitting field goals at a .500 clip, free throws at .802, and three-pointers at .424. Characteristically, he credits his teammates for those high-flying stats. Regarding steals, for example (last year he led the Ivies with 58), Lin notes, “When other guys on the floor are doing a good job defending, that can force a bad pass, and I can grab the ball.”

“I’m trying to do whatever the team needs me to do in that particular game,” Lin explains. “A lot of the time, it’s not going to be scoring, even though that’s what’s most valued when people talk about a game. Sometimes it’s going to be rebounding or passing. It’s a credit to the other guys on our team that I don’t have to be scoring every game: we have several players who can score.”

“I haven’t coached anyone I would regard higher [than Lin],” says Tommy Amaker, who coached 19 years at Duke, Seton Hall, and Michigan before arriving at Harvard’s helm in 2007. “Jeremy is a hard worker, a passionate ball player, a student of the game who loves the game. He’s an unselfish young man, sometimes to a fault. Jeremy’s a complete player, a throwback to the days of yesteryear. He could play basketball in any era. I love coaching him; it’s great to have a player you sometimes have to ask to slow down, instead of ‘Please, take it up a notch.’”

The six-foot, three-inch Lin built his game amid a hoop-playing family. Both parents are Taiwanese immigrants and computer engineers who eventually settled in Palo Alto, California. His father, Gie-Ming, had never heard of the sport when he arrived in the United States in 1977, but soon became a basketball junkie. Though only five feet six, he plays recreationally and collects basketball DVDs. Lin’s mother, Shirley, fell in love with the game as her sons did, and is now a major fan. Older brother Joshua played for Henry M. Gunn High School in Palo Alto; Jeremy played for the rival Palo Alto High School, where his younger brother Joseph is on the team now. “Anyplace we could find a hoop and a ball, we would play,” Lin says. After their Friday-night youth group at the Chinese Church of Christ, for example, the Lin brethren would adjourn to a gym at Stanford for some pick-up games that might last until 2:00 a.m. Lin came to Harvard—not Stanford, Cal, or UCLA—in part because he wanted to play college basketball. Now Amaker feels Lin is skilled enough to have a career after college if he wants one. (Lin admits that playing in the NBA would be “a dream come true”—his youthful idol was Michael Jordan—but the economics concentrator considers pro ball a long shot. He aspires to work for a church (and serving an underprivileged urban community.)

But for now there is the holy grail of Harvard basketball—an Ivy League championship—which the Crimson has yet to bag. Last year Cornell ran the table at 14-0 and graduated no starters; in preseason polls, Harvard wasn’t picked to finish higher than third. On the other hand, before this season, Harvard had never beaten a team like Boston College.

Winter Sports

Ice Hockey

After a strong start that was followed by various disappointing midseason setbacks, the women’s team (11-7-3, 3-2 Ivy) reeled off a five-game winning streak, capped by an 8-0 thrashing of Boston University during the first round of the Beanpot tournament. Senior Sarah Vaillancourt, last year’s Kazmaier Award winner, led the offense with 14 goals and 30 points.

The men’s team (5-11-5, 1-3-3 Ivy) got knotted up in a plethora of ties, and in mid November stumbled into a two-month, 13-game winless streak before breaking the curse with a 3-1 victory over Union. Junior defense- man Alex Biega led the scoring with...