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Three years and nine months ago, Pomona College Admissions staff brought forth on this continent a new community, conceived in diversity and dedicated to the proposition that learning is a worthwhile pursuit. Now we are met on Marston Quad, where we have come to consecrate our experiences here at Pomona, to honor and celebrate our dedication to the culture of education.

The ideas for this speech did not simply pour from my head. Referencing the Gettysburg Address, in fact, was an idea conceived over filet mignon at the Alumni Relations senior dinner. Yes, you heard me, family: filet mignon. We're lucky.

The ideas and thoughts behind this entire speech are derived from countless family, professors and friends, particularly friends in our class. When I say "our class" I am speaking directly to all of you, all of you who were at one time or another a member of the Class of 2013. To all of you who unintentionally or intentionally informed my speech, I thank you. I know that my experiences do not speak to all of yours. The joys and the tribulations that I have found on these campuses are not necessarily shared by you. But I hope that through my honest passion, you will find some message that speaks to your own experiences.

Something that I expect we are all thinking about today is time, particularly its passing. "Where did the time go?" you may be asking yourself. Time and I have a complicated relationship. You may know me as someone who is committed to being fashionably late, or as someone who sets enough alarms to wake up the entire dorm while I sleepily hit 'snooze.' But truly, one of my difficulties with time is that often, I try to grab on to a moment. I become aware of the moment's momentousness and I latch on, grasping at something that was never meant to be fixed. I feel the moment slipping away swiftly between my fingers like precious sand from Senior Week beaches, and I panic, struck with grief for the loss of this experience. What I have learned thus far in my 22 years of life is that the act of trying to stop the moment from passing is nothing short of Sisyphean: it only leads to disappointment and downfall. Rather than trying to grasp moments, we can instead pause to reflect upon them. Rather than grieving for the losses of moments, we can recognize them for what they were and how they enriched us before we keep moving forward. Embracing these inevitable temporal shifts and recognizing their powers can make all the difference.

I have a very distinctive memory from the very beginning of my freshman year here. I was on the bus ride on my way to June Lake for my Orientation Adventure (or OA). On this bus ride I sat next to one of our trip leaders, a senior, who said something to me that has stuck with me. "You're so lucky," he said. "I wish I could switch places with you." Stewing in my own anxiety, I did not believe him. There was no way that he, an established, calm, confident senior, would want to switch places with me, an insecure, nervous, uncertain freshman. I was a first-year, squirming with awkwardness as I attempted to mingle like a grown-up at all the Freshman Orientation events. Meeting someone at the Pitzer Luau and reciting that script that most of us remember well: "What OA are you on? Where are you living? Who are your sponsors? Where

are you from?" On this bus ride, I was naïve to the power of time and to the veracity of that senior sentiment. Now, almost four years later, I get it. I get why a senior would love to trade places with a first-year: to relive the emotional rollercoaster ride that is college. A change in time seems to force a change in perspective, and I often find myself wishing that I could step back for a moment to wonder and reflect.

Last fall, as my sentimentality was beginning to creep up on me, I took a creative writing course, and I wrote a syrupy sonnet about time, about the passing of time. I wrote the poem about a hypothetical 'pause' button, with which we could control time. I will share this poem with you now:

I think one day I'll make the world's first pause  
With just a press, your time, your day, would stop  
Your breathing calm, your breathing soft as gauze  
This button bright, at just a panned, swift drop

Can you imagine all the things you'd do?  
Dance free down streets and twirl 'cross grasses lime  
Bake warm, round cakes and stuff mailboxes blue  
With frosting forks, handwritten notes, and time

If mouths unpursed, untangled into grin  
I'd laze in salty sand and count the clouds  
If hearts were light and minds clear, outside in  
Sip lemonade beneath bright patterned shrouds

I'd like to think we'd all breathe in with grace  
Then push the button off, resume, embrace

In pausing together for just a moment, I hope that everyone in the audience can sense the level of community within these 373 students, Pomona faculty and staff. My four years at Pomona have absolutely flown by, and I have often found myself procrastinating pauses, relegating reflection to the wee liminal hours before I fall asleep, and these moments are

usually fleeting. It is during these pauses, though, that I realize how long ago yet how recent my OA or that luau feel. Graduation is an occasion that can easily fly by without you even realizing it. I hope that through my words, but also through my pauses, you all can take a moment to consider what this moment means to you, what these four years have meant to you. I hope that pausing can help you allow these moments to flow through and around your fingertips rather than trying to clutch each passing moment. I hope that pausing can give you space to integrate your experiences, a crucial component of moving forward. So, pause.

When I pause to consider what these four years have meant to me, I think about stopping in to a professor's office hours, only ending up staying for over an hour. I think about the conversations with friends that kept me chatting in Gibson hallways until 4 a.m. There is a level of community support within our class that I can only hope to cultivate wherever I go. I can only hope to create or find spaces where I feel safe revealing my vulnerabilities and seeking meaningful support and connections. In preparing for this speech, I have been continually struck by the level of meaningful and authentic support that have been extended from my peers, faculty and staff.

The Claremont Colleges is a space that will never exist for me as it always has. This is a community that exists not because of the beautiful weather, not because of the carefully cultivated flora that adorn these campuses. It is the devoted professors, the dedicated staff members, the students. The crux of my affinity for Pomona College is the people. It is all of you that have shaped my experiences here. And when we all leave this campus in a day or so, there's no knowing if or when we will ever return. I wouldn't return to Pomona just to revisit the dorms. I wouldn't book a flight into Ontario because I miss the Village or its closing time of 9 p.m. I would be returning to see all of you, and to immerse myself once again in the atmosphere that the Class of 2013 has skillfully cultivated. The atmosphere of collaboration and humble ambition. The atmosphere of optimistic realism and enthusiasm for pausing to challenge our old conceptions of the world. The atmosphere that we have developed over four glorious years in a bubble of sunshine, preparing ourselves to burst this bubble and to realize our potential throughout the world.

I propose that we make a promise to one another, to all return here to Pomona for one epic reunion. That we commit ourselves to taking time in our lives to push the 'pause' button and to reacquaint ourselves with one another and our experiences. The year for the reunion to me is arbitrary, since 2047 seems much too far away. How about we say, 2018?

I am beginning to realize that my depth of mourning for the end of this experience is only made possible through my depth love for what this experience has given me. My spirit, my outlook on people and the world, have transformed in ways that will surely endure. This experience has changed all of us in ways that I cannot articulate, but that I can feel. I feel our collective presence today on this field as something stronger, brighter, and wiser than what it was four years ago, back when we sat together a group of uncomfortable strangers in Little Bridges. I think that our presence today, our energy, communicates who we are better than any words could. Pause.

It may seem as though I am waxing on idealistically about how marvelous we are, but I hope that you do not mistake me for a perennial optimist. I am just as skeptical as the next Pomona scholar. But today is a day for celebration, for celebration of our class's journey together. So don't try to freeze the moment you walk across the stage, the closing of this ceremony. Let it

flow, and know that having walked through these curious mind-gates, your future is a bright one. Know that time will continue to flow, however capriciously, but we each have a choice along the way to pause, embracing the ebbs and flows of life.

My dearest Pomona College Class of 2013, I want to thank each of you for making this the best four years of my life thus far. I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as your class president. It has truly been an honor.

Push the 'pause' button off. Let's burst this bubble, feeling refreshed and glad to have been here. Now, with the time that each of us has been granted, let's go out into the world and share the passionate power of Pomona's Class of 2013. Thank you.