

Academic Papers & The People Who Write Them

by XXXX

It distresses me that I do not write enough. I know I've told you before that I don't read, and it may be super-ridiculous to tell you now that I don't write much either, but that is the sad catastrophe I with affection refer to as my life. I am neither a writer nor a reader. I don't deserve many things that are given to me. Like the other day my father gave me a paper bag filled with the pastries I loved. I refused it. I said: "Daddy, I've been a very bad boy. I don't deserve sweets." He placed it on the dinner table. I ate it anyway at midnight, and with cream all over my mouth I began to regret it. I have sinned and do not deserve any more if he brings any next week.

I write a lot of filth. That's all. I don't write anything of import. This is what I'm saying. I'm turning 21 and I am still confused about a lot of things, philosophical things, things that people my age have already answered, even if only incorrectly. My father, when I was about nine, told me that he liked to see some rage within me, a manly rage that should manifest whenever something is broken. My drawer was broken. "Kick and scream!" he said. I kicked the drawer and screamed. It wasn't enough. He shook his head, and knew I was hopeless. I am hopeless.

Writing, in any case, is a lot of kicking and screaming. You're not really writing until you're kicking and screaming. My friend with all those books emailed me a few days back and told me that he has been having trouble writing his academic papers because of what I said one time at that coffee shop. We hang out at coffee shops because we are pretentious, and fractious, and restless, and do not know what to do with our money.

We were at the bay, across the busy city, sitting by the swaying rundown yachts. The sky was frivolous and exaggerated against the

filthy sea. In the distance, two lights blinked, one red and one green. A plane was flying straight toward our direction, so it looked like a star that slowly descended into the water, like a faraway sun. We thought it was Venus, or Mercury. I briefly entertained the idea of following it toward the new messiah.

He said: "I want to run my thesis through you."

I said: "Ok," and did so with a meticulousness usually reserved for people who were not so laughable, who were not so devoid of respectable talent. There were a lot of things to note. I wore out his pencil. I lost my voice. By the end it was as if I had been smoking for years, and my trachea had had enough of me and retired.

"My inner child," he said. "You just killed it."

"You're an adult," I said, hoarse. "Your inner child disappeared a long time ago."

"It rose like a phoenix," he said. "Just to die."

"That's very depressing," I said.

"It is," he said.

We watched the enormous birds that sat on the yachts, and they flew by us so swiftly that it was frightening. "They're huge," he said. "Imagine them chasing you. That would be terrifying..."

Then he went all crazy on the phone a week later. He felt very bad about having to write about poetry, rather than just write poetry. There was something immoral about it, he said. Something perverse. I'm writing about writing now, though. I do it all the time. Maybe this is just because I am in general just perverse, and the worst kind: the kind that doesn't even know how perverse he is. He knew it. He was probably disgusted with himself. He felt he has transgressed something important, and he was kicking and screaming. I don't know how to kick and scream.

At the end of it he said he was 100% convinced that he must do it and was going to write it after all. He was going to write about poetry. That's just something we all do, when we grow up. He's writing, at least. I haven't written anything important in so long. I don't think I'd recognise it anymore if I did it. I think it's because my inner child is dead. To write something important, you must kill your

inner child, even if that means raising him from the dead, pulling him up from his grave, striking him with lightning until he is an animated corpse. My inner child's dead body has decomposed. I did not raise him from the dead enough times, did not murder him enough times. Now there is nothing to be done, and he cannot be killed because he is dead, and the worst kind, which is dead and stubbornly so.

