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Look Out, She About to Testify!

Teaching isn’t a place. It doesn’t need four walls, tables, chairs, a screen or a whiteboard. There are no assembly lines, no 5 minute breaks, no time clocks, no meetings with the managers, no five year plans and no PIPs. Teaching isn’t a method. It isn’t worksheets, formative or summative assessments, homework, and it certainly isn’t grades. I didn’t learn any new methods in this group. I hope I wasn’t supposed to because teaching isn’t about methods or objectives or sticking to a syllabus.

Teaching is a state of being. Teachers are not made; they are born. Like Pallas springing fully formed from her stricken parent’s brow, they emerge from the mire of a public school education having learned, but knowing more. Their senses are more acute, their sensibilities are more keen and more responsive than others, and their urges to bring order to chaos will not be suppressed despite their education.

Teachers see through walls into students’ hearts. They heal wounded egos, bandage hurt feelings, and share the burden of the Atlases seated in their classrooms. They leap stacks of paperwork in a single bound, know the sun shines behind the cloudy brow, and hear the cry for help in the angry outburst.

The academy is a retreat for tired teachers. It renews our commitment to keep listening for the heartbeat. It reinvigorates our attempts to break through those walls. It revives our desires to find one more way to share our world view. And it reminds us of all the others like us who make the world manageable.