



Another Bullshit Night in Suck City: A Memoir

By Nick Flynn

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"Devastating....Ranks with Frank Conroy's *Stop-Time*."--Michael Cunningham

"Sometimes I'd see my father, walking past my building on his way to another nowhere. I could have given him a key, offered a piece of my floor. But if I let him inside the line between us would blur, my own slow-motion car wreck would speed up." Nick Flynn met his father for the third time when he was twenty-seven years old, working as a caseworker in a homeless shelter in Boston. As a teenager he'd received letters from this stranger, a self-proclaimed poet and con man doing time in federal prison for bank robbery. Nick, his own life precariously unsettled, was living alternately in a ramshackle boat and in a warehouse that was once a strip joint. In bold, dazzling prose, *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* (a phrase Flynn senior uses to describe his life on the streets) tells the story of two lives and the trajectory that led Nick and his father into that homeless shelter, onto those streets, and finally to each other.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Flynn's wayward father, a self-styled writer and ex-con, describes his life on Boston's streets as "another bullshit night in Suck City": he hangs out in ATM lobbies, stuffs his coat with newspaper and is often "still drunk from the night before." This biting memoir describes the years poet Flynn (*Some Ether*; *Blind Huber*) spent, in his late 20s, working at one of the city's homeless shelters, where his path crisscrossed with his down-and-out father's. In examining their troublesome relationship, Flynn admits to feeling lost, as he turned to alcohol and came close to being on the other side of the shelter admissions booth himself. Punchy language and short chapters make what could otherwise be excessively painful more palatable (e.g., "Fact: In 1839 Dostoyevsky witnessed a mob of peasants attacking his father.... they poured vodka down his throat until he died. Fact: I can watch my father pouring vodka down his own throat any day of the week. My role is to play the son, though I often feel like a mob of peasants"). Although it's depressing, the book never seems hopeless, because readers know the author has succeeded at doing what his father only pretended to do: write, and write well.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Poet Flynn was either fortunate or unfortunate enough to live a life so ripe for a good memoir. The events in *Another Bullshit Night* are extraordinary enough to spur critical debate about whether the story would be better served in fictional form. In fact, the story is so enlightening that Flynn's experimentation with narrative styles (one act plays, interviews, stream-of-consciousness) gets only cursory mention—a real free pass for book reviewers. The critics leap to call his prose poetic and lyrical, but it is the stark examination of homelessness and the paper-thin border between generations and lifestyles that gives this memoir its deep resonance.

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From [Booklist](#)

A homeless man's assessment of life on the streets provides the unforgettable title for this mordant memoir from the author of two critically acclaimed poetry collections, *Some Ether* (2000) and *Blind Huber* (2002). Boston-born Flynn was a mere infant when his mother took him and his brother away from their father, Jonathan, a hard-drinking con man who dreams of writing the Great American Novel. Nearly 30 years later, Jonathan, who is homeless after serving time in federal prison for bank robbery, comes into the Pine Street Inn shelter, where son Nick is a caseworker. A promising poet with drug and alcohol problems of his own, Nick is haunted by the vision of his shivering, drunken father adrift on Boston's streets. "I could have given him a key, offered a piece of my floor. But if I let him inside, the line between us would blur, my own slow-motion car wreck would speed up." Readers of memoirists Frank Conroy and Tobias Wolff will relish Flynn's pungent account of two rudderless souls who navigate their way back into each other's lives. *Allison Block*

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Users Review

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