

ESTHER RUDOLF'S DISSERTATION FREAK-OUT

ESTHER FINALLY LOSES HER GRIP

It's 3am, the night before my deadline, and I'm having a few dissertation problems. But everything will be fine. Even if my flatmate Alistair is hopping around in front of my door, having a dissertation crisis on my behalf, letting out little yelps of anguish and developing an unpleasant stress rash, everything will be fine. Everything will be fine. Everything will be fine. Everything will be FINE. Breathe. This is not the single piece of textual work your life has been leading up to.

“My sister texts me. She says if I don't get at least a 2:1, no one will want to have sex with me.”

All the schooling and your parents feeding you and protecting you and chasing Mr Wokolski off the street for giving Nestlé chocolate to neighbourhood children and stuff, all for this one little dissertation? Right? Oh God, what if I don't hand in my dissertation on time and I fail my degree and my college will look at me the way the whole school looked at Chrissie Smith when she got pregnant and my gran will die of heartbreak because I haven't fully seized the educational opportunities for women that they simply didn't have before the war because university is a privilege, not a right, and my parents have to perform a uniquely middle-class honour-killing and put me in a special green recycling box for children who have become right-wing or don't want to do a Masters?

My sister texts me. She says if I don't get at least a 2:1, no one will want to have sex with me. Shit. She's right. I mustn't spazz out. Don't have a spazz. I'm not having a spazz. Shit, I'm having a spazz! Compose yourself, think clearly. Ok - the intermediary variables set forth a framework from which we can analyse and assess the anticipated

offset of conditional factors. I don't even know what that means!

I turn my head and find Diana Ross sitting next to me. What the hell is Diana Ross doing here? She smiles at me and releases a balloon into the sky, and it explodes into millions of black crows that turn into little pieces of post-feminist nonsense and Ariel liquitabs. God appears, in a yellow tracksuit, and eats them all. Fuck! It's already light! I've got 7000 words to write and the thesis of my dissertation is flat, meaningless chud. What the fuck are intermediary variables? Who gives a damn? Seventeen years of formal education for this? For fucking intermediary variables? I don't care. I don't sodding care. All I want to do is run outside and wander around on the A690 in my dressing gown, lobbing bits of ham at motorists and exposing myself. Christ, this is how mad people happen. My whole life I've laboured inside the system, for this, and all it will ever give me is a management position at Woking Borough Council and a second-hand Mazda.

Diana Ross has reappeared in my bedroom and started singing 'Baby Love' and I'm not even asleep! Ahahaha! I'll give you intermediary variables! I'll give you 'dissertation'! I delete everything and start typing. A moment of sanity hits me - is this plagiarism? But I press on. I don't think their little text-checking machine will pick up "Ooh baby love, my baby love / I need you, oh how I need you / But all you do is treat me bad / Break my heart and leave me sad / Tell me, what did I do wrong / To make you stay away so long", followed by the word "fuck", footnoted (1).

I upload to DUO and press 'submit'. Hmm, will this need binding? I'm ready to go and do the dance of St. Vitus on the motorway now, but first, first, I'm going to lurch into bed and fall into a deep, heavy, black sleep, before waking up to realise exactly what I've done. Goodnight.

¹fuck

POETRY CORNER

RECRUITMENT POEM

Results published by the 2008
Times Online Student Survey:*

Monday's child went to KPMG,
Tuesday's child saved the world, at
BP.¹

Wednesday's child went on an
adventure,

To be vaguely defined but well-paid
at Accenture.

Thursday's child Taught First, he
ran off on Friday to HSBC. ²

Saturday's child pursued self-
independence; ³

And on Sunday they all went on
anti-depressants.

Additional information:

* The identities of individual participants remain anonymous.

¹ "Alternative Energy Department".

² Having established a flourishing extra-curricular Latin club for former ten-year-old heroin addicts.

³ Question 21, option c: 'further travel'.

Lucy Davies

THE MODERN REVOLUTIONARY

Orwell is my uncle,

Said is my aunt,

Derrida cooked my dinner,

Foucault says I can't,

be a modern revolutionary,

because I don't know shit,

about anything by anyone,

Gladstone or William Pitt,

I want to shout out slogans,

to Che and Chairman Mao,

but 'cos I'm just a student,

I don't know fuckin' how.

Magnus Taylor