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When I was in my early twenties, I started to write a book with the intent to kickstart what I dreamed to be a very successful writing career. It was to be titled "Memoirs of a Janitor: a Shitty Story," (with stylized censoring over the curse, of course), and it would be based on my experiences working as a janitor at the local waterpark (for which I had many interesting stories to tell). I can't for the life of me remember how much was going to be fiction, and how much would actually draw on real experiences that I'd had. I think that the real stories that inspired me were definitely hyperbolized to a certain extent, while still maintaining a lot of factual components. I actually made it about 100 pages into the book and was feeling quite happy with my progress, but I ended up losing a good portion of it.

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② I don't actually remember how I lost my work, whether it was a corrupted file, a lost flash drive, or something else entirely, but it was quite devastating. I tried to replicate the parts that I had lost, but it ended up feeling forced and unnatural. It was like telling a spur-of-the-moment joke in one class, ~~and~~ seeing it has received a good response from students, and then attempting to deliver it again to a later group of students (as many teachers can likely attest to, it often falls flat). The attempt at replication proved too frustrating and uninspired, and I ended up not continuing with the project. I still wonder if I could find success as a writer if I were to pursue it whole-heartedly, but I just don't see a point in my life where I will find the time and mental energy

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③ to do so. I did make a concerted effort about six years ago to hone my skills as a writer, but it never translated into anything more than blog posts. Actually, that's not entirely true. Even though my efforts didn't result in me actually jumping back into story-writing, it led to what I consider to be a decently successful food blog. It was (and still technically "is", though I haven't updated it in a few years) called "~~From~~ From James to Jamie", and was originally created as a way to challenge myself to try out new recipes and practice my writing craft. Even though I never made the jump back to attempting a novel, my blog has nearly 250,000 views all-time and ~~led me to sponsored~~ included sponsored content that technically made me a paid writer. I actually partnered (maybe that's not the right word) with a brewery in my hometown to create

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recipes using their beer. In addition to being posted to their website, they printed recipe cards (including intro blurbs from me) that patrons could take home after a visit to ~~the~~ the brewery. These all included my photos as well, so I guess I'm technically a paid writer AND photographer. It's kind of ironic though that the writing I am most proud of, these pieces attached to my blogged recipes, is a major point of contention. So often the complaint about food blogs is that they require so much ~~as~~ scrolling to get past all the supposedly unrelated introductory anecdotes to get to the recipes. I don't know if I'm naive in thinking some people actually took the time to read what I wrote, but if I ever pick it up again, I doubt I would change much. The writing is as much for me as it is for them.