OPENING ADDRESS:

Jon:

Before we begin, can we please have everyone silence their phones and put them away. Thank you.

(Processional begins)

Jon:

Good afternoon. For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Jonathan. I’ll be your officiant today.

A quick note before we get too far, Matt wrote most of this script. So, when the jokes fail, blame him.

I’ve known Shu since our freshman year in college and Matt since shortly after he started dating Shu. They have asked me to officiate today.

Shu and Matt's story is one of two very different people who complement each other. It is a story of openness and honesty, with liberal dashes of liquor.

Shu and Matt's story started in Boston. They connected on OKCupid and first met on November 10, 2011. Shu later remarked that they should've met a day later on 11/11/11. "That would have been special," she said. "It would only be special if we ever got married," Matt replied. At the time he thought it seemed unlikely.

Matt was obviously wrong.

Shu chose a cooking demonstration at a book store for their first date because she didn't want a "boring drinks date". But after the demonstration, they went to a bar. And then to another.

For their second date, they went to a bowling alley. Matt got to see Shu's healthy competitive nature and impressive lack of subtlety.

Matt was intrigued. So was Shu. But they were awkward. At the end of the date, Matt made a clumsy attempt at a kiss. Shu misread it as a hug. A peck on the cheek ensued.

Their real first kiss didn't happen until the very end of their third date -- and almost didn't happen at all. Matt interpreted the missed kiss from the second date as a signal for him to let Shu set the pace. Shu wanted was waiting for Matt to take the lead.

He had no intention of doing so. And that might have been the end of the story. But Shu spoke up. And they shared a moment in the doorway of a Tibetan restaurant.

Matt's first declaration of love came soon after, fueled in part by a bartender who misheard "two waters" as "two tequilas." They agreed it was much too early for the "L" word. They had been dating just a few weeks. So, they backed off. But the feeling remained in Shu's heart. When she thought Matt was asleep, Shu traced the words "I love you" on Matt's back with her finger.

They were soon faced with a challenge. Shu had been accepted to business school and moved to Michigan. But what could have been an ending instead became a trial.

Matt visited frequently. He drove 14 hours each way to see her, and even crossed international borders. Don't worry though, it was only Canada.

They soon grew tired of making trips between Boston and Ann Arbor and decided to move in together. Matt surprised Shu by arriving a week early. He asked Laura to keep Shu busy while he decorated the apartment with candles and a ribbon. He planned for the ribbon to start at the door pass through the living room and end in the bedroom, where he would be waiting.

But what he thought was 36 feet of ribbon was actually only 36 inches. It still worked out.

Shu graduated in 2015 and the couple moved to Chinatown in Manhattan. Shu started work as a consultant. Matt started looking for a job. It was a trying time for the two of them -- both individually and as a couple. Matt struggled as he tried to make his way in a new city and a new career. Shu struggled with the insecurities that come with one's first year as a consultant.

But their love and sensibilities were stronger than this dark period. They sought counseling and they found comfort and support in each other.

To their friends, their home became the go-to place for board games and soup dumplings. After two years together, they decided to go back to Boston, and under the big willow tree next to the pond in the Boston Common Gardens, they would propose to each other.

But Matt had a secret plan.

The day before the mutual proposal, Matt sent Shu on a scavenger hunt. He left her with a puzzle box that Shu quickly solved. And by "solved" I mean broke open. Inside, she found a clue. She followed that and other clues to five locations, including the bookstore from their first date and the doorway where they first kissed. It ended at their favorite Cambridge restaurant, where Matt proposed.

And so here we are. After many board games, dinners, and international trips, the seed of their relationship has rooted more strongly than either ever expected. And it has grown. And branched. An stretched all the way to today. And it will continue to grow and branch tomorrow. And next year. And the year after that.

Shu and Matt have faced and overcome obstacles side-by-side, not the least of which was assembling three apartments’ worth of Ikea furniture. They have built a home filled with laughter. They encourage and support each other to take on new challenges. They complement each other with their strengths and aspirations. And so, we are here to support them today as they begin the rest of their lives as husband and wife.

We pause now for a few words from bridesmaid Lydia. Like me, Lydia also met Shu during our freshman year of college. She'll be quoting Neil Gaiman, who has attempted to describe the unpredictable journey that is marriage.

[BRIDE AND GROOM HOLD HANDS]

CEREMONY READING:

Lydia:

This is everything I have to tell you about love: nothing.

This is everything I've learned about marriage: nothing.

Only that the world out there is complicated,

and there are beasts in the night, and delight and pain,

and the only thing that makes it okay, sometimes,

is to reach out a hand in the darkness and find another hand to squeeze,

and not to be alone.

It's not the kisses, or never just the kisses: it's what they mean.

Somebody's got your back.

Somebody knows your worst self and somehow doesn't want to rescue you

or send for the army to rescue them.

It's not two broken halves becoming one.

It's the light from a distant lighthouse bringing you both safely home

because home is wherever you are both together.

So this is everything I have to tell you about love and marriage: nothing,

like a book without pages or a forest without trees.

Because there are things you cannot know before you experience them.

Because no study can prepare you for the joys or the trials.

Because nobody else's love, nobody else's marriage, is like yours,

and it's a road you can only learn by walking it,

a dance you cannot be taught,

a song that did not exist before you began, together, to sing.

And because in the darkness you will reach out a hand,

not knowing for certain if someone else is even there.

And your hands will meet,

and then neither of you will ever need to be alone again.

And that's all I know about love.

VOWS:

Jon:

Thank you, Lydia.

We’ll proceed now to the vows. Shu and Matt have decided to write their own.

We’ll begin with Matt.

Shu, when we met, I had one stamp in my passport and no plans for more. But you opened my world. You dragged me to China where we walked the Great Wall. You dragged me to India to see the Taj Mahal. You even dragged me to Turkey, where you briefly worried that someone had murdered me and buried me in the desert.

I was fine, of course.

Along the way, I’ve also watched you grow as a person. You’ve learned to take yourself less seriously and accept that you will be bad at new things before you can be good at them. You’ve learned to cook. You’ve learned how to climb. And you even learned flower arranging, if only to make today’s decorations.

More than six years ago, I told you that I loved you. That love has changed to encompass not just the Shu that you are, but the Shu you were and the Shu you will be.

So:

* I promise to support and encourage you in new challenges.
* I promise to only make fun of your musical taste when you listen to Justin Bieber.
* I promise to try each day to be a better partner.
* I promise to talk in silly voices as long as you keep laughing at them.
* I promise to go with you on more adventures.

The future will not always be kind. It will bring illness, injury and loss. Your hair will go gray and mine will go away.

In spite of that, we’ll build a life together -- one that inspires both of us to be our better selves. And we’ll continue building a home together -- one that welcomes and nourishes laughter, friends and family.

I know we’ve rushed into this marriage, but after seven years, I’ve got a good feeling about it.

Jon:

Your turn, Shu.

Matt, despite being a writer, you’ve never been one to demonstrate love through words…(I had to get my roast out early). Instead, you’ve shown your love through countless actions, like driving those 14 hours each way to visit me when I was in grad school, learning Mandarin to try to connect with my family, and cleaning the toilet because you know it is the chore I hate the most.

I love that you are fearless when I am cautious, that you jump into new ventures with your whole heart. I love that you are still idealistic in a world that can be at times cold and indifferent. I love that I can be my awkward weird self with you, and that you appreciate my lack of decorum. I love your sense of humor and that one of your favorite things in the world is to make me laugh, that we can enjoy the same M&M commercial they play at the movies over and over again.

I struggled with writing these vows, because I know we will encounter unforeseen challenges, as much as I try to google every future possibility. I also know that in our seven years together, there’s been times when I’ve disappointed or hurt you. Yet even in our worst moments, my life is infinitely better with you in it. So here’s my attempt.

I promise to continue to laugh with you, especially at your inappropriate but wonderfully timed jokes in the middle of an argument. I promise to support you in your endeavors and trust your decisions, even those I don’t agree with. I promise to respect our differences and to be more understanding towards them. I promise to continue to work on myself and strive to be a better partner, to grow with our relationship. And finally, I promise to love you, through countless actions, everyday, and for all days.

GIVING OF THE RINGS:

Jon:

Matt and Shu’s rings are an external and visible sign of the internal bond of love which unites their two hearts. May they serve as a seal of the vows Shu and Matt make to one another.

(Ringbearer gives Matt’s ring to Shu)

Do you, Matt, take Shu to be your spouse and companion? Will you support her, in times of sickness and in health, in times of joy and sorrow? Do you promise to comfort her during difficult times, to laugh with her during good times, to be truthful with her always, and to love and cherish her for as long as you both shall live?

Matt:

I do.

(Shu puts ring on Matt)

(Ringbearer gives Shu’s ring to Matt)

Jon:

Shu, do you take Matt to be your spouse and companion? Will you support him, in times of sickness and in health, in times of joy and sorrow? Do you promise to comfort him during difficult times, to laugh with him during good times, to be truthful with him always, and to love and cherish him for as long as you both shall live?

Shu:

I do.

(Matt puts ring on Shu)

PRONOUNCEMENT:

Shu and Matt, by the power vested in me by absolutely nobody, I now pronounce you husband and wife - kissing is required!

(Jon ducks to the side)

(Clapping)

(The bridal party walks back up the aisle)

(Party starts)