

Bzzzzzzzzzzssssplat

by Chris Ladd
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They are everywhere. Big and loud and black and ugly, these goddamned flies have invaded my



WHERE THE
HELL IS
WAYNE, ME?

room, two and three at a time flying in circles near the big floor lamp by the desk, buzzing and bouncing off and around any solid thing exposed. I think they know, sense somehow, their true repulsive and despicable natures, and this is why they fly and circle and buzz and plunge around the empty spaces of my room, then whip their filthy little bodies around to fly full speed into the ceiling, my ceiling, in pitiable attempts to end their worthless, stupid, disrupting lives.

I've been trying very hard of late to help them in this end.

I don't know how they got here. They must come from someplace, these flies. People used to believe flies generated spontaneously, from mud or old meat. Not these flies. These flies are from someplace. They were born, spawned somewhere in a far off puddle of muck, and through some rotten pilgrimage they've come through my door, into the place where I sleep. I don't know where they've come from and I don't care. They're going to hell.

Flies are inside of my room.

I sealed it, spent twenty minutes fixing index cards with double stick tape and fitting them to the bottom of the door, over the small crack where light spills in from the hallway. I overlapped the cards so they make a fan, to keep the air and the flies out of the room. They're not getting in underneath the door.

It's not possible, not anymore. They can't.

I laid old textbooks over the vent to block the air from coming in. They can't get in under the door or through the vents.

Now there is no heat. I wake up at night, and my nose is cold, and

CC Kill them when I can, standing balanced on the edge of my desk and nightstand with a metal spatula and a rumpled wad of Kleenex. I wait for them to bounce off the ceiling. They ram their tiny grubby noses into the plaster and bounce, bounce, buzz, and then I hit them with the spatula."

the air is stuffy and filled with bouncing specks of buzzing filth.

They must come from inside the walls.

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It's a very nice spatula.

It's one of those combination ones with a bottle opener and slots cut in the side for scraping old cooked-on hamburger and stuff off of the grill, and it's got a serrated edge to cut meat apart and see if it's finished.

It still has hamburger grease stuck on from the last time I grilled out, probably a month or two ago, and so every time I whack at the ceiling it makes this really satisfying *clang* noise and leaves another faint black rectangle on the white plaster ceiling. The rectangles on the ceiling all have three slanted lines in

them, from the holes in the spatula, and they're mostly above the lamp in the corner.

They keep coming. I've killed tens of dozens of them, chased them about my room like a rabid squirrel in an acorn factory, and they keep coming. No matter how many I kill.

Just the turn of my key in the lock summons them, I think, and every time I come back to my room from someplace there are three more, crawling on the window or ceiling, oblivious to normal gravity. I can't hit the window with the spatula; I squish them with old paperbacked books and wipe their squashed bodies off the glass with Kleenex.

Their damned guts smear the glass and I've cleaned the window with Windex, but it's no good, and those goddamned entombed streaks fog and glare in at me when the sun shines in from the west and criss-cross my view of the outside. Even in death.

They keep coming. They can't come from the garbage, there is no garbage, the garbage is empty. I have no food, no drink, nothing for them, so why, why, why do they come?

Now, even right now as I type, there is one, trapped between the blind and the glass of the window, bouncing between them, stopping enough for me to write nearly a sentence, a full sentence, this sentence,

and then throwing itself back and forth, beating its wings and itself against the glass, the blind, the glass, the blind. I'm not well. I don't sleep as well as I should, I'm not sleeping, and one of the flies bounced off my nose last night and woke me, scared me upright in my covers.

There are flies in my room, and now when I open my door I don't cringe or flinch. I know they will be there, waiting for me, bouncing and buzzing. I know they will be there. I wish I could say I've learned to manage my inward reaction to these revolting glorified maggots, wish I could say I've learned through some fantastic Zen to appreciate them for their place in nature or the intrinsic value of their lives.

I have not.

There is nothing more satisfying to me than the feeling of their worthless exoskeletons collapsing into their filthy innards as I squash yet another captured intruder on the inside of a Kleenex until there is no longer even a carcass, just a smear, a homogenous blackish green smudge on the tissue. In the hierarchy of living organisms, common houseflies lie just below snot.

I wish there were more of them sometimes. More of them would warrant some kind of real action, some kind of response; an exterminator, a roll of fly tape, a genuine flyswatter. But they come two and three and four at a time, enough to taunt me, to roust me to madness with cheap books and spatulas, enough to empty my Kleenex boxes. From all appearances, these flies are going nowhere. They're not leaving my room. I live there, I have to stay, and so I can only hope, pray even, that appearances can be deceiving.