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Hello everyone. And welcome to our Dinner In and Out of the Street. You've had enough from me over the year — certainly enough emails — to last two master's degrees, perhaps even that, and a PhD. I'll try to limit my remarks as much as I can.

A friend of mine — a mentor at the University of Minnesota — told me once that teaching was like Sisyphus pushing a rock up a hill. And then starting, again, at the bottom, a year later. And doing that forever.

Sometimes, like this year, the rock seems huge, like the Evergiven, and the path to a thesis defense like the Suez Canal.

In a sandstorm.

At night.

With a group of seagulls fighting for control of the damn boat... or rock.

Good students and good colleagues, however, mean you have leverage, block-and-tackle. And Perhaps even a smaller, lighter rock as a result. And then it all becomes unstuck, and water flows more quickly, the horizon is clearer, and the path a little wider.

This year and last, it seemed like Zeus decreed that Apollo and Artemis draw the plague arrows from their quivers instead, and everything has been Zoom, Figma and more Zoom, COVID and more COVID. To the students, your supervisors, our staff, your families and friends, my cats, to commend us on making it through a year-plus of the coronavirus, of losses and no small heartaches, a year of being apart, but somehow, also to being together — thank you.

Especially though to the students, for your patience, your stubbornness, your persistence, and for the dogged pursuit of architectural ideas, and like the God Anansi, for your tricky stories and knowledge, your drawings, reveries, cautionary tales, optimisms, and liberations.

Professor Catherine Bonier couldn't join this evening but asked me to extend her congratulations to you all.

We are a school because of you. Thank you for trusting us with your education, and my warmest congratulations on completing your thesis defenses over the past few days.