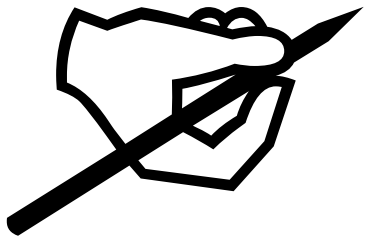


CONGENIAL TELEGRAM NUMBER03



I wanted to make this zine every month. When I made that goal, it didn't seem so difficult. I've done daily, weekly, fortnightly projects before. Making this tiny zine every month would be easy!

But it hasn't proven so. CONGENIAL TELEGRAM 02 came out at the beginning of August. Today is the middle of October.

Instead of declaring myself a failure, giving up, never trying anything again, I'm going to readjust my goal. This zine is now every-other-monthly. 01 came out in June. 02 came out in August. 03 will come out now, in October. Look for 04 in December.

WRITE BY HAND!

The one year I lived on campus at university was also the only year of my life when I stopped writing. It took me a year to fill a notebook I had usually finished in two months.

Now, I see the signs before it gets too bad. It's an easy fix. Pick up a pen and write. It doesn't have to be a nice pen. It doesn't have to be the same notebook you set aside. Find a piece of paper. Move your hand. If you don't know what to write, start with "I don't know what to write." The rest will come.

Somehow, I got really busy. This is, of course, relative to my life previously, and not at all in comparison to anyone else's life. When I compare myself to others (wwhhyy??), I feel nothing but guilt for complaining.

My job is not bad. I have few responsibilities. No one but me goes hungry when I don't feel like cooking. I am privileged and lucky and oh so grateful.

But I also made a conscious choice this year to push myself and put myself out into the world more than before. I did a lot in 2019, more than 2018.

by Jess Driscoll on October 17, 2019

And it's only October. My year won't slow down until December, when I run headlong into holidays and, of course, my birthday, which brings its own endless guilt and comparisons.

To close out this year, I have a trip with friends already planned and paid for. Having a literal ~something to look forward to can help you dramatically when you're struggling to make it to the end of the week. I already have my plane ticket; I can't give up now.

(It's also a nice deadline to help me get CT04 done. I'm not making this zine on vacation.)

I've never tallied the total number of words I've written for the internet. It would be staggering, devastating. It would be multiple books, certainly. I would have to count all my blogs, 13 years of Twitter, all those chats and emails.

I can give you the total words of fan fiction because that's all on the AO3, which helpfully calculates your stats for you.

465,111 words. 17 years. A few dozen books worth. All written and published free for you to read.

But was it worth it?

I pressed pause on blogging in September. I was travelling at the beginning of the month, then I had markets every weekend. It was one task too many and the least important of the lot.

I have started, stopped, and started blogging again so many times in the 17 years since my first post in 2002. At times, it felt like my only connection to the world. Others, it felt like an invasion of privacy.

17 years, and I still don't know how exactly it fits into my life. Does it help me build an audience? Or turn people away with TMI?

My last blog entry was on August 24. Today is October 17. That's not an unusual gap in a blog. It's nowhere close to the longest gap in my own archives.

But a year ago, after XOXO 2018, I was excited about blogging. I started again. I remembered why I had started 17 years ago.

And this year, after XOXO 2019, I'm feeling burnt out. Perhaps that makes sense, when you look at the subtext of many of this year's talks. Many of us were here at the beginning of blogging. Now, we're questioning what it all means.