Twitter Thread by A. T. Greenblatt

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I realized the other day I've been doing this writing thing for almost eleven years exactly.

I became a writer the day I attended my first writing class at a local night school approx. Feb 8th, 2010.

Out of curiosity, I've been looking at the numbers over my career. (1/)

Can I share those numbers? Yes.

Am I procrastinating on actual writing projects right now? Also yes. Don't tell my editors.

Let's do this! (2/)

Over eleven years I've had:

250 short story submissions*
33 original fiction publications
3 essays publications
200 rejections

*approx. number. My records pre-2013 are shaky. In 2013 I started using The Submission Grinder. I still use it. (3/)

I started writing short stories February 2010 and started submitting them in August 2010. I got my first acceptance in September to a micro-fiction magazine. Nonpaying* and now defunct.

*I didn't learn I should expect a contract for my stories until 2013. (4/)

I "sold" 8 stories to non paying magazines between September 2010 and July 2012. It made baby writer me very happy and also taught me how sloppy many of these mags were, though they meant well.

Eventually I took the advice "writers should get paid for their work!" to heart. (5/)

Around July 2012 I started submitting only to markets who paid for stories. I noticed a difference in the quality of stories and professional experience immediately improved. I sold two stories very quickly between September 2012 and December 2012. (6/)

Emboldened, I decided to submit only to semi-pros and pro markets. I started to get lots of rejections. Like LOTS of them.

But I was expecting this. I started going to cons and went to Viable Paradise in fall of 2012. I was warned! I was told to keep trying! So I did*. (7/)

*There's a certain unrelenting optimism you have when you're 24-25 years old that I miss sometimes. (8/)

I made my first pro sale March 2013 to Daily Science Fiction. I was so happy. I remember I was shaking and crying at the kitchen table. My mom was straight up worried about me.

It was followed by a pro sale to Buzzy Mag a few months later. I was on a roll! (9/)

"I'll hold off on joining SFWA," I thought. "I want to join as an Active Member and I'm only one sale and a few hundred words away. At this rate, that shouldn't take long!"

And this is where I was wrong. (10/)

This marked the beginning of the hardest stretch in my writing career to date. I was beginning to get lots of personal rejections but no sales. I revised and revised my stories. I critiqued and read writing advice and slushed. Wrote every day like advised.

No dice. (11/)

I finally got that third pro sale in Dec 2014. (Thank you Daily Science Fiction!) I joined SFWA, but still felt like I was hitting my head against a door that wouldn't open no matter how hard I worked.

That year I had 40 submissions* and it was my only acceptance. (12/)

*This submission stat is low compared to many writers, but I'm a slow writer and this is the most submissions I've ever made in a year. The following year, in 2015, I had 40 submissions. In 2016, 27 submissions. In 2020, I had 8. (13/)

In 2015, I started to slowly get more acceptances to pro and semi-pro markets. Which was great! But I was going through a personal rough patch and I felt stuck. I was still getting lots of higher tier rejections. I was also getting rejected from writing workshops. (14/)

My new goal was to get into a market that Lois Tilton reads and get my harsh review badge of honor from her. Basically I wanted to get a story into one of the top eight or nine markets consistently reviewed in Locus Magazine. (15/)

Five years after I became a writer, I got a story accepted by @BCSmagazine! Dec 2015, to be exact. I was beyond thrilled! I got the email right after I came home from a bad date where the guy belittled my writing while going on about his bible

fanfiction.* (16/)

*(No offense to fanfiction or the bible. Both are cool. He was not.)

Anyway, there was another teary phone call to my mom where I explained I was crying because of the good news, not the bad date. She was still worried about me. (17/)

Between 2016-2018 things got better. I started getting acceptance by markets I've been reading for years and love.

Here's the numbers*:

2016 - 27 submissions, 1 acceptance
2017 - 29 submissions, 5 acceptances
2018 - 20 submissions, 5 acceptances

*Not including reprints. (18/)

I was starting to feel more confident. I was still getting rejections, but they were plenty of successes that I used as fuel to reach the next goal.

What changed? I was becoming a better writer. I figured out my pacing and ending issues. Found a master class crit group. (19/)

Also, in 2017, after 4 attempts, I got accepted to Clarion West in 2017. It gave expanded my community and a group of friends I'm in contact with regularly. (20/)

"And Yet" was accepted by @UncannyMagazine in Oct 2017. No crying this time because by now, I was professional*, but there was lots of jumping up and down when I got the email. It was published in March 2019.

*JK, no I'm not. I still weep from all extreme emotions. (21/)

This was the point where my career took a step forward again. I started getting translation requests and unsolicited reprint requests. I was talking more about disability rep in fiction, writing more disability rep. Accepted that I'm a panster and someone who revises a lot. (22/)

I think around this time I gave up on writing on the weeknights and became a weekend writer. instead. I'm still mostly a weekend writer.

Turns out your writing methods and strategies change over time. Who knew? (23/)

In Feb 2019, I got my 1st Nebula Award nomination. Again more shaking and crying at the news.

In 2017, I started talking about my writing openly with coworkers and acquaintances. With the nomination, suddenly non-writers realized this writing thing was serious for me. (24/)

But that's a rant for a different thread.

This is also where the submission numbers start changing for me.

For example, "Give the Family My Love" was submitted in Jan 2019, accepted 3 days later and published 4 days later in @clarkesworld. (25/)

Lol, Twitter caps you at 25 tweets in an unpublished thread. Who knew?

Anyway, here's the numbers from 2019 and 2020. (26/)

2019 - 8 submissions, 4 acceptances.
2020 - 8 submission, 4 acceptances.*

*My own original fiction only. This is not including the writing I did for Magic the Gathering. (27/)

And of those 8 submissions in 2020, one was a rewrite request, one a non response, and one was a pending submission that turned into an acceptance a few weeks ago in 2021. One was a personal rejection. (28/)

My point is that sometimes it looks like writers appear out of nowhere with a brilliant story that wins all of the awards and you think "Oh god, I've been working at writing for years, maybe I'm just not good enough."

But the years of work to build the skill is invisible. (29/)

Like I've been at this for over ten years now and I just feel like I've found my voice and hit my stride as a short story writer. (30/)

I think no career path in this industry is straight or easy. There's always going to be ups and downs. I'm at the highest point of my career to date right now, but I don't expect it to last forever. There will be downs and then ups again (I hope). (31/)

My next goal is to learn how to write novellas. It won't be easy, because again, I'm a slow writer and pacing has always been an issue for me. But challenging yourself and learning new skills is the only way to get better at this craft. (32/)

Anyway, I should get back to my actual list of tasks today. I hope you found this thread helpful. All typos are my own and proof that I wrote this.

Don't stop telling stories. (33/33)