

Writer's Cough

by Ed Higgins

Ok, so I'm sitting here trying to write through a frigging cold. And I. . .Oops, wait a sec!. . . I'm stopped, astounded, stunned between coughing my left lung clear over my keyboard and watching it flopping on the back of my desk just now. . . Oh shit! my spat-up, spasm-seized lung just slid behind my printer and down the crack between the wall and desk. . . wait, wait, hold on a minute. . . . Ok, ok took my slipper off and I can just feel it with my toes. . . too squishy to grip though . . . there, there, nope. . . . wait, slowly, slowly. . . . yeah, great, barely managed to drag it out from behind and under the desk with my scrunched up toes—once I took my sock off. Kinda looks ok. . . dust bunny-coated on one side and I've had to flicked off a couple of lost sticky notes, an old toothpick and a blue paper clip. . . . but—oops, oh-damn, looky-here, just noticed a rough three inch tear on one side of the upper lob. . . sheesh-to-shit!! what-a-crime, musta happened when I jerked the poor thing around the surge protector. Well, all right, some superglue'll fix that, I think. Give me a bit while I climb outa my loft here and go rinse this ugly mess off in the kitchen sink.

Ah, damn-it-all, the agony of writing, let alone interruptions like this frigging medical crisis!

Fine, fine back now, and I think the tear was just where lefty attached to some bronchial tube or other. After rinsing as best I could, I stuffed the whole pinkish, prolapsed fucker back down my throat and am hoping for the best.

As added insurance I'm chewing another piece of zinc gum. Tastes like a half-rusted galvanized rain gutter (if you need a taste analogy for a fucking ineffectual zinc cold remedy). But I'm a true believer anyway. Still, zinc gum doesn't keep your damn lungs from flying out during a raging coughing fit.

And would your believe, one of the lost sticky notes from under my desk that I flicked off my dust-bunnied lung is just the inspiration I need to finish up this frigging story I've been stumbling around in. "Snot. Do something with snot," the still bright-yellow sticky note says. That's it, of course! Not only have I been trying to write while literally coughing my left lung out, my green-cement-loaded sinuses have given me a headache the size of the Starship Enterprise.

So, I'm thinking of adding nasal decongestants and acetaminophen to the zinc gum crap info. And snot hasta be good for a narrative line or two. Write what you know, they say. Ok, I'm about to intensify the plot-character-coughed-out-lung-crisis with a virulent snot attack.

Meanwhile, your narrator-protagonist seems to be lung safe, for the moment at least. But wait, wait hold on a minute . . . again. . . . now my cold's recurring nose-tickling's demanding an imminent snee. . . . sneeee. . . . sneeze! There it goes, rudely flying outa my partially relieved nose. OMG! all over my iMac screen with an unsightly, viscous, green-infused splat drooling down the screen's center, while still unwinding from my schnozzle like a loosed fireman's hose. Whoa, an embarrassing mucous lament, mostly the color of limes, sliding slowly onto my desktop! Damn, what to do, what to do? No hankie, no Kleenex. And I'm inches away from another coughing fit. Or just a follow-up snee. . . . sneeee. . . . sneeze!! There it goes, ripping onto the screen again.

That's it, that's it, I'm too fucking discouraged to carry on any further with this frigging story. No real resolution anyway. . . . so I better just leave it for now.

Hmmmmm. . . . maybe a double-whiskey hot-toddy will help the ol' inspiration along? Or at least comfort my overactive sinuses somewhat. So, now I'm climbing outa my loft headed for the fifth of

Southern Comfort stashed in the kitchen's under-sink cupboard. Yes, this story's gonna get better before I'm done.

