

Hymn to Ham

By ROY BLOUNT JR., BA'63

Though Ham was one of Noah's sons
(Like Japheth), I can't see
That Ham meant any more to him
Than ham has meant to me.

On Christmas Eve
I said, "Yes ma'am,
I do believe
I'll have more ham."

I said, "Yes ma'am,
I do believe
I'll have more ham."

I said, "Yes ma'am,
I do believe
I'll have more ham."

And then after dinner my uncle said he
Was predominantly English but part Cherokee.
"As near as I can figure," I said, "I am
An eighth Scotch-Irish and seven-eighths ham."

Ham.
My soul.
I took a big hot roll,
I put in some jam,
And butter that melted down in with the jam,
Which was blackberry jam,
And a big old folded-over oozy slice of HAM ...
And my head swam.



Ham!
Hit me with a hammah,
Wham bam bam!
What good ammah
Without mah ham?

Ham's substantial, ham is fat,
Ham is firm and sound.
Ham's what God was getting at
When he made pigs so round.

Aunt Fay's as big as she can be —
She weighs one hundred, she must weigh three.
But Fay says, "Ham! Oh Lord, praise be,
Ham has never hampered me!"

Next to Mama and Daddy and Gram,
We all love the family ham.

So let's program
A hymn to ham,
To appetizing, filling ham.
(I knew a girl named Willingham.)
And after that we'll all go cram
Ourselves from teeth to diaphragm
Full of ham.

Another poem by Roy Blount appears on page 86.

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I took calculus in high school, so I only took one math class at Vanderbilt. I find math to be very useful in life. For example, I ate a banana with lunch. Before I ate it, though, I found the slope of the line tangent to its curve.

Astronomy taught me that the universe is a vast and mysterious place, but with geology I learned that even mysterious things can be boring. Philosophy taught me to add “-ism” to the ends of words if I want to sound intelligent. Also, the longer the word, the more important it is. History classes taught me that people have been behaving badly for thousands of years.

The Blair School of Music proved that if something is far away, I will never go there.

Peabody reemphasized that point and also showed me that taunting HOD majors never gets old. Engineering falls on the other end of the useful/interesting spectrum in that it is one of the most employable fields at Vanderbilt but also stab-me-in-the-eye boring. My good friend Erin is a BME student who likes to tell me exciting stories about her major. Unfortunately, these stories usually end with phrases like, “Then my project partner and I got really crazy and reconfigured the model! And we graphed the results!” Poor Erin. She may get a better job than I will, but she will never learn the art of lobster mangling.

And that’s about it. That’s everything I learned at Vanderbilt. College was fun, but it went far too quickly. My freshman year was

spent in the lobby of Branscomb. My sophomore and junior years revolved around the McGill picnic table, and my senior year has been a series of failed attempts at putting clothing on top of the Cornelius Vanderbilt statue. But that is over now. There’s nothing left for me to do except get a job and a mortgage and wait for the wrinkles to arrive. Well, that and learn how to guide cocktail-party conversations to the topic of lobsters.

Claire Suddath started writing for the Vanderbilt Hustler as a freshman and has had a weekly humor column for the past two years. This essay was adapted from her Hustler column.

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to be in control.

Today I find I am now the person I was meant to be, not consumed by the eating-disordered mentality. I have healthy relationships with my supportive parents and a group of friends, no longer isolating myself. I don’t compare my body with those around me. I don’t get anxious around food, constantly dwell on it, or find it necessary to make food journals. I don’t calculate calories, measure food or obsessively exercise. I don’t try on six outfits every morning, attempting to find one that “conceals my fat.” I know and believe that I am not fat.

I share my story not for my own healing but to show that complete recovery—physical and emotional—is possible. I’m not going to lie: treatment and recovery are not easy. It’s actually quite difficult, but I promise you that it’s worth it. To those who face the same struggle, I challenge you to believe for something better—you are worth it.

Shannon Thomas, a violin performance major in the Blair School of Music, graduated in May.

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Song to Grits

By ROY BLOUNT JR., BA’63

When my mind’s unsettled,
When I don’t feel spruce,
When my nerves get frazzled,
When my flesh gets loose—

What knits
Me back together’s grits.

Grits with gravy,
Grits with cheese.
Grits with bacon,
Grits with peas.
Grits with a minimum
Of two over-medium eggs
mixed in ’em: um!

Grits, grits, it’s
grits I sing—
Grits fits
In with anything.

Rich and poor, black and white,
Lutheran and Campbellite,
Jews and Southern Jesuits,
All acknowledge buttered grits.

Give me two hands, give me my wits,
Give me forty pounds of grits.

Grits at taps, grits at reveille.
I am into grits real heavily.

True grits,
more grits,
Fish, grits and collards.
Life is good where grits are swallowed.

Grits
Sits
Right.