Good afternoon and welcome. My name is John Hennessy and I would like to tell you a little bit about what you inherit agreeing to sit before me today, the multi-billion-dollar two syllables within whose proud utterance I too have recently found a home. The idea of home is a good place for us to begin our relationship and so I want now for you to think back to your birth here earlier today. Was your name sacred to you before a megaphone sold it to an echo that would jump over the bookstore and bounce restlessly between the walls of Meyer and Green and Mem Aud and…you have no idea what those places are, do you? and it just so happens that it is there that we have begun to make profoundly profitable profanity out of you too. Ah, found I am, you think to yourself, in this glittering silicon paradise, lucky I am that they wanted me, I was full enough though, you should think, for them to want to make me hollow.

So, to go home again, easily, you may have thought, jiggling your rectangle of a key (hang on to your keys, they are your common ground, each of you holds one in the palm of your hand and it looks and acts and feels exactly the same as the one in his and hers and my hand. You may not be able to look like him or her or us, to have her shorts, to have his chest hair, to shimmer golden locks like them and dribble their soccer ball too, but you will always have the same key)...anyways, twisting that key in your new door beneath your cute name plate, you may have thought to yourself, “easily could they have given me a single, have entitled me to the privacy that should be a right and not a privilege, this privilege that I may now only earn through what patterns this other random former high-school superstar, whose last name I thought I saw on a building walking over here, the patterns this person shall happen to assume now in this two-syllable place.” And I say worry not, deviance is rare. No one deviates here, no one wants to deviate. Didn’t the smile we programmed your RA for weeks in the remote and lavish wilderness of Tahoe to wear for you this morning tell you that? Didn’t the beanie your tour guide donned tell you when we lured you here on a spring afternoon with the sirens of magnolias and those seductively fun pieces of whole words your tongue will forget, knowing as it will the sweetness of rolling “ho,” “co”s, “chu”s and “mem”s off its tip, beckoning for places that will juice you for juice, oh you will never want to leave this island, those real words shall merely torture your taste buds after today. Darling, you are a lotus-eater…here, have a start-up.

It may be true of your intimate stranger (your roommate, in case you have lost my train of thought) that it will be at the mercy of him or her or it who will watch you sleep and wake, eat and pick your nose that your need for solitude shall have to kneel, at the mercy of how long he or she showers, the extent to which he or she will seek solitude too in the library…but, you should say to yourself, “it is a search that, lucky for me, may never end, just going on and on my friend (yes, because we are all friends in these two syllables) through the labyrinth he or she will only imagine, after all, on the ground floor of Green, now a vulnerable savannah.” She or he may, perhaps, search that lofty place called the Bender Center (by the way, we own that and now you own that, as far as you can call yourself a part of us, I suppose…oh, and pick the flowers…they’ll tell you not but we spend more on those little gardens than all of Palo Alto combined…and we won’t even go into East Palo, we never do…Oh, and speaking of landscapes, facades and such, I encourage you as well to climb a palm tree each year you are here because to get it there we sacrificed a year of educating someone just like you…remember your best friend back home who got that little thin envelope instead of the obnoxiously oversized one?…climb, climb, climb, and don’t forget to think of them).

Make all the friends you can this year, smile as hard and as wide and for as long as you possibly can, go to sporting events and drink everything you are offered at a house inhabited entirely by one gender who will proudly show you their 2 or 3 letter brand, and you won’t even have to ask nicely if your top doesn’t brazenly tread too high. Expose yourself, the self that will not end with the trim of our luau shirts and tank tops. If you wish to discuss a book, take your Cosmo and GQ to something called Rush, this word, “rush,” will no longer mean the excitement of reading of the green light at the end of Fitzgerald’s Sound, it will no longer mean witnessing the pristine elegance of a chemical precipitation from two other substances, forgetting time and falling to what we will call frazzle and you will call the only question that matters lost in a curiosity you will persue until some “rush” satiates all that thirst. No, it will no longer mean all of that unless for some reason you hold tight to what we expect you to leave in the basket before passing the metal detector, you may reclaim it after you pass through, but many forget about it all together, and rightly so, for we believe they never needed those excessive passions in the first place. Oh, some of you get by…with your hands in the air, beyond the reach of our alarms, you find your own caves, the places we forgot to renovate, the spaces we have not yet managed to censor.