



THE IMMACULATE DEFECATION

A SHORT STORY



OWEN MILLER

2018

Everyone has a poop story. And everyone knows their poop story by heart, and if they're a half-way decent storyteller they've perfected it. A poop story is an incredible canvas – poop is funny, and someone else pooping themselves is hysterical, yet the character of the poop-struck victim is a tragic one, and better still, universally relatable. We live our lives in fear of this ultimate shame, but it is a fact of the human condition that your body will, at a time and place not of your choosing, betray you in the most spectacular way. It might succumb to illness, leaving you food poisoned and at the mercy of your weakened, bubbling bowels. Or, it might lure you into a sense of calm, convincing you that yes, this next fart will be a harmless nuisance like all other farts, only to strike when your guard is down. Pooping your pants is a lot like Russian roulette – you don't know when, but if you keep pulling the trigger, eventually a bullet's going to come out.

My story takes place in Ms. Pomerantz' second grade classroom. I came out the other side luckier than most, able to preserve at least my dignity and anonymity, if not my self-respect. Like every poop story, this one has lodged itself deeply in my memory, retaining the same intensity as the day I lived through it. Nevertheless, I kept it a secret for years, telling no one until I moved forty-five minutes away and successfully cut ties with everyone from my old town.

I remember sitting at my desk, my eyes locked on the clock on the wall across from me as I watched the seconds-hand lurch forward in agonizing slow-motion. A bead of sweat crept down my forehead, but it was the middle of winter and the ancient heater groaning in the corner provided only enough warmth to keep us alive. There was ten-minutes left until the bell rang, signaling the end of the day and my escape. I had to shit, urgently. My stomach

threatened to implode from the unbearable strain of holding back the fecal reckoning, and I bent over double in my seat. Suddenly, Ms. Pomerantz' shrill voice cut through the excited second grade chatter and interrupted my desperate staring contest with the clock. She announced that it was time for us all to march, *single file, please*, into the cubby room. If you're not familiar with the concept of cubby room, it was essentially a large storage closet in the back of the classroom, honeycombed with backpack-sized, open-mouth lockers where we kept our belongings during the day. The class immediately erupted, leaping from their seats and sprinting towards the cubby room, forming a bottle neck in door. I stayed in my seat and watched them, eyes bulging and mouths agape, gasping for breath like salmon frantically pushing through a tiny stream, their bodies crushed together into a single, heaving mass. I rose to my feet slowly, leaning on the desk to support my trembling knees. My gurgling volcano of a colon was becoming dangerously unstable, and I held my breath as I fought to keep its choking fumes and scorching lava inside me. A jolt of pain ripped through my lower abdomen, threatening to bring me to my knees – I needed to release some of this pressure.

I glanced at Ms. Pomerantz. Her bathroom-break policy was notorious throughout the elementary school; we'd all heard the story of the poor kid who, in a moment of desperation not dissimilar to mine, asked if he could go to the bathroom in the middle of a state-wide standardized test. Unfortunately for him, Ms. Pomerantz had been selected as the test's administrator and, despite his begging and insistence that it was indeed an emergency, forced him to remain in his seat. A terrible choice was placed in front of him: either suffer through the horror of shitting himself in the gymnasium, surrounded by every single one of his silent, test-taking schoolmates, or endure Ms. Pomerantz's legendary fury, which was sure to rain down

upon him like brimstone if he ran to the bathroom against her orders. He decided to shit himself.

I was determined to not make the same mistake, but something kept me from making a break for the toilet. Maybe it was my fear of Ms. Pomerantz and her itchy trigger-finger when it came to calls home (I've lost track of how many times that year she called my parents to inform them that I was *a disruption to the class* – which was only kind of true and entirely due to my inability to keep my mouth shut), or maybe I just underestimated the severity of the situation. Either way, I decided that the best course of action would be to bide my time and wait for the cubby room to empty out, at which point I could nonchalantly walk in and, if all went according to plan, release the fart stabbing through my innards like a spear.

There's an old saying that goes, *no battle plan survives first contact with the enemy*. It's a good one. I timed my approach of the cubby room perfectly, entering the now empty and quiet closet a split second after the last student walked out. Finally, I was alone, in a space safe from the judgmental eyes of my peers. I relaxed myself, and leaned forward against my cubby like a pilgrim whispering to the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. Much to my surprise, nothing happened. I was frustrated, and confused; just a minute before I'd been fighting to hold in the fart with every fiber of my being, but now I couldn't make it budge. I pushed, ever so slightly, trying to coax it out without releasing the flood gates. Still, nothing, yet the pain in my stomach was still increasing, the spear twisting and sinking deeper into my gut. I gave the fart everything I had, exerting maximum force in a last-ditch effort to deflate my swollen, screaming bowels.

I shit myself. A gasp escaped my lips as a perfect, firm little spherical turd escaped my ass and settled in the seat of pants. My eyes widened as I realized what had happened, and

what I was about to have to do. In the last minute or so of every day, Ms. Pomerantz would wait menacingly at the classroom door, refusing to let us go until everyone was sitting silently and at attention at their desks. If I wanted to leave I would have to return to my seat, and I would have to sit in it, and I'd have to do it in what had essentially become dirty diapers, like a God-damn infant. I'm not sure if the phrase "fuck it," was a part of my second grade vocabulary, but there's no other way to describe the dejected, stoic attitude I adopted as I stepped out of the dark, smelly closet, and into the light of the classroom.

I began the long walk to my desk, walking as naturally as possible with my head down to avoid any incidental eye-contact. After what felt like miles, I looked up, expecting to be almost on top of my chair; I was half-way across the classroom. At that very moment, I felt the poop shift. It slipped through my loose boxers and tumbled down my pants, pin balling wildly as I increased my pace, trying to make it to my seat before the unthinkable occurred. It was too late. Like the most disgusting mini-golf hole ever imagined, the turd, retaining its unusual, globe-shape, popped out of my pants at the ankle and slowly rolled to a stop a few inches behind me. I didn't stop for an instant, finally looking back at my dropping once I had made it to my desk safely. Incredibly, no one had seen the indescribable act that I had just committed. I was blown away by my luck, but a hopeful glance at the clock reminded that I wasn't out of the woods yet. There were still a couple minutes until the bell rang, and my shit was on the floor in the middle of the classroom. I had to think fast.

Um... excuse me, Ms. P? What's that on the ground? I tried to sound as innocent as possible as I pointed out the sad, brown lump sitting guiltily at my classmates' feet. Ms. Pomerantz looked at me, and then my poop. A confused look spread across her face, and the

entire class turned in their seats to get a better look. Curiosity overcame a girl sitting only a foot or two away from the turd-ball, and she left her chair to get a better look. Of course, it had to be Jaime, the girl I'd had a crush on since kindergarten. My body went numb with terror and disbelief as I watched her remove a Kleenex from her pocket and slowly get down on her hands and knees. Time seemed to stop as she leaned closer, her face eventually hovering just inches above my poop, and prodded it with a Kleenex-covered finger. She realized her mistake, recoiling in disgust as her senses processed the unholy waste in front of her, but not before she succeeded in wiping it into the fibers of the carpet.

Pandemonium ensued as the class realized it had a turd in its midst. Not even Ms. Pomerantz could stop them as they rushed to the scene of the crap, screaming out hypotheses attempting to explain how an orb of feces could have miraculously appeared in the room. *Someone pooped their pants!* one voice called out. *Someone brought it back from the bathroom!* another responded. Desperate to steer them away from the (correct) assumption that it was human feces, I yelled that someone probably tracked it in on their shoes. I explained, to no one in particular, that I had seen some dog poop outside, and that this poop bore an eerily similar resemblance.

Just as Ms. Pomerantz fought her way to the front of the crowd and came face-to-face with my stool, a divine sound split the air. The bell rang out like the trumpet of God, and I followed my classmates out the door to freedom. As I strolled out of the school and into the familiar cold of a New Jersey, I broke out in a grin, realizing that I'd done the impossible. I had pooped in public, and escaped undiscovered. I felt untouchable – I pulled off an immaculate defecation, and lived to tell the tale.