

FLUSH IT - an internal monologue

by Gary Garrison

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You desperately try to ignore it, but that computer or typewriter sitting on your makeshift writer's table is like a two-ton elephant sitting in your living room and staring back at you. It's got eyes that follow you everywhere. You won't, can't, go near it. You force yourself not to think about it. You walk out of the room so you don't have to look at it. Seconds later, you're back in the room, staring it down. Impulsively, you sit, crack your knuckles, and prepare to create.

Now you've been sitting there for hours. Nothing's coming. Same thing happened yesterday, and the day before that. You're getting more and more despondent. You feel like you'll never write again. Your mind's blank—not a creative impulse anywhere. You think if you work on an old draft of a play it'll jump-start your imagination. You look at the old play. Nothing. You feel worse. You go back to a blank page to start something new. Nothing. You flip back to the old play. Nothing again. You call a friend to feel better. He makes you feel worse. Nothing's working. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so you smoke another pack of cigarettes. Now you feel sick. You eat another pizza. You feel worse. STOP!!!

Grab a pencil, rip these pages out (or Xerox them), check into what you're really feeling, and check it off .

___ I'm too old to be writing. They're only doing plays by eighteen-year-olds anyway.

___ I'm _____ (fill in the blank), and theatres are only doing plays by African Americans, women, gay people, or the physically challenged anyway.

___ Most theatres are only doing new plays by known playwrights.

___ I never studied playwriting. Everyone will see I'm a fake.

___ I've never had anything produced so I can't present myself as a writer.

___ I don't even have an agent. No theatre will take me seriously.

Professor _____ (fill in the blank) implied I was a lousy writer. And he's right. Never mind that I disagree with him on just about everything else.

With this, he's right.

___ I never heard back from the Theatre in a Tent, and they're a small theatre, so why bother? God, if I can't even get them to look at my work...

___ I don't have enough money to mail my work out once I've finished it, so what's the point?

___ I don't have a printer cartridge or paper for my computer, or a print ribbon for my

typewriter.

___ I hate rewriting.

___ I never finish anything.

___ I had such a bad reading of this play, it's not worth working on.

___ No one liked my last play, so what's the use of writing another?

___ All I write is one-acts anyway, and no one's producing one-acts.

___ My mother called and asked when I was going to take life seriously and get a real job instead of waiting tables so I'm free to write.

___ My boyfriend/best friend called and said that he hopes that this play doesn't get any interest because then I'll be in rehearsal and he hates it when I spend that much time away from him.

___ No one will ever produce this play because the issue of _____ (fill in the blank with anything you are currently writing about). That subject is "over-written" too dark too controversial too embarrassing for my parents to know I've written about in need of too much research before I write already written better in Angels in America.

___ I don't really like the theatre anyway.

___ Nobody can make a living in the theatre.

___ I'd rather write a screenplay.

___ I'm better at writing poetry, fiction, essays, term papers, or short stories.

___ The only director I know did a bad reading of my last play, so who could I get to direct another reading of anything I write?

___ Everyone liked my last play so much, how can I top that?

___ My heart's been broken recently, so I'm afraid it'll spill out onto my pages.

_____ (fill in the blank).

_____ (one more time; you've got plenty, I'm sure).

OK. You've identified why you can't get anywhere in your writing or won't even go near your computer or typewriter. Now wad this up and go flush it in the toilet. These are weak excuses that keep you from doing what you're meant to do. Writing's hard. Rewriting's harder. Submitting your plays out into the universe is a nightmare. But you're a playwright, damn it. It's what you have to do to be heard by as many people as possible. Stop with the excuses. Now, go to work.

