

May 21, 2025

It is almost cliché how the weather turned after graduation. Despite the threats of a thunderstorm my weather app had been making all week, the morning of graduation was sunny with a soft breeze and clear blue skies. But after we got the graduates over the finish line, forcing them to shake hands with the same man who told them in possibly the most callous way imaginable that the school was closing, and we sent them on their way with their families, the skies darkened and the temperature dropped.

It's been in the 40s and cloudy all week, covering the campus in a blanket of dull, eerie gray. For the past month or so, I have been plagued by the question "how are you feeling" to which the only answer I can muster is "I don't feel anything." Perhaps this is a continuation of the denial that I have been carrying all year, perhaps I am incapable of processing anything until I have truly departed campus for the last time. Perhaps I feel a weird sense of closure, like I knew it was coming this time and I was able to say goodbye. Like the feeling of incomplete achyness that followed me around for the three years after the pandemic had been cleared in the first few months I spent here and now it's not coming back. In a weird way I already grieved Simon's Rock for what it meant to me, maybe I am ready for this. But I know that's not right and the closest to a feeling I can muster is a sense of loss at the fact that I wasn't sad. I didn't cry at the end of *The Hatmaker's Wife* when Frances told me how much he appreciated me and would miss me. I didn't cry when I stood surrounded by sobbing dancers, soaking in collective grief about the dance concert ending, I didn't cry when I watched Academy Matriculation or Graduation, I didn't cry when I gave my first students that I connected with their gifts. I wanted to. I wanted to feel the overwhelming grief and community around me. I wanted to be brought to tears by the final piece in dance concert when the dancers were struggling to keep going through tears. I wanted to be able to share it. But I sat there in the booth, empty, and that's what's been most upsetting so far.

Campus is empty, it's rare I see anyone when driving to and from work. This is the norm for the summer but with the weather's aid, I can't help thinking about fall coming around and the campus still being this way, the lights off, the buildings empty. I walk around the DAC and wonder if it will never sell and be left to rot like the old arts building. I look at the light traveling across the walls and wonder if someone will come here in 20 years and hate it, disgusted by the black mold and the cold, heavy air, not able to imagine the building ever being warm, welcoming, and filled with the cacophony of students. Still, the closest I get to grief or sadness is a small stoking in my ribs, like it's waiting to burst out of me but it can't. So I go home, walk the dog in the dark, and go to bed alone, waiting for what's to come.