TEN MILLION FLIES

THE FIRST INFESTATION

2017-2025

A retrospective compilation

Ten Million Flies / Open Arts Press

75 pieces from the years before we started pretending these were annuals.

2017

2 pieces

Writers’ Camp

By Lance Watson / November 8, 2017

“So how do we get their attention?” said Eduardo.

“I’m not sure,” said Darrius. “We tacked up fliers at the university, and I told everyone in my creative writing class. You did, too—right?”

“I did.”

Eduardo and Darrius sat for some time in silence, passing a joint back and forth.

“Why do you think your parents named you Darrius?” Eduardo asked.

“My mom told me once,” Darrius said. “Mom and dad wanted something different, and they got out a book with a lot of names in it, and Darrius stuck out for some reason.”

“I see,” said Eduardo.

“Yeah. That’s the reason,” said Darrius.

https://tenmillionflies.com/writers-camp/807.html

creative writing 101

By Lance Watson / December 13, 2017

so anyway
the students were hoping
the prof would be stoned

he was

julie waznowski?

“here”

julie, do you write poetry
while smoking pot?

“I don’t know what to say”

pass your sample poems
to the front

mark wimple!

“here”

mark, does your mother
shave her pussy?

“I don’t know what to say
either”

pass your poems
to the front
but I doubt you will be
admitted

sandra beach!

“here”

sandra, could you stand up
and show us your tits?

“I don’t know what to say”

say okay

Sandra stood up
exposed her tits
and we all started
writing

https://tenmillionflies.com/creative-writing-101/1073.html

2019

8 pieces

fitbitch

By Daniel J. Flore III / November 1, 2019

https://soundcloud.com/user-673577468-435000874/fitbitch

Come on we both know that's not sweat, they sprayed you down to make it look like it. Yes it is, yes it is...I just got done working out. I just left the gym. No...now come on. Yeah alright. I'm sorry, you look good, you look like you were really working out. Well, I do work out in real life so I'm not really lying here to everyone...that counts that really I do... well what are you doing? Just hangin' out huh? Looking at the picture of a pretty girl on the fitbit cover on the rack, pissed off that she's up here and not with you, so you start being a dick. Hey, whoa.. I mean afterall, I'm just browsing here. Well, that's your thing isn't it? You're not a man Dan. What you'd like to be doing is screwing me on the beach with the particles of sand going straight up my asshole, but you don't have the nerve, even in your fantasies, to do something like that. In fact, you wouldn't even be able to imagine it, you'd just come up with something half-ass like, I take it hard on the beach, with the sand in sweat sticking on the curve of my ass cheek like the tracks of a pick up truck along the beach. So when are you going to drop the misanthropic, bummin' around the animal house thing and let me have it? Please Dan, let me have it, let me help you. Can I help you let me have it? Can I help you? Can I help you sir? Would you like me to take something down so you can have a look at it?

https://tenmillionflies.com/fitbitch/1269.html

So Much Dick

By Lance Jencks / November 2, 2019

Lance, I'd like you to meet Dick Dick.
Ah...pleasure to meet you, Mr. Dick.
The pleasure is mine. Call me Dick.
Dick...yes, of course...Dick.
I understand you're a writer.
Well, I dabble.
I see, most impressive. I'm a dick.
Pardon?
A private eye, a gumshoe: a dick.
Oh! Interesting job!
It pays the bills. Ah...here comes Mrs. Dick...
Dick darling, I'm so distressed!
Do tell, Delores.
Well, it's my book club. I...but who is this?
It's Lance, he's a writer. Lance...Delores Dick.
My pleasure, Mrs. Dick.
Please...call me Delores.
Delores. You have a book club?
Yes, she does. Wonderful really.
But Dick, I'm so distressed.
Darling, why?
Our next author. He's so verbose. So sordid.
Dick wait, I think I know. Delores, is it....
Yes, dear boy: Dickens.

https://tenmillionflies.com/so-much-dick/1332.html

Unwanted Premonition

By Jordan Trethewey / November 3, 2019

https://tenmillionflies.com/unwanted-premonition/1380.html

a man gives himself

By Mike Casetta / November 5, 2019

I

a good talking to

a man sees his reflection
in the still water

this is how you look
to others

a fish jumps

this is how you look
when you talk

to yourself
you crazy motherfucker

II

comeuppance

a man takes himself out
behind the woodshed

cuts a switch
from the peach tree

that he planted
to attract the girls

& shouts, so you think
you are so smart

III

a good what for

a man opens the refrigerator
grabs a beer

he is hungry
hops & barley are food enough

there are tools in the garage
he understands better than himself

& a good what for
begins with a hammer

https://tenmillionflies.com/a-man-gives-himself/1402.html

Reverse Rumi

By Paul Brookes / November 5, 2019

Always live in regret.
The past is ever present.

There are no new days; you are the same person you were before.

Believe that today will be no better than yesterday. It’s about looking down with despair

and looking backward.

Don't look for new opportunities
that the Almighty has planned for you.

Hardship disheartens,
and does not pass away.
All hope is followed by despair;
all sunshine is followed by darkness.

People want you to be sad.
Serve them your pain!
Don't untie your wings,
bind your soul with jealousy;
you and everyone around you
can't fly like doves.

https://tenmillionflies.com/reverse-rumi/1442.html

My refrigerator said I was going to die

By Daniel J. Flore III / December 1, 2019

my refrigerator makes an all doom sound once in a while
it used to really bother me when I was crazy
I really thought they were coming to shoot us all up
now when I hear it, it just frightens me like my life is a movie
and the doom sound from that stupid thing is the soundtrack
I really hate it
it's really annoying
and quite a scary sound
finally I told the refrigerator to "just chill"
and it hasn't messed with me since
now if I could only figure out
the secret of beating
the sound of my phone
or the music my wife plays to go to sleep to
or the commercials on TV during the holiday season
or all the other damned non living bullies that have their way with me
then I might just be a man again
and not another inanimate object
fighting against all the others

https://tenmillionflies.com/my-refrigerator-said-i-was-going-to-die/1482.html

The toilet water is tears

By Daniel J. Flore III / December 7, 2019

this woman on the radio
was just talking about the glory of God
she said heaven opened up and she could hear music playing

today the sink smells like puke
and the lighting is worse
I'm not doing anything about it either
and I'm too sick and broke to get outta here

why can't I reach into heaven too and hear just one note playing for me
I need it on this godforsaken day
that I am only made of tears

last night I drank something that tasted
like an old lady's perfume
I've been puking and crapping and crying ever since

I like to think what I drank was the old lady's perfume who was talking about heaven
and all these sounds my body has been making
are the music of heaven I'm hearing
that I've been wanting to hear so bad

heaven crying my body out with theirs
on their knees next to me by the toilet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvnSR7N8DXs

https://tenmillionflies.com/the-toilet-water-is-tears/1500.html

A moth in the park

By Hanna Abi Akl / December 24, 2019

it’s 5.00 pm
still no luck
out in the cold
the apartment dreary
teenage boys cutting in front of me
to do their laundry
and smoke hash
on the dryer
i have a supermarket list
but no money
my stomach is growling
but i can’t think about food

baby, it’s cold
but i can see a moth
a little orb of yellow light
floating in the air
from one lamp post
to another

i observe it
from the park bench
the cold wood
freezing my prancing ass
i remember how much you like
moths
how highly you speak of them
because they are attracted by the light
just like you
you say you would like to be reborn
as one
now that i watch it
now that i pay close attention
to this moth
i think
they are not bad
after all
little flashing creatures of the night
little candles floating until first light

candles
like the candle set you always have
on your dining table
vanilla-scented
that’s another thing
you really like
candles—bringing together
sight and smell

reconciling the senses
i admire your senses
your sensuality
your erotic naked raw vulnerability
dripping emotion
dripping on the wet shower floor
all the way to the bedroom…

i think that
all in all
i would like to be
a moth
tonight;

that wouldn’t be
such
a terrible
thing.

https://tenmillionflies.com/a-moth-in-the-park/1544.html

2020

25 pieces

I was thinking about starting an internet poetry forum

By Lance Watson / February 28, 2020

So i went online to study the one that says it's "the web's most active poetry forum" or some shit like that.

I started reading a thread, which is poetry forum lingo for a poem followed by a bunch of comments from other poets. I scrolled down to the middle of the discussion.

"Don't try me, bitch!" wrote one poet to another. "I can read you like a smut magazine."

"You called me an ape," came the response. "You don't have to wear a swastika to be a Nazi, you know. You racist whore."

"Don't stress yourself about someone who has a shitty mouth," another poet chimed in. "I can even smell her odorous being over the internet."

"I'm late to this discussion," yet another poet said. "But this poem strikes me as a crass attempt to malign a dead poet. It's disgustingly narcissistic. You've always envied Babsy. You'll never be half the poet that Babsy was. So what if Babsy showed her tits? So what if she liked to drink? Who gives a shit? Now get lost with your jealous, loser poetry."

And then the author herself chimed in.

"I might be an asshole," she said. "But you know what they say about assholes: Mine is better than yours."

Upon seeing the author respond, other poets took the occasion to converse with her.

"The only asshole you know is mine, bitch. And last time you didn't lick it clean. I want your piece of shit mouth over here again tonight. I just wet farted. I can't wait to see whether you can make amends for your shoddy performance last time."

"You cum sluts. Shut the fuck up and respond to the poem. I'm going to report this whole thread to @AdmiralB."

"Hey @AdmiralB, be sure to notice that the bitch who reported this thread called someone a cum slut."

"This is such a pathetic bunch of losers compared to what it used to be. I used to come here to learn from great writers. It was inspirational."

"Boo hoo hoo. What happened to my site? You jackass. You couldn't write your way out of a birthday card."

It was at that point that I felt I had a good idea of what poetry forums were about.

I rolled a joint, took at walk, and tripped out at the trees.

https://tenmillionflies.com/i-was-thinking-about-starting-an-internet-poetry-forum/1685.html

some evening in March at the coffee shop

By Lance Watson / April 1, 2020

"yeah, i don't know why they don't
legalize this stuff," karsten said.

i watched the thick plume of smoke
snake up out of his joint
and collect at the top of the ceiling

"yeah," i said

"it's like, can you imagine
if they made alcohol illegal
again
like they should, cuz the stuff is
way more lethal
than weed"

"it is," i said.
"i even hate being around people
who drink alcohol"

"they're scary," i said

"they are," karsten added

"plus they destroy other people's
lives with their shit," i said

"yeah," he said

"pass me that joint," i said

"here you go"

i inhaled
leaned back
looked out the window
at a tiny wisp of smoke
coming out of the chimney
of the building across the street

"i forgot what we were
talking about," karsten said

"it's okay," i said
"i did, too"

https://tenmillionflies.com/some-evening-in-march-at-the-coffee-shop/1486.html

Worrying about doing a poetry reading at Barnes & Noble

By Daniel J. Flore III / April 27, 2020

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9MH6c3h2k4

Worrying about doing a poetry reading at Barnes & Noble

I don't know if the guy sitting next to me
heard me try to apologize for accidentally
moving his car magazines and taking his spot

obnoxious hrrr of the espresso machine
I had to talk over one at the books a million reading
with Dennis who showed up drunk
right in front of my grandparents
Hershey zinging sunlight
and a couple of sold books in the parking lot
coulda sold more in the store maybe,
but that's back before I got published and had an ISBN
and they wouldn't allow outside sales in their store
"Sell them in the parking lot
you worm of the literary alley of poetry nothing."
self publishing days of balls and burn yearn

I really should ask the manager if I could do a reading or signing here
but I can't right now
I'm hidden in these words
plus the girl in front of me's ponytail is too college cool ouch
and the other lady's expensive scarf is tied too tight upright uptight that poets livin wrong
and the barnes and noble employees are art indie cool and might dumb me
into myself if I walk up there like my droopy pair of jeans
that keep falling down
uhhh my book isn't on your shelves but its on your website uhhh so can I do an event here
"No you're not even at least wearing a Nirvana shirt."

my legs keep lifting up
in paralyzed numb tension
'this is the hang out with Gregg barnes and noble 8:19 on a Tuesday night ease
buying the new R.E. M. in years ago gone
not one to do a reading in

I put a Mitch Albom book in front of me
like my attention span is still at novel proportions
but I'm lasting perfectly through haiku
and short stories tinkering out at page 2
I can't sit through watching a TV show with my wife
and until I can I'm not scheduling a reading

if I can't watch a show I'm not going to be one
(fidget slam down couch get out!!!)

I dunno set me up in the back as a book signing by some guy
I don't have any Author copies to sell right now so here take a card to throw out
and a set list would go through my mind
like not even being able to find an author in the ks
too many poems
too many dreams I can't climb the ladder
maybe I should just read from my latest book
still I'd rather sit here and write
overrun anxious
intellectual jeff caps looking at me
and the Asian kids by some of the only outlets
hogging them all the time
to plug in their devices
laughing

here's my reading
"Attention please
Barnes and Noble weekend shoppers some guy's too
scared to come up from his notebook to say anything but what you're reading here

here's my encore set list-

*will they give me a free bottle of springwater
*if they do will the he's our showman pressure make me vomit the water
*the coffee cake crumbs on the table are grossing me out
* I can't take the inquisitive coffee looks
* I need a cigarette
*I used to be able to buy a cookie without thinking about it with Gregg
but don't buy one of my books out of pithy just so I can get one
*is anybody gonna buy one of the books in this store or just sit there and read
them

hardcovers author images saying
keep at it Dan and you'll be like us
I can't right now Mitch Albom I'm too screwed
why can't I ever find the tiny hidden poetry section
the poetry section is always on some odd angle
but that's ok because so am I

https://tenmillionflies.com/worrying-about-doing-a-poetry-reading-at-barnes-noble/1836.h
tml

14,000 energy drinks

By Daniel J. Flore III / April 30, 2020

14,000 energy drinks can't be wrong
the taste is mutant fruit
by the 14,000th one today it's like drinking a flat soda
can't think
bumbling down the highway
heart attacks in my chest
weak without food
caffeine crapped waterfall
on the sunoco bathroom floor
everything sticks out more than usual
like the discount store owner statue's front teeth biting off my head
trying to get to lake Noxamixin to drink it from dehydration
waiting on a pizza for 10 minutes of back country boredom
with a buzzing going off in my body
like a cell phone vibrating in my abdomen
till I puke in the rain
then shit again
like I'm planting something other than manure
and stench
the fecal matter looks lit up like a Christmas tree lights
merry 14,000 energy drinks keel over and die
walking with streaks of light that aren't there
discotek fingers flicking
14 million volts of fake energy
breathing like a vacuum cleaner
sucking up my sanity
burn out crash
can't move till I get another one
caffeine headache aspirin popping like fizz
till I open my first can of the next day

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvykshFW-v4

https://tenmillionflies.com/14000-energy-drinks/1766.html

Pandemica

By Daniel J. Flore III / May 1, 2020

I can't take this
stuck, covid 19
not a store open
to buy something
inessential
(which are the best things to buy)

I've gone to corona hell and I don't even have the virus
which could be my next circle of covid hades

the gas station slot machine
keeps taking my money because it's the only thing to do

it's all
just the same old toilet
draining me
into the sewer
again

there must be some reason
I woke up this morning
or maybe there isn't
and I missed my chance at heaven

https://tenmillionflies.com/pandemica/1775.html

Surprise!

By Daniel J. Flore III / May 26, 2020

"I need
something
positive," I said.

"I farted 5 times," she replied.

I had no idea marriage
would be like this.

https://tenmillionflies.com/surprise/1803.html

I’m a Freaking Salamander

By Lance Jencks / June 22, 2020

That's what I learned on TV.
The first fish to crawl from the muck
became me.
These hands were fins;
lungs, once gills.
I shot my sperm in the water
without getting laid.
Now I jerk into Kleenex.
Big difference.

https://tenmillionflies.com/im-a-freaking-salamander/1820.html

A Lot of Mice

By Jordan Trethewey / June 26, 2020

—for DJFIII

What will we do
when an electro-
magnetic pulse from space
voids our I-need-it-now! lifestyle?
We'll find a lot of mice
with eyes aimed low
ready to submit.

https://tenmillionflies.com/a-lot-of-mice/1876.html

from a seat in the garden

By Stella Read / June 30, 2020

blue jays build a nest in the pine,
swallows migrate overhead,
wren in and out of the compost,
centipede in beak

behind the fence
children screech,
entitled neighbours
don’t distance from friends,
posture, to sear game meat
drink, smoke, snort

we sip coffee
in the comfort of
inverse snobbery,
snicker
that their RV is worth more
than our house and contents,
exchange snide
whispers,
our quiet, spoiled

from the tree house, slide,
log cabin, kitchen activity center, pool,
we know several families have congregated
and decide it’s time
to retreat into
our funky little house

guilty and ashamed of
our own bitchiness,
we share a polite attempt to
be accepting of the wealthy young pair
and their wee ones,
agree it’s better to hear children play,
than not,
that we are getting old,
fussy, weird

https://tenmillionflies.com/from-a-seat-in-the-garden/1926.html

WAKING UP ONE TIME

By John D Robinson / June 30, 2020

After waking up from a four
day binge of alcohol, hash,
pills, I found myself lying
next to a woman I didn’t
love, though she said that
she loved me,
the woman I loved had
marched out of my world:
beside the bed, the floor
was cluttered with empty
wine bottles, over-flowing
ashtrays, take-out-food
cartons, plates of
rotting food and the
interest of a large number
of flies:
I got up, vomited, smoked
a joint and phoned the
woman I loved and told
her what a pathetic
sorry-ass loser I was and
asked for her
forgiveness and said that I
loved her and wanted to
be with her:
"That’s nice to hear but
don’t ever fucking call me
again" she said terminating
the call:
I opened a beer, it wasn’t
going to help but I
couldn’t think of anything
else to do:
I looked out across the
park, I drank from the
bottle waiting for the
woman I didn’t love to
wake up so I could tell
her that I didn’t love her
and that she should
leave:
the day wasn’t looking
good and when I looked
into a mirror, I saw that
neither was I,
I drank the beer,
opened another

and waited.

https://tenmillionflies.com/waking-up-one-time/1947.html

saying goodbye

By Stella Read / July 3, 2020

reading Leonard Cohen
by candlelight,
visualizing
bonfire night,
your birthday

were you still alive
under that streetlamp,
we could walk together
to your bench
and talk awhile

it’s what we always did best—
just talk, just care

I’ll print this poem
in a lonely font
and burn it
in a bowl,
set the ashes facing east
next time it storms

https://tenmillionflies.com/saying-goodbye/1958.html

America Police State

By Jenn Zed / July 4, 2020

https://tenmillionflies.com/america-police-state/1969.html

200Kmph and Nineteen, Berlin

By Jenn Zed / October 15, 2026

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wGQG4LpWV0

the thin film of my mouth
on your cunt
in a half-mile high toilet
just to keep us going
through an invisible
security corridor from west to east

notes of golden brown
play easily
as we fuck each other
over
and land in Berlin Templehof
1986

the airport border guards check
that i'm some
Persian-Irish renegade
and you're
my Meinhof-Dansk trophy
halfway between Muj?hid-IRA
and Danish Anarcho-Syndicalist
that's the idea, anyway

(another)
check-point
Englischer police soldier
smuggled MDMA pills in pussy
and raw Base speed packaged in
jacket lining
we enter as highly stylised
hüftenwacklerbuttenschlecker
Goth Tramps
but like any fuck in a suit
are searched
head to ass
ass to toe
die Polizei
ist dreck

we really
don't care and breeze
entrance fees paid
into the warehouse
duty ignored
industrial junkie payback
certain of einstürzende
jack-hammer holes in the walls

instead of a guitar solo
and amphetamines made by hand
too strong to snort
in an abandoned factory somewhere
between music and demolition

and in the Deustch nacht
i don't know if your voice is
male or female
german mädchen
but you have
a nice arse
and are taller than me
right now

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZJFFStQemI

https://tenmillionflies.com/200kmph-and-nineteen-berlin/1982.html

covid-culture

By Mike Casetta / July 6, 2020

If you stand away from me
& I stand away from you
& you & you & you
many of us will need to walk on water
& cling to the cliffs on the sides of mountains.
Ex-city dwellers will spit plant pigments
over their hands onto the walls
& ceilings inside their caves
& people like me will return to the tall trees
using ropes instead of liana vines
unless you are lucky enough to
stand east of Sierra Leone
& west of the Congo Basin.
Umgawa means, keep your distance,
asshole! Umgawa also means,
go find your own Jane, motherfucker!

https://tenmillionflies.com/covid-culture/1990.html

Dermoid Cyst

By Kaci Skiles Laws / July 7, 2020

I’m gonna tell everyone
my Facebook got hacked.
It isn’t true. It’s easier

when trying to surgically remove
family members and fake friends
like fake news.

Social media has been to me
like a dermoid cyst, with its teeth
and nails and lanugo-like fine hairs,

no heartbeat or facial features.
A deformed doll
I should have discarded years ago.
The truth

is I’ve been addicted a long time,
the same as my attachment
to trauma bonds,
afraid of what comes and lies
between who I am and who I want to be.

My attachments effectively eat me
like a bone,
buried and uncovered a dozen times
before it's forgotten.

https://tenmillionflies.com/dermoid-cyst/2004.html

Robert

By Delainie Littlejohn / July 8, 2020

My husband had no idea that he’d proposed. Nor I.
We just suddenly found people turning up

outside our home with salads. Sweetmeats. Kitchen appliances.
We looked at each other, shrugged.

“Do you think they mean to kill us?”
“I’m not sure. It’s possible.”

https://tenmillionflies.com/robert/2008.html

It’s the 4th of July and I don’t feel free having to listen to your shit all night

By Daniel J. Flore III / July 9, 2020

the neighbors are setting off fireworks
the sky is farting national pride
only it’s like the civil war
it looks and feels like they’re firing them at each other
my cat is scared under the couch
the air tastes like sulfur
the trees are blocking any view that might be pretty
and they just keep going and going
keeping me awake
and I know they will be at it all night
till their stupid grand finale
which for me will be silence

https://tenmillionflies.com/its-the-4th-of-july-and-i-dont-feel-free-having-to-listen-to-your-shit-all-night/2050.html

My Father’s Prison Letters

By John D Robinson / July 10, 2020

Today I found them
by chance and re-read them:
he tells me
it’s because of the drink that
he is in jail and that he is
going to stop when he gets
released and he is never
going to drink again and
that he misses me and asks
me to look after ma:
he writes
he is sorry and regretful
and remorseful and vows
repeatedly he’s going to
change his life,
but he
didn’t and that life killed
him by alcohol and drugs,
"misadventure":

as I read your letters I
cried, softly, and then I
re-placed them back into
the envelopes,
closing darkness on
your voice once again,
but I see you
writing these words,
genuine
scared
honest
hopeful
dreaming
and it all came to
nothing, no promises
or wishes were kept,
but what I know
is that you loved me
best you could
and I loved you
the only way
I knew,
we shared that,
at least.

https://tenmillionflies.com/my-fathers-prison-letters/2058.html

Penile Sphincter

By MARK ANTHONY PEARCE / August 21, 2020

‘Number three all over my friend’
for which he’ll charge me £9.50
It’s been a few months
since the last haircut
One of the other barbers says
‘Oh fuck look at this!
He’s put his knob in a cow’s mouth’
Some film on his phone
‘Honestly’
says the chap
cutting my hair
‘He showed me a woman
blowing a horse’s cock earlier
did a proper job on her mind
spunk all over her face’
I ask him
‘Horses have very big penises
don’t they?’
‘Yeah’
he replies
‘Honestly what’s wrong with people!
why would you do that!’
Meanwhile one of the oddities
pays a visit
He likes to come in
gives us all a middle finger
and tells us to fuck off
hobbling out with a black eye
which one of the barbers
wished they gave him
‘He’s here all the time!’
says my barber
Then in comes oddity no.2
likely pissed
definitely disturbed
I don’t understand him
he’s mumbling in Italian
but my barber does try
to engage in conversation
wishing he’d also fuck off
Eventually the Italian
drifts into Anglo Saxon
Oddity No.2
shouts out loud
‘Oh they really
fucked me up this time!
Oh, good and proper

fucking up
my penile sphincter
the cunts!
Every time I takes a piss
it’s red!’
None of us asked
if he just got out of hospital
Me
I just grinned
and laughed quietly
I looked at myself in the mirror
number three finished
I pay the barber
and thank him
‘It’s been a pleasure’
I tell him
then go and collect
my coat and satchel
off the hanger
‘How old are you then?
What year were you born?
Says oddity no.2
‘1985’
I shake his hand
and he doesn’t let go
‘You that old!’
he shouts
I force my hand
out of his grip
‘A pleasure’
I tell him
and walk out
smiling
closing the door behind me
Oh yes
I look forward to my next visit

https://tenmillionflies.com/penile-sphincter/2105.html

Everything Shines Brighter in Her Hell

By Jordan Trethewey / September 10, 2020

Everything shines brighter in Heather’s hell
with piercing visions of uncomfortable truths.

Old MacDonald still has a farm
because society requires sustenance.
No one wants to do the work
to produce it, margins being slim to none.

Popeye cigarette sugar sticks
were the addictive co-conspirator
of Cousin Tobacco.

All love songs are children
born of apology
for exquisite romantic error.

Children despise progenitors for mistakes,
yet their college credentials claim
life is trial and error.

The man you marry regards you as a sexless roommate
after your body gives birth to two parasitic organisms,
bids adieu to its twenties.

The tenuous glue children provide this relationship
becomes hard, and brittle. When they leave,
two bewildered and exhausted strangers remain.

https://tenmillionflies.com/everything-shines-brighter-in-her-hell/2120.html

Shopping for a new penis

By MARK ANTHONY PEARCE / September 24, 2020

The fret’s returned
soon the windows
will need
to be cleaned again
to wash off
all the limescale
and bird shit
We’ve ended up
flicking from channel
to channel
avoiding
the Third Reich’s
home movies
and a programme
about some thespian
on the hunt
for a brand new cock
On one channel
a strumpet
with her right hand
pleasures a gaoler
while the inmates giggle
to themselves
the harlot sighs
with resigned desperation
a mild excitement
overcomes me
I feel
the free floating guilt
think of the explosions
In Beirut
protests in Belarus
fortunately
I remain limp
soon it will be
another episode
of Celebrity Gogglebox

https://tenmillionflies.com/shopping-for-a-new-penis/2142.html

Father

By Kaci Skiles Laws / October 23, 2020

I am ashamed of my schism,
my contortionist brain and tongue.
Told status is a ticket to love.

Take hurried notes on how
to be righteous.
Worship Satan at my school.
Eat full-metal propaganda.
I should be enough–one day.

I am a contradiction.
Confess on knee through a beehive
covering your honeycomb profile,
tell the truth
about wearing the Devil's cotton fingers
when I am menstruating.

Only a sociopath could come up with both
invention and condemnation.
Is it always what you say it is,
Father?

I wear a rosary under my shirt;
I like the cold burn.
I’m as invisible as God in a church.
A child. A crime.
Contrition, disclosure, satisfaction.

I am ashamed of my shame.
Coming to terms with gasoline
next to my Mary Janes,
matches nervously scratching.
A chalk border of burns.

Acting as though speech exonerates
my clotted gauze and knotted deeds.
Repeat. Repeat. Repeat after me:

I cannot choose to be the seed
or the poison.
I can choose not to be the harvest.
I think. I think. I think, I stammer
If I am trying to be honest—

Father, you have sinned.

https://tenmillionflies.com/father/2158.html

OkCupid

By Mike Casetta / October 27, 2020

Longhaired strongman
divorced
weary of seeing
the horrors in the world
has hung up
his jaw-bone-of-an-ass
seeks a Delilah
for fun & bondage
will gladly turn your grind stone
& attend to your place of worship.

https://tenmillionflies.com/okcupid/2167.html

A £1,000 TIP

By MARK ANTHONY PEARCE / November 14, 2020

My mother
and her husband
are talking
to a married couple
from Wisconsin
probably the same age
They describe themselves
as nice
but very stupid
and have been
on a number
of cruises before
one which involved
a suicide
Apparently it
was an Irishman
An early morning
around 3 AM
he jumped overboard
with his suitcase
and into the darkness
he disappeared
But the Irishman
had left behind
a £ 1,000 tip
just to show everyone
how grateful he was

https://tenmillionflies.com/a-1000-tip/2185.html

He Did It His Way

By Mike Casetta / November 29, 2020

I once tried to kick in the screen
of a 21″ color tv wearing
my Tony Lama shit kickers.

The boot’s heel & slick sole
slid off the smooth glass
like I was dancing a one legged
boot scootin’ shuffle.

I was drunk on my ass
on the Saltillo tile floor.

He was Loathing in Las Vegas.

Elvis, the undercover, stoned out,
Tricky Dick sworn-in-narco,
hippie hating cop was dead
from drug abuse
& some schlock news show
was reporting that he shot out
the screens of more than one tv
in Graceland with a Colt 357 magnum.

I hated fat Elvis.

https://tenmillionflies.com/he-did-it-his-way/2205.html

2021

20 pieces

For Seth Guy

By MARK ANTHONY PEARCE / January 29, 2021

A pig sits
on my bookshelf
a question mark
branded on its flank
Sometimes
when the mood
compels me
I pick it up
without protest
give it a squeeze
and it makes a noise
I put it back
on the shelf
and usually
go to bed

Bristol, January 2021

https://tenmillionflies.com/for-seth-guy/2226.html

In protest of morning

By Daniel J. Flore III / March 10, 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

I would like to protest the morning. I am smoking too many cigarettes. (cough, cough-spit.) There is sleep in my eyes and I would like it to go away. Rubbing only agitates. The morning is for the birds. I feel like I could vomit pancakes all over a waffle house of ill repute. Surely you understand there's no need for the morning. A day is hard work enough. I have heard about a great haiku master who composes at dawn. His writing isn't worth a damn, I don't even think he had a coffee yet. While I'm well aware that I compose this in the am hours it is only to show you the inherit madness of this morning. The wind blows. It really does this morning and I certainly have no desire to go out into it and start living. Like I said, it blows. The morning is killing me. It fools me with hope—the whole light through the blinds thing, when I awake. A farce really, because you know as well as I do there's nothing out there but another hangover and I didn't even drink last night. I'm going back to bed now please don't bother me tomorrow with waking up.

Yours,
Daniel J. Flore III

P.S.
I find my anxiety level to be very high upon waking in the morning. If I get a note from my doctor, will you then cease and desist? You bastard, you probably aren't even listening, you're probably at Starbucks.

https://tenmillionflies.com/in-protest-of-morning/2241.html

Silly Facts

By Mike Casetta / March 16, 2021

Dr. Seuss' 1st book,
"A Pocket Book of Boners,"
published in 1941,
was a collection
of 4 books, the first 3
copyrighted in 1931:
"Boners," "More Boners,"
"Still More Boners" &
"Prize Boners for 1932."
Boners back then
were silly mistakes,
not erections. Some
of my boners
have been silly mistakes.

https://tenmillionflies.com/silly-facts/2255.html

Bullshit Writers

By Daniel J. Flore III / March 18, 2021

alotta
writers
say
they
write
for
themselves

if
they
are
then
why
am
I
reading
their
shit?

https://tenmillionflies.com/bullshit-writers/2261.html

This is me not exaggerating

By Mike Casetta / March 22, 2021

My virginity is still lost somewhere in Athens, Greece.
After serving my hippie time
for marijuana possession
I admit I was happy that prisons exist.
I didn’t need rehabilitation then
like so many of those assholes.
I must have driven drunk a thousand times
after my military discharge
without getting a DUI.
A cop in Phoenix in the early 70s
turned on his lights
& he had me follow him to a 24 hour coffee shop
& he told the waitresses
to make sure I drank a pot of coffee
before I got back in my car.
My caffeinated thank yous
to waitresses everywhere.
I went to India on a spiritual pilgrimage after I got sober.
I worry less as a result.
I told my VA boss to go fuck himself
but I said it in a way to help him improve his supervisory skills.
A surgical scar on my nose gives me street cred,
my 4 divorces gives some women
the impression that I’m a stud.
My homegrown tomatoes are the sweetest,
my pasta sauce the tastiest.
I grow mint & parsley to make my own tabouli.

https://tenmillionflies.com/this-is-me-not-exaggerating/2274.html

don’t trust anyone

By Michael Ashley / March 23, 2021

always question the avatar
if it is actually a representation
it is likely modified
no one really likes how they look
and if they tell you they do
they're either lying or a sociopath
however there does exist the breed
that gives no fucks
and as you get older you can slip
into this slot
it is the best channel to be in
that's not to say you can't use
the occasional filter
or pull out your nasal hair
every few weeks
look at my avatar
do you really think this is me?
this is the hotel version baby
imagine the bed unmade
bits of food all over the place
bin overflowing
and a big ripe shit stain down
the crinkled
long gone whiteness of the sheet

https://tenmillionflies.com/dont-trust-anyone/2282.html

fucking poets!

By Jennifer Wilder / April 5, 2021

I start the day
like the last one ended
head in hand
on pillow
words fighting their way out—
all sterile-sentiment-sap
love and longing
more or less
everything
you despise

you tune me a
broken wind chime
or a crack girl puffing your pipe
hanging on like tools in rows
it's tight seal friction, baby

Delete
me
&
all
my
kind be
fore I motor
cycle fuck your
mind

offer up
one of your
all night girls with
centerfold names
and inflatable breasts—
don't think I didn't notice—
I was raised on daddy's Playboy
just like Candy in Santa's lap
look! isn't that funny?
even the reindeer's got a hard-on!

gotta love a 70s bush
and a Marlboro stash
quick nod to your
agents in drag
lining streets with their signs
love! love! love!

I end my day like it started
head in hand thinking of you
love and longing
and god, is that all?

https://tenmillionflies.com/fucking-poets/2293.html

Exodus 3:14

By Tom Strong / April 9, 2021

It was a strange sermon.
Most adults were nodding
in deference,
some with fatigue.

I didn’t get it, until I got home
and heard a different version
watching Popeye on Sunday
morning cartoon shows.

Exodus 3:14, KJV: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." ... Exodus 3:14, NLT: "God replied to Moses, 'I Am Who I Am. Say this to the people of Israel: I Am has sent me to you.'"

https://tenmillionflies.com/exodus-314/2303.html

Dumbass cashes out

By Daniel J. Flore III / May 31, 2021

after losing too much money gambling
I play Sinatra singing Send in the Clowns
lying on my stupid ass
with my pants falling down
knowing no matter how hard
I wish
the whole damn thing
just won’t go down differently

https://tenmillionflies.com/dumbass-cashes-out/2342.html

Pfizered

By Daniel J. Flore III / June 8, 2021

2 shots of Pfizer and I’m hung over

I walk
like I’m in waves in the ocean
that are swaying me all around

this vaccination
is a disease unto itself

my wife has a high temperature

I’m as loopy as a lifesaver
crunch on a red one, there goes my brain

and I’m getting so tired...
so tired...

not a good tired either
more like I’m turning into Pfizer dust
I don’t wanna get up and go to the bathroom

I lay on my side
with my head away from the TV
and listen to the baseball game
the announcer calls the game
low and inside for ball one
just like how I feel
lazy night at the ballpark
the muted huzz of the crowd,
the hecklers
the sound of a foul ball
outta play
and I’m asleep
the announcer’s excitement
wakes me when my team wins
oh my god I gotta reach for the remote
phew it’s right beside me
I turn off the tv
the remote slips outta my hand
onto the floor
I’ll get it in the morning I think
the next day the symptoms will be gone
I don’t remember falling asleep
I just pass out into the Pfizer abyss

I’m awake the next day and I don’t pick up the remote
I feel the same
so does my wife
her temperature has been down
so it’s not Covid

which we can still get for another ten days—even after this Pfizering— hurray!

this house has been Pfizered
I tell the cat she is in charge
I hope she’s makes me breakfast
after we give her hers

in a daze
I go out on the deck and keep thinking I’m going to fall over it
I am the smoke dissipating
in Pfizer land

nobody wants to cook dinner
which is ok because you can’t eat anyway

we are inoculated into sickness
would just getting covid have been easier
na I don’t wanna maybe die
I'll stay pfizered
the sound of the truck exhaust like a fart in the wind
which is me flatulating through the air

drink lots of water
even though it hurts to move your arm
inoculation nation
almost too tired to wave the flag
to get the shot

carry my wound
like I have been shot
because I have
I have been Pfizered
I just got up and I better get back to bed
even though there’s not one there
just a swamp of Pfizer
to lay in
I’m vaccinated
I played it safe
and it’s killing me
no regrets though
I’m glad covid can kiss my Pfizered ass

https://tenmillionflies.com/pfizered/2352.html

If only

By Mike Casetta / August 30, 2021

she had said,
“A talking snake
tried to tempt me

into eating
the no-no fruit
but I didn’t listen”

instead of,
“I know something
you don’t know”

I’d never
have tasted
her juicy taunt.

https://tenmillionflies.com/if-only/2378.html

X-Lover

By Leah Mueller / September 6, 2021

X, as in X-rated. That’s how it starts.
X, as in stupefied, tongues hanging from our mouths.
X, as in two rivers, meeting head-on and fighting over who needs to yield.
X, as in the spot where we allowed the accident to happen.
X, as in a pair of intersecting lines, warning you are no longer welcome.
X, as in our eyes are shut, since we bonked ourselves over the head with our own hammers.
X, as in the photos that show where our bones were broken.
X, as in the squall of distress that guts my belly to the studs.
X, as in former, but sure as hell not now.
X, as in examination of why you still reside in my head, though you have no right to be here.
X, as in stitches over the wound.
X, as in the additional time it takes for scar tissue to form.
X, as in closed permanently. Watch for new location.

https://tenmillionflies.com/x-lover/2387.html

Mighty Fine Stripper from Portland

By Leah Mueller / September 7, 2021

Her stage name was Cupcake. It’s not often that you meet a woman when her crotch is already in your lap. But fortuitous. As his eyes rolled back into his head, he dreamed of rescuing her from a life of erotic dissolution. He’d buy her a house in the desert, settle down and bake bright-colored pastries. He licked his lips, imagined them emerging from a warm bath, covered with gobs of frosting. No one could bake like his sweetheart. Soon he would have her all to himself. He closed his eyes and felt the sugar shoot through his veins.

https://tenmillionflies.com/mighty-fine-stripper-from-portland/2384.html

you take what you can get

By Lance Watson / September 8, 2021

it was another late
morning
mid week

i was rolling a skinny
joint
with some leftovers
from the table

when my lady walked out
of the bathroom

oh my god, she said
i just laid
the biggest turd
i've ever seen
it took minutes
to come out
i just sat there &
waited
then i got up
to look at it
it was huge
circular
i couldn't see
the end of it

really? i said

really, she said
but it was brown &
firm
well-formed,
so i must be
okay,
she said

that's good, i said

it is, she said

then she sat down
next to me:
my woman

that's a skinny joint
you're rolling,
she said

it is, i said
it is

https://tenmillionflies.com/you-take-what-you-can-get/2411.html

Poison Sumac

By Leah Mueller / September 9, 2021

My body lies, tells the truth,
but lies again. Sweet discharge,
then inflammation. You on top,

breathing as I receive. Delivery
insistent as vines. Once you climb inside,
those roots crumble me like sod.

Pent-up humidity after years of drought,
fluid held within like
a deposit gathering interest.

Everything else comes along with it,
once I let go. You: an impulse buy,
product I consume despite myself.

Afterwards: red, itching welts
along my arms and spine, areas
touched earlier by your limbs.
Swollen, as if I’d lain in something venomous.

Like poison sumac, you said. And laughed.
Around your eyes, contrition. Tomorrow,
I will drive hundreds of miles, as before.
My rash won’t heal until I am gone.

https://tenmillionflies.com/poison-sumac/2439.html

Drag Your Tape Gun Across the Night

By CL Bledsoe / September 10, 2021

Boxes seem to dent the floor their placement,
a weight that sucks the future in.

So long I’ve waited to wait for the wait,
which will begin any minute now.

These things I’ve dragged across hell’s creation:
detritus abandoned. Here’s a woman’s hand
that forgot me and a face I’ve forgotten—
scowling, I’m sure.

It’s so tiring, living. I will need rugs.

What kind of people display fake fruit for guests?
Welcome, and remember the hunger that
can never be filled.
A face can do the same work without the worry
of dust.

Here’s a list of three things I’ll fail to do:
enjoy life,
overthrow the government,
record an album of songs about monsters.

If I work very hard and forgo all enjoyment,
someday, I’ll still be broke and miserable
but in a different pair of shoes.

When there’s no change to be had, people
pretend it’s the janitor’s fault they’ve
left trash everywhere.

Sometimes, if you throw yourself under the bus,
the bus drags you home. This is as close
to a new life as many of us can afford.

Whose turn is it to stack the dishes in the sink?
I’m supposed to tell you to be grateful for having a sink.

https://tenmillionflies.com/drag-your-tape-gun-across-the-night/2444.html

Back Exam

By Matt Dennison / November 25, 2021

X-ray technician holds film to light,
whispers aloud:
“My God you're constipated...”

https://tenmillionflies.com/back-exam/2474.html

Woman arrested for selling adult toys at Santa gathering

By Lance Watson / December 23, 2021

Her motivation was simple enough. "Why should the kids get all the presents?" a red-clad woman said as Milford police handcuffed and escorted her out of the annual outdoor Santa celebration, where parents and kids gather peacefully each year to celebrate the season.

But as Santa was busy handling the line of kids waiting to tell him their Christmas wishes, an unidentified woman stationed herself about 200 feet away, plopped down a large mail sack, and started removing adult toys, one by one.

"Who's been naughty?" she yelled. "Better yet, who wants to be naughty?"

As she removed the first "toy" from the bag—a large black cylindrical object—observers say that an audible gasp erupted from the parents in attendance, with some snickers sneaking through the murmur.

"It vibrates!" she said. "Admit you've been naughty, and for 25 dollars, it's yours!"

When no one approached her, she started removing other objects.

"These little suckers help your naughty man stay naughty longer," she said. "Pack of five for $20!"

"And this little purple pleasure pole will keep you ladies warm while your man is out doing who knows what!" Another collective gasp emanated from the crowd.

Parents could be seen leading their youngsters away, some said, while others noted that some left the Santa line and moved over the see more of the woman's wares.

But soon enough, police arrived and broke up the commotion.

"It's not fair! It's just not fair!" the woman yelled, as police led her away.

"Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas" this year's Santa said, looking out over the now sparse crowd. But few remained, and so Santa packed up his gear and left the scene. Christmas lights were all that remained, blinking randomly from the liquor store across the street.

https://tenmillionflies.com/woman-arrested-for-handing-out-adult-toys-at-santa-gathering/2487.html

There’s poop in my underwear

By Daniel J. Flore III / December 27, 2021

https://soundcloud.com/user-674857679/theres-poop-in-my-underwear

when my wife gave me shit
for the poop in my underwear
I had, had enough of it
I can't help
the crap
on my hanes
I said plain
but she wanted me disgusted and shamed
out on the streets
these streets
so unforgiving
for a man that's stinking
in his underwear
but she didn't care
I don't know
why I had to jump through poop hoops
in an endless
loop
to explain it's only natural
that a man like me
have poop atrocities
that society
doesn't understand
if only we could reach out and take each other by the hand
and make a poop stained stand
underneath this dawn this sun
and then the underwear revolution would've begun
but instead I stand
with a laundry basket in my hands
feeling alone
on the cold stone
of this city unforgiving
reeking
of misunderstanding
I wave my soiled underwear
in the air
and wonder who will care
who will care
we've all had poop on our underwear
we need to unite
not be divided by each others poop
but see my poop in you and yours in mine
but alas it's just on another day
where were grossed out
by the poop that got away

and I say
when
when
when
when will your disdain
for my poop end

https://tenmillionflies.com/theres-poop-in-my-underwear/2483.html

Lure

By Tom Strong / December 28, 2021

I’m that fly fisherman
way upstream
where I’ve never been

waist deep in quiet water
catching myself
trying too hard.

https://tenmillionflies.com/lure/2498.html

2022

11 pieces

SHIT

By Daniel J. Flore III / May 24, 2022

looking at
the enormous dump
I just took
I say to myself

you’ve been carrying
that around all day?!
no wonder
you felt like shit

https://tenmillionflies.com/shit/2549.html

you take what you can get

By Lance Watson / June 13, 2022

it was another late
morning
mid week

i was rolling a skinny
joint
with some leftovers
from the table

when my lady walked out
of the bathroom

oh my god, she said
i just laid
the biggest turd
i've ever seen
it took minutes
to come out
i just sat there &
waited
then i got up
to look at it
it was huge
circular
i couldn't see
the end of it

really? i said

really, she said
but it was brown &
firm
well-formed,
so i must be
okay,
she said

that's good, i said

it is, she said

then she sat down
next to me:
my woman

that's a skinny joint
you're rolling,
she said

it is, i said
it is

https://tenmillionflies.com/you-take-what-you-can-get-2/2565.html

Shame On Me

By Tom Strong / August 26, 2022

I didn’t get the job
cuz I wasn’t who
they expected.

I didn’t sell the painting
cuz it didn’t fit
their frames.

I wasn’t promised heaven
cuz I didn’t concede
being born in sin.

I couldn’t handle
the shame
so I changed

met expectations
trimmed the painting
declared myself a sinner.

https://tenmillionflies.com/shame-on-me/2592.html

I wrote this for you, asshole

By Daniel J. Flore III / August 28, 2022

I wrote this for you, asshole
because you parked and took up two spaces

so I am taking this opportunity
to write this to you, asshole

because I never got the chance to call you an asshole to your face

which I probably wouldn’t have had the balls to do anyway, asshole

https://tenmillionflies.com/i-wrote-this-for-you-asshole/2598.html

DANNY AND THE GIANT PASTY

By MARK ANTHONY PEARCE / August 30, 2022

"Some cunts
stole my shoes!"
said Danny
I looked
at his socks
soggy
and soaked
stepping
in puddles
"I was asleep
in the park
minding me
own business
and the cunts
stole my shoes!"
Danny’s dad
up in Scotland
used to read him
Robert Burns
his dad is dead
and so is my dad
Danny’s child
is also dead
I think about his
missing tooth
his poems
about Christ
and Calvary
I asked him
if he wanted
something to eat
he said he would
like that
he told me
he could
buy himself
a cheap pair
of sandals
at a charity shop
for six quid
so I gave him
the six quid
We went
to the pasty shop
he wanted a giant
and before
he ate it

he used it
for a few moments
to warm his left foot
and I gave him
some money
for a bus fare
he said he had
to get to Henbury
I told him
if I saw him again
I’d make sure
I’d say hello

Bristol, November 2008

https://tenmillionflies.com/danny-and-the-giant-pasty/2604.html

Sometimes I sit in a room

By Ken Tomaro / September 11, 2022

and listen to the silence
which isn't really silence
but a collection of many subtle sounds
similar to a television or radio
playing in the background
they are there but they are not:
the white noise in the ceiling vents
the muffled car horn in the street below
or heavy machinery backing up on the same street
even the constant ringing in my ears
or the sound I imagine a cloud makes
gliding past the window

https://tenmillionflies.com/sometimes-i-sit-in-a-room/2612.html

The Death of Everything

By Ken Tomaro / September 12, 2022

life is a 72 year old hangover
and I am tired
tired of the endless meetings
tired of the cordial conversations
the unfriendly faces
the stares from others
the death of compassion
I’m tired of the sun
and the cracks in the sidewalks
and the crackling sounds my aging bones make
I’m tired of the fiber
I’m tired of smudged glasses, running errands,
filling the gas tank, the bills, fighting for approval,
fighting to belong,
tired of how the other half lives
but I am not tired of being alive
I’m tired of being a ghost
in a room full of the living
I’m tired of looking at the calendar
of making decisions
that aren’t mine to make
of paying taxes
of winter and the death of everything
of loneliness
but I’m not tired of the birds
they have done nothing
for me to be tired of

https://tenmillionflies.com/the-death-of-everything/2617.html

CHRISTMAS AT THE MENTAL HOSPITAL

By Daniel J. Flore III / September 26, 2022

I never had to
spend
Christmas
at the
mental hospital
I imagine it’s
exactly like
it sounds

https://tenmillionflies.com/christmas-at-the-mental-hospital/2622.html

Night Comes Down

By Jason Ryberg / October 27, 2022

Cows doze along one side of the barb-wire,
tombstones on the other,

a few ragged leaves and a cigarette wrapper
scurry across the highway,

a skittish breeze is playing
a child’s game in the corn-rows
while rattling all the skeletal trees
out behind the house like a forest of spears.

It’s true, out here on the prairie,
night comes down before
you even know it.

https://tenmillionflies.com/night-comes-down/2647.html

SPIRIT AND / OR WIND

By Jason Ryberg / October 28, 2022

The wind has brought its
army of rowdy ghosts to
the windows and doors

of the house, tonight;
"We know you're in there," the wind
is saying, pushing

and tugging at things.
"Why won't you come out and play
like you use to. Come

on, man, is it true
what they're saying, that you've just
taken too many

hard falls, too many
blows to the heart and head and
come up lame (and left

for dead or worse, one
of the barely-living dead)?
You've only got your-

self to blame, you know.
But hey, suppose we were to
bring some serious

thunder and lightning
and rain? Would that fire you up,
a little, mother-

fucker? Would that take
some of the sting from your pain?
All we want is a

little of your time
and maybe an offering
(or two) of some of

that wine you're drinkin',
there, for all our fallen and
missing brethren that

just never managed
to find the spirit or the
wind to rise again.

https://tenmillionflies.com/spirit-and-or-wind/2652.html

Rudolph’s red nose looks like a big zit

By Daniel J. Flore III / November 17, 2022

I’m smoking
and drinking more—
it’s almost the holidays

I need to be as numb as possible

last year Santa broke his neck falling off my roof into a pile of reindeer shit

nobody spiked the eggnog

I don’t know what Yule tide is
and I don’t wanna know

leave me alone it’s almost Christmas
and I want to melt like a snowflake
and get as fat as frosty the snowman

https://tenmillionflies.com/rudolphs-red-nose-looks-like-a-big-zit/2672.html

2023

4 pieces

Shaving my legs

By Leeza Simmons Sikes / March 21, 2023

I take
the razor
all
the
way
down
my
leg

a thin line
of blood
arcs over
my thigh

it looks
like the first
color of a rainbow
at night

I keep staring
at it

then I use bath water
to clean up the mess
like it was
just an accident

https://tenmillionflies.com/shaving-my-legs/2692.html

Phoenix, 1965

By Mike Casetta / March 23, 2023

In a park
near my home
some big fucker

who didn’t like
my face
took a swing at me.

I blocked
his right hand
with my left

& by chance
my Tiparillo cigar
smashed into his nose

before he
could land
a punch.

It happened
so quickly
all I remember

are the sparks
& his screams
as I ran away.

https://tenmillionflies.com/phoenix-1965-2/2697.html

I GUESS I SHOULD PLAY FRISBEE OR BUY AN ICE CREAM

By Daniel J. Flore III / April 9, 2023

it’s 75 degrees
the first real nice day
since winter

I’m staring at a patch of grass
with a confused look on my face
like I should be
doing something outside

a fly lands on the railing
he looks like he doesn’t know
what he’s doing either

it’s spring

it’s beautiful
and perhaps that’s
the biggest problem

https://tenmillionflies.com/i-guess-i-should-play-frisbee-or-buy-an-ice-cream/2744.html

VOMIT

By Daniel J. Flore III / August 28, 2023

at this party
smoking a cigarette
with sun in my eyes
my face flushed
out of breath
I just threw up
and only the fly
in it
cares

https://tenmillionflies.com/vomit/2762.html

2025

3 pieces

Holding the bong

By Lance Watson / February 26, 2025

it's 11 o'clock
at night &
i'm striking the bong

standing at my window, staring
at the lights,
pondering the universe
& the past

i can't explain much
about what has happened
or what will

i can only tell you that
11 o'clock at night
is a lonely time
to be standing at my window,
holding a bong

https://tenmillionflies.com/holding-the-bong/2461.html

SOME BIPOLAR TYPE SHIT AT THE PARK

By Leeza Simmons Sikes / March 17, 2025

no I don’t wanna
go for a walk
you fuck

you want me to walk
around this park
and enjoy what?

these fucking trees?
and people picking up dogshit
and their screaming, spoiled kids?

I like to walk to go places
this trail goes nowhere
no wonder you wanna fucking walk it

https://tenmillionflies.com/some-bipolar-type-shit-at-the-park/2847.html

Could you please shut the fuck up?

By Lance Watson / March 19, 2025

The couple at the next table
arguing about politics.
The guy at the bar
telling a story like he’s Hemingway reborn.
The TV spitting out bad news
no one can fix.

I sip my drink,
listen to the ice melt.

I could say something.
I could stand up,
slam my glass down,
make a speech.

But what’s the point?

I just want the silence.
I want the sound of nothing.

So I close my eyes,
finish my drink,
and hope the world
loses its voice
for just one
goddamn second.

https://tenmillionflies.com/could-you-please-shut-the-fuck-up/2860.html