

Confession

Jim ~~Bottomly~~ Bottomly gazed blankly at his typewriter. He'd been sitting there for four hours vainly seeking an idea; the hour hand of the clock was on the downbeat again indicating that it was ~~morningz~~ past midnight. He picked up what he had come to regard as his bible, ~~the~~ Roget's Thesaurus, for the hundred~~th~~ time, and flipped through~~x~~ its pages at random in the hope of finding a word that would set off a train of thought in his mind. ~~Itxxxx~~ the search ^{was} fruitless, ~~so~~ he set the book back in its niche. He ~~xxxxxxdxxxx~~ drew out a manuscript envelope ~~xxxx~~ marked "plots for short stories." He emptied the contents onto the table beside his typewriter and began rifling through odd bits of paper on which he had scribbled hasty outlines of plots when he'd been struck with an inspiration. ~~Somexxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ The pencilled writing on some ~~xxxx~~ had smeared, making them illegible; ~~xxxx~~ the ~~xxxx~~ on some of the inked ones ~~xxxxxx~~ had been jotted down too hastily to be ~~xxxxxx~~ recognizable; those he could read no longer made sense/ or seemed trite He should have gotten to work on the stories the minute he'd gotten his inspirations, but he'd always said, "I'll let it go until tomorrow." ~~xxxxxx~~ Well, why not? there were usually things of the moment that were too pressing for him to ignore. Still, if he wanted to be a writer, he'd have to do more writing. Something still might be salvaged if he typed those notes on some filing cards as he'd always intended doing; he might just as well do that while waiting for an idea to strike him. He rummaged around his untidy desk until he found some three by five cards. He looked at the ~~xxxxxx~~ messy pile of notes and, appalled at the ~~xxxxxx~~ number of slips bearing his ideas, he thought, "Well, I might just as well let it go until tomorrow when I have more time." Then the idea to sort the notes he ^{that} might be able to use from those ~~xx~~ that were useless took hold of him, and for five ~~minutes~~ he sat there putting the notes he intended throwing away on the left side of the typewriter and the others on the right. With the pile not appreciably diminished because of the time taken for deciphering, Jim decided, "I might as well let this go until tomorrow too. He put the

right hand pile back into the manuscript envelope and picked up the left and pile and bent down toward the wastebasket. He paused, reconsidered, and put those notes back into the envelope too.

Wondering what to do next, Jim gazed at the ~~x~~ library books lining the bookshelves; he'd meant to ~~xxxx~~ do a lot of reading, but had put it off and consequently, the library books had ~~gone xxxxxxxx~~ done nothing but gather dust. He silently read the ~~xxx~~ now-familiar titles, "Further Foolishness, The Red and The Black, Dark Duel, The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, Harper Prize Short Stories, The Twentieth Century Novel, The Conflict ~~to~~ of Naturalism and Humanism, The Mighty Three, Living Under Tension, The Daily Companion, Works of Oscar Wilde, Discovering Poetry, Poets of America, Development of the English Novel, History of English Literature, Short Stories of James Farrell." ~~xxxx~~ ^I Migawd, how'd he ever accumulate so doggone many books from the library." He wondered how many were ~~xxxx~~ overdue. Anxiously, he got up and flipped ~~through xxxxxxxx~~ open the back covers. ~~My~~ gosh, here's one that was due two ~~xx~~ weeks ago, and here's another that must have been checked out the same day." ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Most of the others were from the school library and were checked out for an indefinite period. "~~Oh~~ Better try not to forget to return some of these," Jim thought.

His ~~mind xxxxxxxx~~ eyes caught the clock which now read 1:45 and his mind snapped back to the paper to be written. He put his hands over his eyes and tried to think. Giving it up as a bad job, he turned to his letter box and thought of ~~xxx~~ all the unanswered letters that had piled up. He ought to at least send back some cards. "But what the hell, I might as well wait until after exams."

He started to make out his schedule for next semester he decided it could wait.
He ~~gxxxx~~ tried to straighten up his ~~xxx~~ disordered desk and got it half cleared before deciding to let the rest of it go ~~x~~ "until tomorrow."

"Guess I'll turn a couple of somersaults to get the blood into circulation," he thought and got up ~~to~~ and walked over to his bed turning a half-hearted ~~xxx~~ forward roll. He didn't have momentum enough to land

3-3-3

on his feet so he lay on his back. "Well, I'll just rest here until I count to ~~10~~ ten: then I'll go back and write my story," he told himself. "I might as well make it ^{fifty} 50," he mused after he'd finished the ten. He ~~stiffledxxxxxxx~~ opened ~~x~~ his mouth and yawned audibly. "Guess I'll write that story tomorrow," he said ~~to himself, xxxxxxxxxx~~ relaxing and giving himself up to Morpheus.