

## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



Image: Georgiarosebooks.com

## A FEW ASHDOWNIANS TELL THEIRS ...

“All words are pegs to hang ideas on.”  
— Henry Ward Beecher

This month we have several different articles through which Ashdownians have expressed their ideas.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2014 Ashdown Short Fiction Competition 2014! In this month's issue, we've published the first installment of the short story by Ritsu Chan.

We also have reviews of the Phantom of the Opera, reflections on an internship in Israel and an update from our residential life coordinator.

**Remember: This newsletter is for you!** Have an idea for a new section/ article? Love to draw cartoons/comics? Let us know! As always, if you have suggestions to improve the newsletter - please email me, I'd love to hear them!

Sara Dolcetti  
Ashdown Newsletter Officer  
ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu



Sara Dolcetti

## AUGUST: UPCOMING EVENTS!

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Cherry Pit Society Sidpac 7pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Fifth floor movie outing
- 14<sup>th</sup> S'more night (Hulzier)
- 27<sup>th</sup> IKEA TRIP (12-5pm)
- 30<sup>th</sup> International Dessert Night (Hulzier 8-10pm)

Wed Board Game nights in the  
@ Hulsizer Room  
8pm

## IN THIS ISSUE

- **Calendar of FREE/CHEAP** things to do around Boston!
- **“A message from”** Associate Housemasters, AHEC, Resident Life Coordinator
- **August events / July re-caps +** Committee updates
- **Interview an Ashdownian!**
- **Story Story Contest Winners!**
- **Ask the Kids Stuff**
- **MISTI** in Israel

..... and **MORE!**

## A message from ...

### Associate Housemasters

Hello Ashdown Residents,

We hope you are enjoying the summer! We would like to take this chance to give you some information about Ashdown's Residential Scholar program, which will enter its 7th year this fall.



The Román Family

MIT's Department of Urban Studies includes the SPURS program, or Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies. Each year, approximately 10 Hubert H. Humphrey Fellows are selected from designated countries around the world to participate in the SPURS program. These Fellows, financed primarily through the US Department of State, are accomplished, mid-career professionals chosen to complete a year of study and related professional experiences at MIT. (For more information, please see <http://web.mit.edu/spurs/www/hhh/>.)

Each year, the new SPURS/Humphrey fellows are invited to apply to serve as Residential Scholars in Ashdown House. After reading their applications and interviewing them via Skype, we choose 2 Residential Scholars. For the 2014-2015 academic year, Irakli Zhvania from Georgia and Elleni Ashebir from Ethiopia will live in Ashdown as Residential Scholars. In addition to participating in the Ashdown community in general, they will plan and host many events related to their countries of origin and their areas of expertise. For example, Irakli would like to organize a panel discussion regarding Georgia's movement towards western democracy and the role of Russian pressure in preventing this transition, which he states is causing significant problems for the country's advancement and development. Elleni would like to host a discussion about the construction of the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, which she states is a huge project with political and economic implications.

Please join us in welcoming Irakli and Elleni to Ashdown House, and keep an eye on your inboxes (and on posters around Ashdown) for Residential Scholar event announcements throughout the year.

All the best,

Katie, Yuriy, Max, Dante, and Apolo



## A message from ...

### AHEC

Dear Ashdown Residents,

I hope you are all doing well and had some free time to enjoy the nice weather!



Ho-Jun Suk  
Treasurer



Jordan Romvary  
Chair

Before getting into what AHEC has been upto for the past month, we would like to thank everyone who came out and took part in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ event (held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July)!! Due to unexpected rain and thunderstorm on the Independence Day, one of the biggest Ashdown events of the summer had to be postponed by one day, but this could not deter our enthusiastic volunteers! Without your amazing help and commitment, it would have not been as successful and fun-filled as it was. Thank you again for all of your help!

In this month's note, we would like to draw your attention to some of the amazing items we are planning to purchase through the Avery Ashdown Will Fund. Out of many items that were proposed by your fellow residents (a complete list of these items can be found in the AHEC meeting minutes from July 17, 2014; <http://ashdown.mit.edu/minutes/20140717.html>), outdoor patio furniture has been approved for purchase, and we are moving quickly to write up a formal proposal for them (some of them shown below) so that we can use them in the warm weather (while it lasts!) If you know any items/accessories that might go well with these, please feel free to email us or come to the AHEC meeting on any given Thursday to share your amazing ideas!

In terms of the basketball hoop usage, we are well aware of the fact that the hoop usage hours (11 AM – 9 PM) are sometimes not strictly upheld, and we will be more stringent with the usage hours (definite usage hours will be announced in the near future). Please remember that the **violation of hoop usage hours is equivalent to the violation of other general house rules, and repeated infringements can lead to the dismissal from Ashdown House, as well as other disciplinary actions** if necessary. If you have any ideas or suggestions about this issue, please contact us and let us know!

As always, we look forward to hearing from you and we hope you have a great rest of the summer!

With Best Regards,

Ho-Jun Suk  
AHEC Treasurer

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jordan Romvary  
AHEC - Chair



# August



Savannah Niles

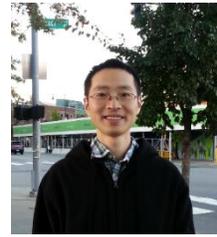
## Free (or cheap!) activities in Boston and Cambridge every day in August.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Free admission to the ICA tonight w/ DJs, live performance, gallery talks, drinks, and more.	2 See a student play at MIT, Harvard, or Tufts.
3 Upgrade your morning coffee routine: Head to Boston's Little Italy, the North End, for a cup and cannoli from Mike's.	4 Transplant your Monday workload to the Boston Public Library.	5 Broaden your horizons without leaving Cambridge: venture up the Redline to Davis or Porter Square.	6 Get into the Museum of Fine Arts for free with your MIT ID.	7 Grab cheap eats and pastries in Boston's Chinatown.	8 Take a daytime visit to Harvard's Putnam Gallery of Historical Scientific instruments.	9 Take the \$3 ferry from Long Wharf to the Charleston Navy yard to visit the U.S.S. Constitution.
10 Decompress your week with a stroll across the Charles and along the Esplanade.	11 Go to Harvard to get a Harvard library card, free to MIT students.	12 Take a free daytime tour of the Sam Adams Brewery.	13 Visit the Patriots Training Camp at 2pm today.	14 Visit the Colt Observatory at Boston University.	15 Before it's unbearably cold, make the hike to Inman square for a quality Friday night.	16 Bike to Walden Pond. Get transcendental.
17 Check out the SOWA farmer's market, happening every Sunday.	18 Take a break from the lab and walk over to MIT's List Center.	19 Check out Faneuil Hall Street Performers and grab a lobster roll.	20 Take a relaxing walk through Boston Common.	21 Take in the lovable grunge of Alston this Thursday night.	22 Brave the Dionysian wasteland that is Central Square on a Friday Night.	23 Take the commuter rail to any of Boston's beaches!
24 Check out Boston's Museum of African American History.	25 Visit Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.	26 Go on a Freedom Tour: the free, mandatory Boston tourist activity.	27 Go for an evening walk by the shops at Newbury street.	28 Class isn't here yet: power to the Thursday night barcrawl at Inman or Harvard Square.	29 Stroll through MIT's Hart Nautical Gallery on your lunch break.	30 Take a tour of the State House.
31 Plan your trip to Boston's (and the world's) only Museum of Bad Art...						



## A message from ...

### Residential Life Coordinator



Dear Ashdown Residents,

The residential life survey, as many of you have responded, provides valuable suggestions to Ashdown officers on their work. As new students are coming, the survey results also bring our attention to address the “classical” concerns of new students. This article provides a brief summary of the survey results, and answer main concerns raised by the residents.

Three quarters of the responses are from residents who have lived in Ashdown for over a year. Most people (over 80%) are satisfied with Ashdown events, among which outing events, world cup watching, cherry pie society discussions are among the most popular events. On the other hand, only about a half are satisfied with floor events, showing that the floor events still need more advertisement and interactions with the residents.

**Noise control.** Residents reported noise of singing in the TV room, basketball in the courtyard early in the morning, loud speaking in the hallway, and noise from neighbors. Please be aware that Ashdown quiet hours are from 23:00 to 08:00. During this time, please keep noise, music and any other activities to a low volume. Allowable hours of using the basketball hoop are from 10:00 to 21:00. If your neighbor continues to make loud noise, please leave him/her a note or report if necessary.

**Mice problem.** According to an email from house manage, an exterminator comes regularly to set traps in the mechanical spaces and anywhere mice enter the building. To avoid mice, please keep your apartments clean of food waste and crumbs, clean your stoves and counters after food preparation and don't leave food out overnight. If you have done all these and still find mice in your apartment, please report and door sweeps will be installed on your apartment doors after your room is inspected.

**Repair/mice report.** Please use the online service request form at <https://atlas.mit.edu>. This is the most efficient and effective way to report housing problems. Requests are reviewed weekdays from 7:00 to 16:30. For urgent repairs outside of these hours, please call 617-253-4948.

**Hulsizer room opening for study.** Most residents prefer the Hulsizer room to be open on weekends for study. The open hours are 14:00-18:00 every Saturday, starting from this week. We will listen to residents' feedback to change the hours accordingly.

Thanks again for your support and enjoy the summer and the coming new semester!

Jianan Zhang  
Residential Life Coordinator

# Looking forward/back: August & July events (& other updates)

## Events Committee



### July

The wait for what some consider the most important sporting event finally came to an end. **Football** enthusiasts gathered in the Ashdown Hulsizer Room and the Thirsty Ear to support their favorite nations in the company of both friends and rivals with pizza, snacks, grad-student priced drinks, and free soda.

### August

The end of the month is the beginning of orientation.

The events committee will be focused on planning the orientation events and developing the brochures for orientation – stay tuned for updates!



## Coffee hour Committee

**July re-cap: Smoothie night!**  
We made our own smoothies and shared recipes with friends



**August Event: S'more night on August 14<sup>th</sup> !**

Enjoy summer night with delicious S'more making by yourself!



## Communities Officer

July was a great time for communities. The weekly game night continued on, with the board game "Eclipse" continuing to be a favorite, but last week we tried "Zombie State" which was very much enjoyed by everyone. The Minecraft community also had a kickoff event, where we restarted the server and explored the new map. The server is always running and anyone interested can sign up to play at their leisure. The Garden community has been doing well too, with the crops starting to get pretty tall



Andrew Rzeznik

### Upcoming August Events:

1. **Game night:** every Wednesday 8pm Hulsizer room
2. **Grilling Club Events (TBD)**
3. **Gardening trip (TBD)**

# Looking forward/back: August & July events (& other updates)

## Health and Safety Officer

### August events:

Planning on holding a seminar with MIT police to highlight some of the on-campus services available to students - more details to follow.



Alexander Leder

Contribute to the next newsletter and **earn TechCASH!**

Went to an amazing restaurant / show / lecture / world-cup match etc. recently? Write about it in an **article / poem / short-story / review!** (300-500 words, \$10 TechCASH).

Any other contributions are also welcomed! Email us with suggestions / thoughts!

**Write-on!**

### July 4<sup>th</sup> (5<sup>th</sup> !) BBQ

Thanks to a hurricane the 4th of July came late to Ashdown, namely on the 5th of July!

Once the grills were red hot, we served over 400+ burgers, hot dogs and veggie patties to the assembled guests. A good time was had by all and we look forward to a rain free 4th come next year.



## Inventory & Facilities Committee

Reminder: A new Sanitaire vacuum (S-2) has been added to the front desk inventory. It is available for checkout to **all** Ashdown residents, including those who are not members of the Vacuum Club. Please be courteous to your neighbors and empty the vacuum bag before returning it to the front desk.



Garrett Ryan Dowdy



## Looking forward/back: August & July events (& other updates)

### Cherry Pie Society

On July 22, a bunch of Ashdown residents along with a few members of the Fossil Free MIT community assembled together to watch the 2012 documentary "Chasing Ice". Introduction of the movie and the discussion subsequently was done by Yuran Wang. The movie documents the role of global warming and climate change on the receding of glaciers in regions close to the north pole- Alaska, Canada and Greenland. The keystone of the movie is a series of time-lapse photographs of the evolution of glaciers over years taken by James Balog and his team.

The members from Fossil Free MIT helped in leading the discussion and what could be done in the immediate future to arrest the effects of climate change. There was considerable debate on their current plan of 'divesting' from fossil fuel companies and whether it can help in actually reducing carbon emissions. The social, economic and political obstacles to implementing large-scale renewable energy power plants across the world, especially in developing countries, was also briefly touched upon.



Sai Gautam  
Gopalakrishnan



Ludwig Schmidt

### Art and Theater Events for July

**Phantom of the Opera:  
July 8, 2014**



Ina Kundu

On a crisp Tuesday evening in July (July 8<sup>th</sup> to be exact), a group of fourteen Ashdown residents made their way down to the iconic Boston Opera House to see the Broadway rendition of *Phantom of the Opera*. Seated in the balcony, we were serenaded by the voices of Cooper Grodin (the Phantom), Julia Udine (playing Christine Daae), and Ben Jacoby (portraying the character of Raoul) among others. The Opera-esque musical lasted a total of two and a half hours after which we headed back to Ashdown, laughing with each other and sharing stories of how *Phantom of the Opera* permeated our childhood.

#### August:

1. We are looking to beautify the walls of Ashdown. If you have any suggestions for acquiring art, please message Ina at [inak@mit.edu](mailto:inak@mit.edu)

### Cherry Pie Society Events for August

Cherry Pie will be hosting a joint event with CoSI (Committee on Scholarly Interactions), an intellectual discussion group of Sidney-Pacific.

The event will be hosted at Sid-pac on August 3, 7pm.

The topic of discussion would be on geopolitical events happening in the middle east. The discussion would include recent issues such as Israel-Gaza and also slightly older issues like Egypt.

# Looking forward/back: August & July events (& other updates)

## Floor 3 Officer



Brian Seifried

Do you live on the 3rd floor? Do you like free food? Of course you do! Look for a 3rd floor restaurant outing coming to your stomach this upcoming August!"



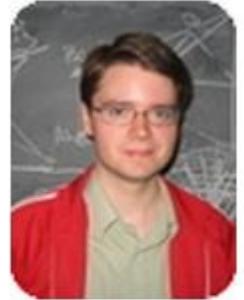
## Floor 1 Officer

Hey my floor 1 fellow residents, hope you all had a great summer vacation! Also welcome those who have just join us! In the end of August, I am planning to have a weekend movie outing. The movie has not decided yet, so please vote for your favorite! Just email me the preferred movie title and date, and any other suggestions are welcomed!



Jin Xue

## Floor 4 Officer



Martin Copenhaver

Pi (Approximation) Day, or July 22, is the one day a year that  $\pi$  is essentially rational ( $22/7 = 3.14 \dots \approx \pi$ ). By popular demand, pies were back to floors 4 and 5 as we celebrated by gathering on Tuesday, July 22, at 7pm in Ashdown's fifth floor kitchen.



### August Outing:

Boyhood moving screening at Kendall Cinemas



## Contribute to the next newsletter and **earn TechCASH!**

Went to an amazing restaurant / show / lecture / world-cup match etc. recently? Write about it in an **article / poem / short-story / review!** (300-500 words, \$10 TechCASH).

Any other contributions are also welcomed! Email us with suggestions / thoughts!

**Write-on!**

## Ashdown Short Fiction Competition 2014 Winning Submissions!

**Congratulations to the winners of and all contributors to the Ashdown Short Fiction Competition 2014!**

Name	Title	Place	# Entries
Ritsu Chan	Carnation	1st	9
Gwendolyn Vines	Sagittarius	2nd	6

Name	Title	Place	# Entries
Jordan Romvary	Trajectory	1st	5
asdf	Aliens and computer viruses	2nd	3
Changhoon Oh	A story that never sold	3rd (tie)	2
Gwendolyn Vines	ITEMIZED INVENTORY OF JAMES MALONEY'S GREEN 1993 JEEP WRANGLER - OR - A CAUTIONARY TALE	3rd (tie)	2
Chronusfree	The Dark Side of the Moon: Confessions of a Scientist	5th	1

Name	Title	Place	# Entries
Jordan Romvary	Hands	1st	7
Petunia Weatherby	A masterpiece denied	2nd	4
Gwendolyn Vines	(t)his song	3rd	3

### Carnation (part I tbc in September issue)

By: Ritsu Chan (1<sup>st</sup> place)

Five-year-old Faye stood in the murmuring crowd, clutching her umbrella, and stared at the corpse that was causing the commotion. The dead woman was kneeling in the mud, her body arched toward the sky, propped up by a spear piercing through her torso and into the ground. Her eyes were open in the rain, as if she were gazing at the sky and crying, not in pain but in grief.

*What are you looking at?*

Tilting her umbrella, Faye peered at the sky, at the thick haze that was sickly orange and gray, but nothing caught her eye. She looked away, and her gaze trailed to a torn red carnation lying in the mud next to the still body. Her eyes widened upon recognition, and she lifted her hand.

Someone grabbed her wrist and she jerked instinctively, pausing when she saw that it was her sister.

“What do you think you're doing?” her sister hissed.



## Time for a Review

### Phantom of the Opera

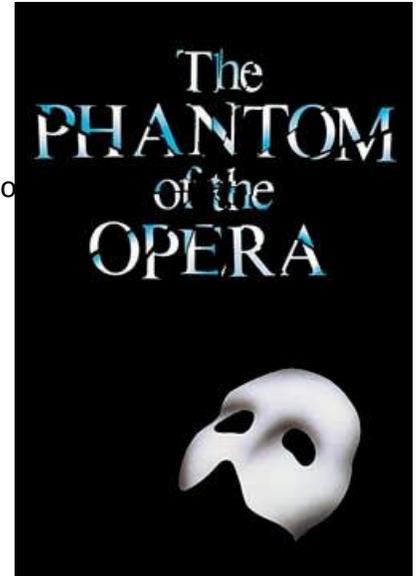
By Ina Kundu

“He’s there, the Phantom of the Opera; Beware, the Phantom of the Opera!” The lyrics never rang as true as they did on July 8<sup>th</sup>. On that cool summer evening, I, accompanied by thirteen fellow Ashdown residents, went to see the traveling Broadway production of *The Phantom of the Opera*. As Broadway’s longest running musical, no one was a stranger to Andrew Lloyd Webber’s masterpiece musical. In fact, on the way to and from the Boston Opera House, we all started sharing stories of how we “had always wanted to see the show!”

Cameron Mackintosh’s production did not disappoint its fans. Seated in the balcony, we were serenaded by the voices of Cooper Grodin (the Phantom), Julia Udine (playing Christine Daae), and Ben Jacoby (portraying the character of Raoul) among others. This was the second time in one week that I had seen the two and half hour long “opera-esque” musical. Rather than being a boring replica of the same musical I had seen just a week before, the show seemed to finish even faster the second time around! I could marvel at the simple engineering of the sets and focus on the intricate costumes of the performers.

Having seen the movie and growing up playing “The Phantom of the Opera” and “Music of the Night” on the piano, the musical played a significant role in my childhood. Thus, hearing the music come alive as Grodin and Udine sang the title track in the infamous cave scene gave me goose bumps! Of course, with any performance, the live show and studio productions have their share of differences. Contrary to the musical quality of the movie, this show, true to its name, had more of an “opera” feel. For some, this did not suit their tastes, but it was an artistic license I could appreciate.

Overall, it was an incredible experience watching the well-known musical come alive before my eyes! The traveling Broadway production was unparalleled and it was more enjoyable to share this experience with my fellow Ashdowners.



## Jokes at 3am ...

**Q:** What's Beethoven's favorite fruit?

**A:** Ba-na-na-naaa!



## Kids' Corner (a.k.a. Ask the Kids Stuff)



**Got questions you want to ask Apolo, Ben, Dante, Lila, and Max?  
E-mail the Editor!**

### What is the most amazing thing about you?

Max: I am smart and fast.

Dante: A lot of people like me.

Apolo: I'm not going to tell you it.

### If a genie would give you only one wish, which would you pick, and why?

Max: I would ask to be with my cousins more often.

Dante: I would pick a star. I would do the things stars can do, like circle around and flip around.

Apolo: I am wishin' for nothin'. I'm not telling you it. I'm still, still, still, still not telling you it.

## Interview an Ashdownian .. Ben's Corner!

This month, Ben interviews Chris Foy, an EECS applied physics graduate student finishing his first year at MIT.

Ben: What do you study?

Chris: in the most basic sense, I study science. This basically means we get ideas and we test them.

Ben: Science is just thinking about stuff. Someone thinks of something and they try it out.

Chris: The trying out phase is the most important.

Ben: What we did in our class, all those experiments worked out. Some of them were disgusting, like the pumpkin rotting. We had to put it in a jar and watch it rot. We were testing how long it took.

Chris: Not a bad experiment. Usually it's a bit more involved. You have to decide beforehand what makes for a successful measurement. Because humans are very good at thinking they have something when they don't. You have to decide ahead of time what a good result would be.

Ben: Sometimes they work out and sometimes they don't.

Chris: 99% of the time they don't. But some of the fun is in figuring out why they didn't work out.

Ben: Did you make any new friends living in Ashdown?

Chris: Yeah. Many of the members of the government. Even though we yell at each other I'd like to think we're friends. I go to the Weds night board game nights. I am also a bartender at the Thirsty Ear and see a lot of friends there. A lot of the first years in my lab live here so I hang out with them too. It's one of the reasons why I like Ashdown, it's such a community and you can make a lot of friends.

Ben: Do you like Ashdown?

Chris: I can tell you why I originally joined Ashdown. It was because it had a bar. I thought, "Oh I'm definitely living there." You might understand that choice when you get older. Now I like it because I have friends here, it's close to my lab so it's convenient, I like the MIT facilities and the rooms. Mostly inertia, I found something that fit and I don't want to change it.

Ben: Hmmmm...

Chris: How about I ask you a question. How do you like being a kid at Ashdown? Over the summer does it get kinda lonely because you are here?

Ben: I see my friends, a lot of friends from preschool live in the neighborhood. And I go to day camp so I see a lot of kids there. I like EVERYTHING about living in Ashdown.

Ben: Where are you from?

Chris: I am from Miami.

Ben: Where are your ancestors from?

Chris: My mom's family is from Guyana in S. America. Longer back from India. My dad's side is from America. Culturally I feel aligned with America.

## Cont'd

Ben: Favorite thing to do in your free time?

Chris: Sleep is not an acceptable answer? I don't know. I work a lot so I don't have much free time. During the weekdays I'll just watch a stream, like people playing videogames, like starcraft 2. I'll watch a TV show. On the weekends; I usually work at least one day on the weekends. Usually I'll grab dinner with friends. On Sunday I might sleep the whole day or go out and do something, like see sights around the city or go to a movie with friends. The city has so much cool stuff to see. You don't know how lucky you are growing up in a city like this?

Ben: What's your favorite thing to do in the bar?

Chris: I shoot pool a lot. I'm not very good but I like to play anyway?

---

## Shabbat

By Alice Kao

This summer, I am interning at Schwartz Besnosoff Architects in Haifa, Israel as part of the MIT MISTI-Israel program. I live in the Hadar neighborhood, which is the 'old downtown' of Haifa. One cultural practice that is particular to Israel is "Shabbat", or the Sabbath, which is a day of rest. In Israel the work week is Sunday to Thursday, so the weekend is Friday and Saturday. Shabbat arises from the Biblical command that God rested on the seventh day of creation. Shabbat begins Friday evening and ends Saturday evening. Except for the tourist areas, the whole city and public transportation shuts down during Shabbat.

During my first weekend in Haifa, I remember that when I arrived on Thursday it was fairly quiet so I thought Haifa was just a really sleepy town. However, on Friday morning at 8 am, I awoke to I heard a lot of vehicular street noise. My room window faces the street and I peeked out to see what was going on. The adjacent street was buzzing. All the shops were open, and the street was full of people walking around and eating in the open air cafes. Young and old, families, children and IDF soldiers in uniform were all out. I was amazed, considering how quiet it was the previous evening. I went out to explore Haifa for the day and when I came back in the afternoon around 3 pm, the same street was total opposite of the morning. All the shops were closed and the streets were deserted again except a few people were waiting at the bus stop. It was strange to see such a contrast with the scene a few hours prior.

Later I learned that because of Shabbat, businesses usually open 8am-3pm on Fridays so that is why the streets were so busy. Everyone tries to squeeze in their shopping, eating and traveling in the few precious hours. To my knowledge, Israel is the only country that has this unique practice.

---

## Contact the Editor!

Please direct any comments or queries about "3am" to Sara Dolcetti at  
ashdown-newsletter@mit.edu

---