Spoiled in Academia

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The unbearable lightness of change. Life after the doctoral dissertation will be different. A colleague said there are adjustments. Writer’s block. Professorship is not automatic. Soon, a Ph.D. from the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. My dissertation, Riffs of Change: Musicians Becoming Music Educators, has eight short stories and an autobiography. Nontraditional research about the identity conflicts of musicians who complete an education degree. Rehearsed the turmoil of change and context of pain. Inspired to write scholarly and creatively. Maybe that was the trouble. Spoiled in academia. Research, theories, philosophers, and psychologists. Intellectual rush. Read anything I wanted. The library an exotic dim sum. Strolling appetizers brought magic and myth. Shrimp dumplings, snake soup, egg tarts, with Piaget. An aroma of plots. Dissertation starts, “Today I will tell a story. It has a beginning, middle, but no end.” Is this the end?


Lots of jobs pass by me. But I hunt for professorship. A tenure-track position. Owe my family and friends a university gig. Validate my education. I must not offend them by settling for less. But where to begin? In town or out, academic or non?

For 9 years, the luxurious life of a grad student. Taught undergrad courses Tuesday and Thursday mornings. By noon, I passed my supervisor’s office. Short quips and queries, he never failed to bait me. A propelling game of polemics. I checked my mail, visited secretaries, and shared stories about students and children. Then I escaped to write. Many half-started journals.
Scribbled notes of fascinating folks. I conjured stories to publish. How to give this up?

To be a professor or writer. Which life do I want? Or can I do both? No choice but to write during the day. Inspiration from isolation. It is tricky business to write. Solitary confinement. The world is a table, chair, and books. My hideaway. Desperation triggers writing rituals. Clean and wash clothes. I have sparkling bathrooms. And very clean clothes. No choice but to write during the day.

The doctoral committee meeting went well. Two hundred and eighty-one pages of flesh and blood. They supported it. My supervisor read a draft. Some typos, he said. Broader issues, he said. Give me revisions. Modus operandi of a doctoral committee. Seven years in a weighty paper. I get out of bed. Tiptoe to the kitchen. Pour a glass of water. I walk to the magnum opus. Stare. Should I drown it?

I must acknowledge I have crossed the finish line. The end of graduate school. Celebration with interrogation. But the end is about something deeper. A professional student for 9 years. What next?

I grab at the future. Ivory tower surrounded by abstracts. My friend Geraldine says if you want professorship, you’ll get it. Convocate in 2004, took 2 more years. Damn car accident. Permanent neck and back injuries. Gone. Forget about my Tercel. For Godsake, he drove into me. Glass everywhere. I breathed in and out, the way I learned from band class. Could not see straight after the hospital X-ray. Massage treatments have helped. A bond has been sealed with my massage therapist. Words gush when I visit her. I tell her stories and she listens. How to enter the job market?

University folks do not know how to find employment. Academics know tenure theories but do they know practice? Permanent head damage. That is what I have. I must continue to research musicians becoming music educators. Maybe it will help me understand doctoral students becoming professors.

Revived by a gasping snore. There is a huge rest. A pause. Slowly, I curl up. Intonation is better. Needs more dynamics. I hear short staccatos. More syncopation. But watch articulation. There is a slow legato with softness. Tighten my eyes. My nightly ritual. No excuse but to think. Three a.m. I awake from his snoring.

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My Hero Academia: Heroes Rising is supposedly ahead of the anime's current timeline, and here are 10 major spoilers the movie gave away as a result. My Hero Academia: Heroes Rising released recently, and it's been going gangbusters at least for an anime movie. The film takes place a fair bit after where we currently are in the anime, which is a pretty interesting choice, as it means that this film is rife with spoilers. What do you do when an anime is spoiled for you??? Do you still watch it because it's a good anime or just drop it because of no motivation to see what happens? I really want to watch Assassination Classroom, but the ending was spoiled for me. However, if something like Hunter x Hunter or My Hero Academia got spoiled I wouldn't really care.

My Hero Academia: Heroes Rising, the second stand-alone film in the franchise, contains a major spoiler from Volume 23 of the manga, which is Viz Media's most recent English release of My Hero Academia.