

“After Class Someone Asks You if You are Crazy”
Adapted from *How to Become a Writer* by Lorrie Moore

After class someone asks you if you are crazy. Explain you ate a medley of Fruit Loops and Lucky Charms for breakfast and are fueling off of two hours of restless sleep. Explain you are an aspiring writer, and that late nights, early mornings, and crappy colorful cereals enhance your genius. Tell your ignorant classmate to go watch Discovery Channel’s *Eaten Alive* if she wants to see real crazy. Everyone glares at your backwards-inside out shirt, convinced of your insanity. Shrug off their stares and strut out of the room, chest up, chin up. Your upcoming *New York Times Bestseller* novel *Pride in Perjury* — about a timid farm-girl who drastically leaps from a tractor, disappears, then steals Oprah Winfrey’s identity — will show them.

Go home and start writing your novel. Reassure your mom of its potential. Leave out your teacher’s dissidence; lie and say he thought your plot was *New York Times Bestseller* worthy. Lie in the book. Make up words. Put down anything that comes to mind: sleep, sofa, cushion, food, Cheetos, sandwich. Take pity on your gurgling stomach. Get up and make a sandwich stuffed with Spicy Hot Cheetos. Assure your mom the red-hot carbs fuel your creative brain. Ignore her nagging about your weight. Tell your mom to go watch *Eaten Alive* and be grateful that you have not ended up consumed by a ten-foot boa constrictor. Ignore your mom’s side comment, “Oh, like I have to worry, since no snake will be able to fit you in his mouth!” Lick your stained fingers with gusto.

Return to the safe haven known as your bedroom. Lock the door. Realize the isolated words abandoned on your Word Document are of no inspiration whatsoever. Rapidly tap backspace. Decide to write about *Eaten Alive* instead. Change your title to *Pythons in Perjury*, or *Pythons with Props*. Or better yet, *Pythons doing Pilates*. Settle on: *Pythons as Pirates: The Tale*

of Abnormally Large Snakes with No Money and No Mercy. Do a victory dance to *All Star* by Smash Mouth. All great writers deserve a victory dance. Sing until your sister down the hall screams at you to “shut your pie-hole!” Shout back that you are an aspiring successful writer and therefore are exempt from any rash behavior because one day, in some distant future, your prospective *New York Times Bestseller* novel may, perhaps, potentially earn some form of income...unless you decide to go to law school after all.