

Appendix E.

Revised Alma Mater

Lyrics to Fair Harvard

*Fair Harvard! we join in thy Jubilee throng,
And with blessings surrender thee o'er
By these Festival-rites, from the Age that is past,
To the Age that is waiting before.
O Relic and Type of our ancestors' worth,
That hast long kept their memory warm,
First flow'r of their wilderness! Star of their night!
Calm rising thro' change and thro' storm.*

*Farewell! be thy destinies onward and bright!
To thy children the lesson still give,
With freedom to think, and with patience to bear,
And for Right ever bravely to live.
Let not moss-covered Error moor thee at its side,
As the world on Truth's current glides by;
Be the herald of Light, and the bearer of Love,
Till the stars in the firmament die.*

New last line by Janet Pascal, A.B. '84.

About the Competition to Revise the Last Line of the *Alma Mater*

The Task Force launched the competition to affirm that Harvard's motto, *Veritas*, speaks to and on behalf of all members of the Harvard community, regardless of background, identity, religious affiliation, or viewpoint. The University's *Alma Mater* is a powerful element in its repertoire of rituals, anchoring its culture and values and framing each student's Harvard experience: It is a living symbol used to welcome each incoming College class, and to celebrate the conclusion of each class' journey at Commencement.

The line to be replaced was, "Till the stock of the Puritans die." The metaphor of the final line fails in its own aspiration to project a valuable Puritan commitment to education into the future. The line reduces human experience to biology with the word "stock," and ties the commitment to education to ethnic lineage and to the rise and fall of racial groupings.

This is not the first time the *Alma Mater* has been altered. In 1998, the lyrics were adapted, also through a community competition, to achieve gender inclusivity. The campus community also no longer employs the middle verses of the *Alma Mater* and has not done so for many years.

Entries were submitted online from April through September 2017. The Task Force received 168 entries from Harvard students, staff, faculty and academic personnel, and alumni. A subcommittee of the Task Force selected a long list of 20 entries that were then passed along to a panel of distinguished campus community judges:

- Steph Burt, professor of English
- Kurt Crowley, A.B. '06, associate conductor of *Hamilton*
- Franklin Leonard, A.B. '00, founder of The Black List
- Marcyliena Morgan, professor of African and African American Studies
- Carol Oja (chair), William Powell Mason Professor of Music

The judges selected three finalists to move forward to the University to select the winner:

- "Till the shadows of ignorance die."
- "Till the stars in the firmament die."
- "Till the end of the ages draws nigh."

The three entries work within the constraints of the rhymes, rhythm, and sense of the existing *Alma Mater* lyrics to convey the accessibility and value of the pursuit of truth to people from all backgrounds and to affirm the University's commitment to inclusive excellence.