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WITH THE STEAM and chemical stench coming from that ditch in the Main Green lately, simple events become easily shrouded with an apocalyptic tension. It appeared early Monday—as local children ate snow off their jackets mere yards from the swirling fumes—that future itself could be robbed of authority. And History, arranged by professors' slides in a Sayles classroom turned hysterical cloudscape, seemed a callous, practical joke. To be sure, it was our ancestors who first laid that metal pipe under the Academy's grass—but the toxic spray has nothing to do with them. The source of this mess is plain: infrastructural suicide. A metal vein was sliced, the ivory blood sprayed above us: for seven and a half days and counting, not a clot. What in Earth happened?

Before we knew what it was, it was anything: a natural geyser, political hoax, some cryptic portent courtesy of Zeus. For a moment, even, it seemed "Evil" could've pierced our Academic jugular: if there's one thing terrorists hate, it is how people cut around to that side door of Salomon to avoid the crowds. But even as we've learned about the "leaking water pipe" theory, the scene hasn't gotten any simpler. One doesn't know where to direct his or her support—toward the workmen whose shirts read "We Build America," or the hissing, yellow machine, perhaps the chasm itself?

Weather only worsened the disorientation. Last weekend, a friend and I slipped under the construction

(W)HOLE OF DESTINY

barrier as the Blizzard of '06 began to pour its righteous milk. Snow, tricky in the way that it crushes shrubbery but helps disseminate seedlings, fell big on Faunce House and the yellow diggers. So forth we pressed, coughing up fumes, blinded by vapor on the brink of an absence. I can only remember arriving at the ditch to the extent that I remember my own, cold birth: vision and movement were subsumed in concert—those four white walls, the nothingness-ness of industrial divinity, nature and its inversion colliding in earnest!—and there was nowhere to go but back home, so sober.

Even as the snow thaws, the site has remained compelling in the way it straddles the man-woman-nature divide. Indeed, its charm is hermaphroditic, and alienating, but unusually recognizable, because we've done this before: we've created a problem that turned out beautiful. In the dark, especially, with the hole and the steam and seething pipes lit up like a ballpark, the structured artificiality of our placid Hill becomes an aesthetic event. As students we are raised in varying climates, but were specifically tapped to constitute this University just as the ducts and circuitry inside the walls inside the buildings. If we've learned anything this week, it's that our collegiate development rests on fragile ground—but a ground, apparently, with autonomy, and a resolve to dissent. If heated, piped water can break free from its predetermined path, we do not have to make the mistakes of our parents. We do not have to make mistakes.

AVD

AS IF YOU CARE

From the current antagonism building between the temporary Olmert government in Israel and the budding Hamas government in Palestine—the very situation that undermines that notion of terrorism versus democracy as chaos versus order—it becomes imperative that the world turn and consider that instead of an ideological battle between terrorism and democracy, there are very real states already priming for an actual battle, a sea of green-hooded riflemen flooding west throughout Jerusalem into a maze of strongholds and armaments sheathed in blue and white.

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Letters to the editor are welcome.

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