



Ode to a Freshman

By Scott Poole

You! There! Gentle freshman!
Yes, you hiding behind the planter in the corner,
shading thine acne-riddled face with frond and thistle.
Do not fear your education, for you have friends! Look!

Bank of America walks beside you with a pencil held high!
When you think of Bank of America, think Bank of Awesome!
The awesome you need will be there when the awesome is needed.
For when you are at your lowest, a Bank of Awesome says
"We will keep you moving forward" What a nice thing to say to a genteel freshman.

Emerge! Emerge! I say from the blazing trailer of doubt and fear!
For great opportunities await!
For the Portland Trail Blazers are with thee, all 3,423 combined feet of them.
They will lift you into the sky as if you were strapped to a thousand seagulls
swooping after a tuna fish sandwich suddenly thrown into the air by fearful beach picnickers.
The Blazers say: Play! Play! in the knowledge you are not alone.

Here stricken between your survival and tutelage, your living heat is supported by
FLIR Systems, Inc.
reminding you to wave your Harry Potter wand of educational excitement for all to see,
(but maybe not in front of Linda McDougall that cute girl in the third row who told you
"Thermal imaging changes how we see the world.")

Sit in your desk with confidence
O sanguine student and prepare to be
illuminated by the well elected elucidations
of your illustrious educators!

As the first question is asked
do not fear your own arm or your hand.
Raise it upon high as if waiting for the
peregrine falcon of knowledge to land upon it
with a squirming chattering morsel of wisdom.
For you will find when you raise your hand
that others will raise their perrigrine palm perches too!

Look Avangrid raises his hand as well!
The kid who always
Puts Energy Into What Really Matters.

Comcast is raising her hand too
The alt-girl with the glasses who
has a neck tattoo of a neck.

And the Cross Country guy
Hood to Coast Race Series
Who never stops running even in class.

And the German/Italian exchange student
Kaiser Permanente
Pops his hand up! And says
Here's to healthy minds and bright futures!

Look! What is emerging? You are in an emerging forest of hands,
a verdant canopy of fingers spreading shade relief
against the harsh indifference of fluorescent indoor lighting!

More hands blast into the air like science fair rockets!
JP Morgan Chase & Co., the kid with the briefcase
who never stops talking about the size of his spreadsheets.

And good old MG,
Metropolitan Group, the Jedi
who wears a brown fleece blanket to class.

And News Seasons Market
the kid with a pocket square
who smells like kombucha.

And even the shy kid has her hand up
Northwest Evaluation Association, Norty
the one everyone cheats off of.

And Packy, no not the elephant
(rest in peace old friend,)
the Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters
who built her own fold out desk.

And the kid already invests in the stock market
Portland Business Journal

And the kid who drives an electric car
Portland General Electric
With the t-shirt that says "I power possibilities"

The wise acre girl who always wears new stylish boots every month,
Portland Monthly,
Who writes love poems in random library books.

And don't forget the couple since junior high -- Provy and Reggie,
the one who wears a stethoscope
Providence Health & Services

and his girlfriend
Regence Bluecross Blueshield of Oregon
Fearless is raising your hand! she announces.
Wow! The kids are excited!

Even giant backpack guy who never stops studying
Stoel Rives.
He's even standing on a desk, yalping,
Education opens minds and drives innovation.

Don't forget the smart girl in the back of the room
The Boeing Company
Who skypes in via drone airplane

And even the good ol' cowboy in back who doesn't say much,
Wells Fargo,
proud of his boots with the periodic table of elements branded on them.

Look at this forest of hands!
Is that a spotted owl I hear betwixt
leaf and branch and fern?
In the Northwest, the forest is greater than the sum of its trees!

O education may we always set up a picnic on you
in this sylvan glen of towering radius and ulna
and may we forever nibble upon the cold chicken
and macaroni salad fruits
of your loyal and steady friendship.