RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poetry
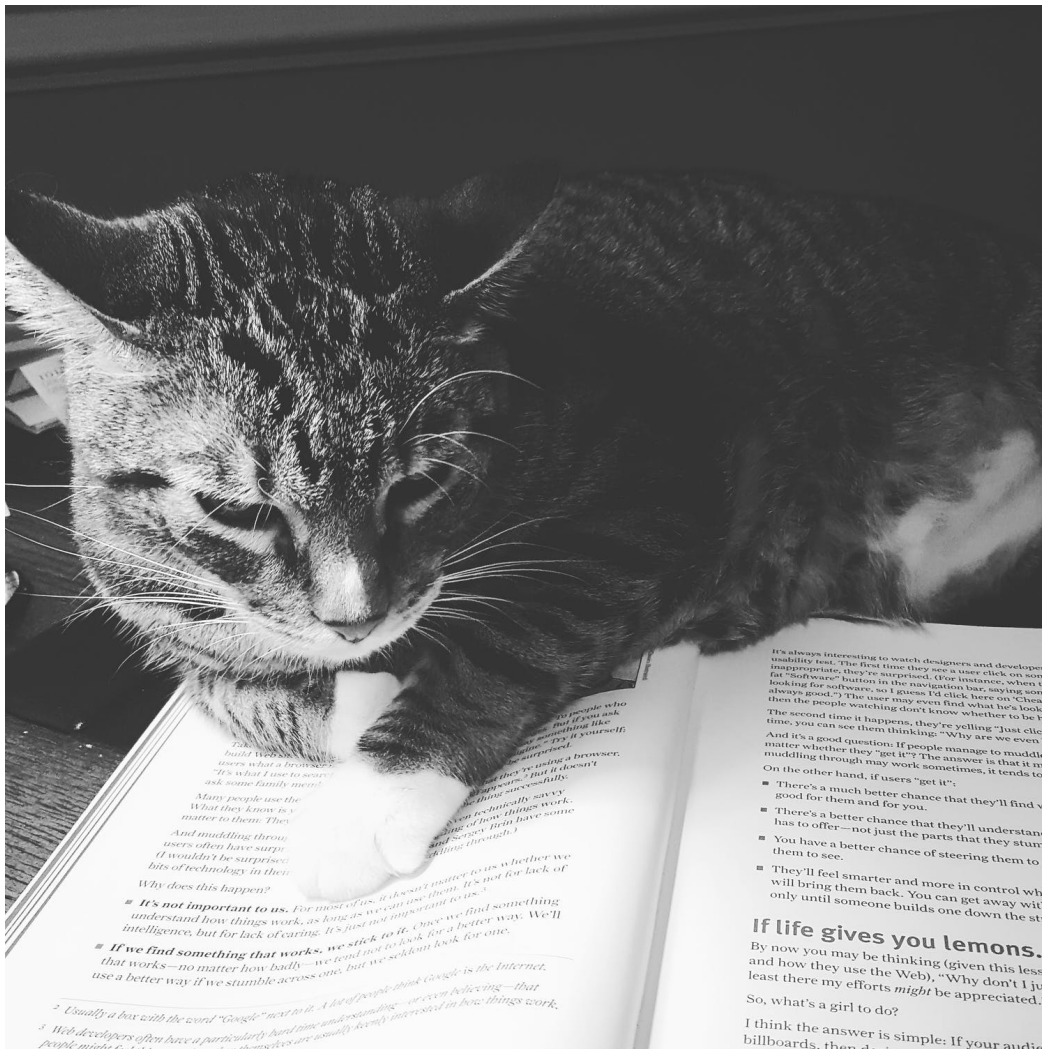not yet

by Veronica Hotton

IMAGE BY HEATHER MCKEEN

not yet

I have not graded your paper yet
     not yet

piles grow
they get moved around the room
moved to different rooms
carried in backpacks or bags
dragged in and out of cars
     moved to folder
             to binder
                to desk
                   to table
                      to lap, then back to folder

I have not graded your paper yet
because it is time to create the next assignment, yes, already time
I have not graded your paper yet
because that assignment was forgotten, yes, forgotten

the piles need to be alphabetized first ✔
the late papers need to be rounded up ✔
the piles need to be complete   ✔
the papers need to be re/stapled   ✔✔

were we like this before or after the grading rut?
     I am sad
they overcharge you
     they underpay us
     or a messy combination
more facts to internalize

because I am tired
of grading
     you
I have not graded those papers yet

I wish I had shiny-star-stickers ★
   for you
would the piles dwindle,
if I could gift you something
for your quality and quantity?
could that help me dive into those piles?

I have not graded your paper yet
because I would rather have you read it, today

to me, to us, so we all hear it, together
we can listen to what works, what
needs fixin', and what can be
      re/moved
      re/added
we can celebrate
      you

I have not graded your paper yet
because my cats are sitting on the piles
      the folder
        the binder
          the table, the desk, my lap
feline cheek drool has marked your paper
their stapling claws and fangs have punctured your paper
at least they were not recently in the little box
      at least the lease only allows cats

I have not graded those papers yet
because they are at the bottom of
another pile I have not graded
      no
not yet