

PERSONAL ESSAY

Putting down roots

// BY ANGELINA KOVALCHUK

My suite is filled with celebrities. Not artists, musicians or influencers. By celebrities, I am referring to the collection of ivies, succulents and aloes arranged carefully around our common room coffee table. Over the course of the last four weeks, my suite has accumulated several different houseplants, each boasting a different leaf shape and shade preference. For our love of film, we have bestowed upon each a moniker inspired by our favorite Italian actors. Our plant children, Allison “Al” Pacino, Monica Bellucci, Robbie DeNiro, Danny DeVito and the newest addition Leonardo DiCaprio, all live and interact in their own little plant canon.

It is from the experience of adopting plants with my suite that I have come to assess the importance of doing things with these people who now live and share in my space. When I was applying to Yale, the suite was sold to me as at the heart of the “Yale experience.” This collection of people seems entirely arbitrarily picked, even though we were supposedly put together by our deans, and is now expected suddenly to live in the closest proximity.

Before moving, I was accosted by a barrage of TikToks complaining about “random roommates” and how genuinely weird they are. Determined to beat the stereotype, I received my housing assignment with resolve. It seems obvious — of course you should spend time with people to get to know them, but I find that all too often we take for granted the whimsy and spontaneity that comes with nurturing new and fresh connections. The suite counters the fast-paced social environment of college; in a place that emphasizes meeting so many new people, where we must sift through faces and friends to find our perfect matches, there is value in being stuck with people. This place will be my definition of home for the next four years, and I’m not planning to leave without friends.

Every morning when we water our plants, I am brought back to amblings through my family’s gardens at home — from the tomato bushes in my Lola’s condo to the mango trees my mom cultivates in our backyard. Aloe barbadensis and bottlenecks that run along the perimeter of our old house climb the walls of my soul. As the latest in a lineage of people who love to garden, it feels all the more significant that I continue this tradition. In an effort to make Yale feel like home, my suite has been strengthened and tethered to the place I grew up.

Still, I am determined to give a new definition of home to Yale, which is vastly different from the humid mires of my Floridian upbringing. After all, coming to college is an act of “uprooting” — moving away that should culminate in an experience that feels familiar but is different in every way. Exploring study spots, gabbing into the early hours of the morning and planning things to do with my suitemates has helped me to root myself in an unfamiliar place 1,200 miles away from everything I knew two months ago. In such a short time, my suite has become a branch of my definition of home.

Not everyone is as lucky as I have been with my suite. Among the many communities and spaces at Yale, it is crucial to investigate the spaces that call to us and see if they can offer that elusive familiarity. Communities that offer the same experience of belonging and “re-rooting.”

This is all to say that I gladly and openly express my love for both my suite and our adopted plant celebrities. We have pot-decorating plans scheduled for next weekend, and I have a feeling that Al would love a trim Godfather-esque suit. After that, who knows. There are so many things we have yet to do together.

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ILLUSTRATION BY ANNA QIAN

Puzzle by Ariana Borut '27

ACROSS

1 "The Studio" has won 13 of them

6 Move over to make room

7 Milan-based fashion label

8 Bay Area NFL player

9 ___ Harbour, Fla.

DOWN

1 "SportsCenter" network

2 Periodic McDonald's sandwich

3 Disney heroine with a pig named Pua

4 Sing in the Alps

5 Yelp review symbol

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
	9			

ACROSS

1 Play hooky

5 Birthday slice

6 Cornfield challenges

7 Root beer treat

8 "Without further ___..."

DOWN

1 Burn with hot water

2 Buzzy instrument

3 Furniture store that sells Swedish meatballs

4 Annoyance

6 Painter's deg.

	1	2	3	4
	5			
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7				
8				



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIAN RAYMOND

HOROSCOPES

// BY KIVA BANK

It’s that time of year again. The crisp breeze signals the arrival of colorful fall leaves...and much-dreaded midterms. You’ve only been in classes for three weeks and already exams are just around the corner. Welcome to Yale, where midterm season is never ending!

Instead of enjoying a pumpkin spiced latte and an episode of Gilmore Girls like autumn calls for, you are overwhelmed with office hours and writing sessions at the Poorvu center. On the bright side, studying is a welcome distraction from the unfortunate reality that you haven’t been tapped for anything.

You now spend your days consumed with looking for answers to your psets when you should be looking for faith...in the stars. Well, look no further.

Here is what your horoscope says about your fate, delivered straight from the universe and Bass Library:

Aries
Your energy is unmatched, but burning out is not a personality trait. You don’t need to consume three different caffeine sources at once so you can out-study everyone else. Staying up until 4 a.m. doesn’t make you a hero. It makes you delirious. Please, for everyone’s sake, go to bed before you start lecturing strangers about your grindset.

Taurus
You’ve been dutifully sitting in lecture and taking notes in preparation for your upcoming exams when suddenly your professor decides to go off on a tangent. And no, not the useful kind for finding instantaneous velocity. Your professor may be an expert on astrophysics, but he’s also a Belieber. You now know more about Justin Bieber’s discography than you do about planetary motion, but hey, that might show up on the test. Consider it extra credit.

Gemini
Learn to say no. Your GCal is overbooked, you barely have time to shower, and you’re not even a CS major. You’ve overcommitted to so many extracurriculars that you’ve seemingly forgotten the classes that you’re paying \$90,000 to take. Running from HQ to WLH every 15 minutes does not count as cardio, and no, your professor will not accept “sorry, I had rehearsal” as an excuse for missing the midterm essay. Drop a club before a class drops you.

Cancer
For the new school year, you’ve decided to try the Flex meal plan. Unfortunately, you keep “forgetting to eat” in the middle of your marathon study sessions. You need to be reminded that Liquid IV is not a food group. Please consume an actual vegetable before you faint in Sterling and become a cautionary tale on Yale Fizz.

Leo
Resist the urge to talk shit about ex best friends and former situationships. The enemy of your enemy is NOT your friend. Also, why do you have enemies? You are a 19-year-old “Art History” major who has a caffeine addiction and gets winded walking up the stairs in LC. You can’t defeat anybody, much less an archnemesis. The only demons you are fighting is your GPA, so stick to one battle at a time.

Virgo
You are convinced your professor is plotting against you. You’ve been locked in the seminar room every week playing a twisted game of mafia as you and your classmates guess who wrote the essays your professor is tearing apart on the projector. She removed names for anonymity, but that doesn’t stop suspicion of murder. Cause of death? The try hard who dragged your verb usage for sport.

Libra
You swore you wouldn’t procrastinate. Yet here you are. It started with skipping your lecture on Science Hill and now you’re “just taking a little nap” at 11 a.m. on the day of your exam. You need to set thirty two alarms, or else you’ll be explaining REM cycles to your professor instead of writing essays about it. Try an alternative next time: sleeping at night like a normal person. Your roommate will thank you.

Scorpio
Are the stacks in Sterling Library feeling a bit too stuffy for you? Or are you suddenly catching a cold? Maybe it’s time for you to take a quick vaccination trip to prepare for flu season. The rusty iron gates are a workout, and you need to make sure you’ve gotten your tetanus shot. You do NOT want to get Yealthed right before your midterm.

Sagittarius
You prefer the aesthetic of studying as opposed to actually learning. You look hard at work in Atticus even though the only thing you’re researching is Pinterest board inspiration for a pumpkin patch photoshoot. Unfortunately, being in a book store does not mean you’re an academic, and your TFs will certainly not be grading based on the vibes you curate for fall.

Capricorn
Your midterm crisis is going to turn into a midlife crisis. Political science will severely shorten your lifespan as the stress and guilt of succumbing to corporate lobbyists overtakes you. Luckily, it’s not too late to change your fate, and your major. Follow your dreams of playwriting and switch to English, even if you end up with no future job. At any rate, you’ll die happy and unpublished.

Aquarius
Divine intervention is blocking you from receiving your mother’s overbearing text messages. They’re a distraction in your hour of desperation. You don’t have time to answer her 10th FaceTime of the day. You can lock yourself in Bass where both the sun and cell signal won’t reach you, but unfortunately your mother will still find a way to embarrass you from 1500 miles away. Probably via a Facebook post you didn’t approve.

Pisces
Crying signifies you are in a “liminal space” — what that means, who knows? At least, that’s how you are justifying your middle of the night breakdowns in Sterling. Sometimes it’s okay to romanticize your tears, or whatever gets you through the next few months of midterms. Just don’t let the puddle ruin your laptop.

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