

## The affective tones of academic life

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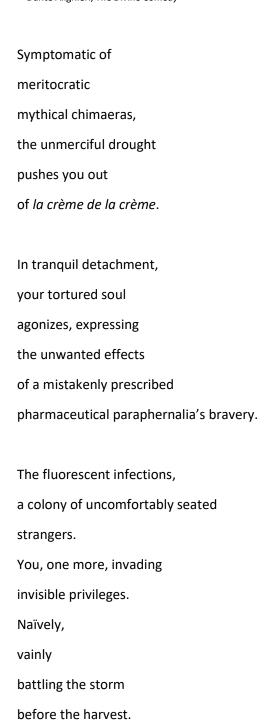
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# The Affective Tones of Academic Life

#### Pesante

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
—Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy



As pain writes your obituary with pieces of your skin and punctuates it with your coagulated blood, you, the impostor, meet the *Inferno* Game.

The game board assembles
as a snow-capped triangle.
Like many other colourful climbers
desiring to partake,
you take your chair
and look out
for any future dice swing prayers.
Pointless to persist...
Don't you dare!
You'll soon burn out of favour.
The game's overwhelming fire

uses you to praise

its legitimate heirs.

### Trionfante

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Congratulations!

A thousand citations,

a milestone!

The unhappiness machine,
through its incomparable puissance,
suits you well,
wishes you well,
creates miracles for you.
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In a delicate extract of guilt,
the machine's expertise restores vitality,
combining your choice of shameful,
gentle exfoliation
with a cooling gel of not good enough
for an instant light
of burnout suffocation.

Resist, resilient, above and beyond.

Work hard. Unlock your talent.

Invest in yourself.

Yes, you can achieve

a better you,

sleepless and restless,

la crème de la crème,

one step away

from the restorative

summit of success.

#### **Eroico**

But the scar is a sign of the injury: a good scar allows healing, it even covers over, but the covering always exposes the injury, reminding us of how it shapes the body.

—Sara Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion

An unconcerned driver, caresses his narcissistic thoughts, challenging the gloomy winter landscape. His priority is disrupted, glorious interruptus, 'what is wrong with you?' as he creates another roadkill. Oops, one more female deer. A doe dressed in wonder, fille of nature, her gaze distilling her innocence, exhibiting, without hesitation, her female power. She risks the dangerous highway And her courage meets a lethal, last humiliation. Oh, dear sister, dear deer. You don't stand out. That's weird. Barely noticeable, Smashed and overlooked,

Her flesh in the snow, her weakly kicking legs, chilling the air

inaudible

is the deer's agonizing voice.

squeezing out those feminist

raindrops of killjoy.

#### Andante

Therefore, dear Sir, love your solitude and try to sing out with the pain it causes you.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

Beauty spots hold an open question, a mysterious enigma, a visceral connection. Beauty spots keep secrets. They unleash your intuitive being, the divergent understanding from the margins, the treasures of uncrowded metaphors. Wondering beauty alive, in deep appreciation of collective discomfort and normalized ignorance makes you surrender to the astounding. Beauty spots, which, out of sight in pure nothingness, are what joy is all about.