

The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 108: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, sort of become.

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It was a quiet non-stormy day on the path of adventure and new meanings when Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, passed by a dilapidated and thoroughly graffiti-drenched house rotting away beside the path.

“I sure wouldn’t want to be that house,” said the dog, Sidestepper.

Crazy Man studied the house for a few minutes, maybe a few hours, and came to a solid decision based on his observations and past experience (most of which he couldn’t remember) and said, “Nope.”

“And I don’t want to be me either,” said the house.

OMG...a talking house!

“I’m what becomes,” said the house. His words slogged against the eardrums of man and dog like a flood of regret. “And we’re all becoming,” said the house.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, weren’t all that taken with this becoming thing. They had no idea what it was and, if this house was the result of becoming, they were having none of it.

“What is *becoming*?” said Crazy Man. “And does it have a map to food?”

The house chuckled. “Becoming is when you find a map to food...too late. Becoming is when you sag in the middle, the top, the bottom, the sides, inside, outside and all over your mind. Becoming is...”

“Nope.” said Crazy Man. “Don’t want this becoming thing.”

“Me too,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “I think I’d rather do some de-coming.”

“You can’t,” said the house. “Becoming comes to all of us, bit by bit, day after day, year after year...until we’ve become.”

“So,” said Crazy Man, staring at the caved-in walls and rotting beams. “If you had some repairs, some new wood, new paint, new doors and windows...wouldn’t that make you un-become?”

The house regarded Crazy Man as though he were crazy (which he was) and said, “All the beams and nails and wood in the world won’t stop me from becoming. It’s what we do when we first become and then go on becoming until we’ve become.”

Now it was Crazy Man’s turn to look at the house as though it were crazy (which it probably was, having become and all) and said, “So...you become and then you become. Sounds like it’s going nowhere.”

“No!” said the house. “Becoming always goes forward no matter how much it goes backward and becoming is good until it’s not so good.” The house thought for a moment and said, “And by the way, I don’t know where the weird dog’s mother is and you’re both bastards.”

The dog, Sidestepper, was incensed. “I heard that! And you’re a bastard yourself.”

The house seemed to vibrate a bit on its foundation...just enough to shake a small misty cloud of dust and dirt off its roof. “I’m not a bastard. I’m an abandoned house. My owners left me and went off to live in a cave because they wanted to devote the rest of their lives to painting deer and eagles on cavern walls.”

Both Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were big fans of cave paintings and had always wanted to do some cave paintings themselves, especially the dog, Sidestepper, who liked a challenge.

“And they just left and never came back?” he said.

“They sent postcards for a while,” said the house. “And then the movers came and took away all my furniture and pride and the postcards stopped.”

Uh oh. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, couldn’t help themselves. The house’s plight launched them into a monumental show of empathy. They fell to the ground, crushed and crying, howling their regret for the house and its unbecoming/becoming state. They battered the ground with their fists and rolled around until their ears were filled with dirt and twigs.

Several hours into this, the house began wishing it had been built somewhere else...maybe on a cliff by the ocean. It couldn’t take any more. “Stop it! You’re creeping me out!”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, immediately calmed down, stood up (a huge feat for the dog, Sidestepper, with his long awkward legs) and stared at the house, man and dog, glaring at the house and wishing there was a way to take back their empathy for this ungrateful house.

“If we owned you,” said Crazy Man, “we would abandon you.”

“Oh yeah,” said the house. “Well, I wish you a very unbecoming becoming and that you become so fast that your heads will fall off your shoulders and be eaten by ants.”

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, being big fans of keeping their heads on were offended to the core. In unison, they stuck their tongues out at the house and pointed as they laughed around their tongues. They called the house names like homeless and shack and condemned and they pointed some more and laughed at the house.

This was too much for the house. It had had enough of this becoming thing and just became. It shook on its foundation and creaked and groaned and splintered and sputtered and huffed and puffed and collapsed into a pile of wood and shingles. And that’s what it became...a pile of used-to-be-house.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were speechless. This becoming thing seemed kind of excessive. Crazy Man looked at the dog, Sidestepper, and the dog, Sidestepper, looked at Crazy Man and they both burst out laughing.

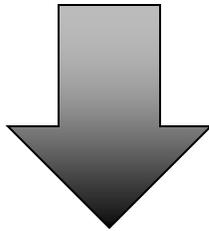
“Nasty way to go,” said Crazy Man.

“Yeah,” said the dog, Sidestepper. “Very unbecoming.”

And the two chuckled as they continued down the path of adventure and new meanings in search of mother, a map to food and this outside thing.

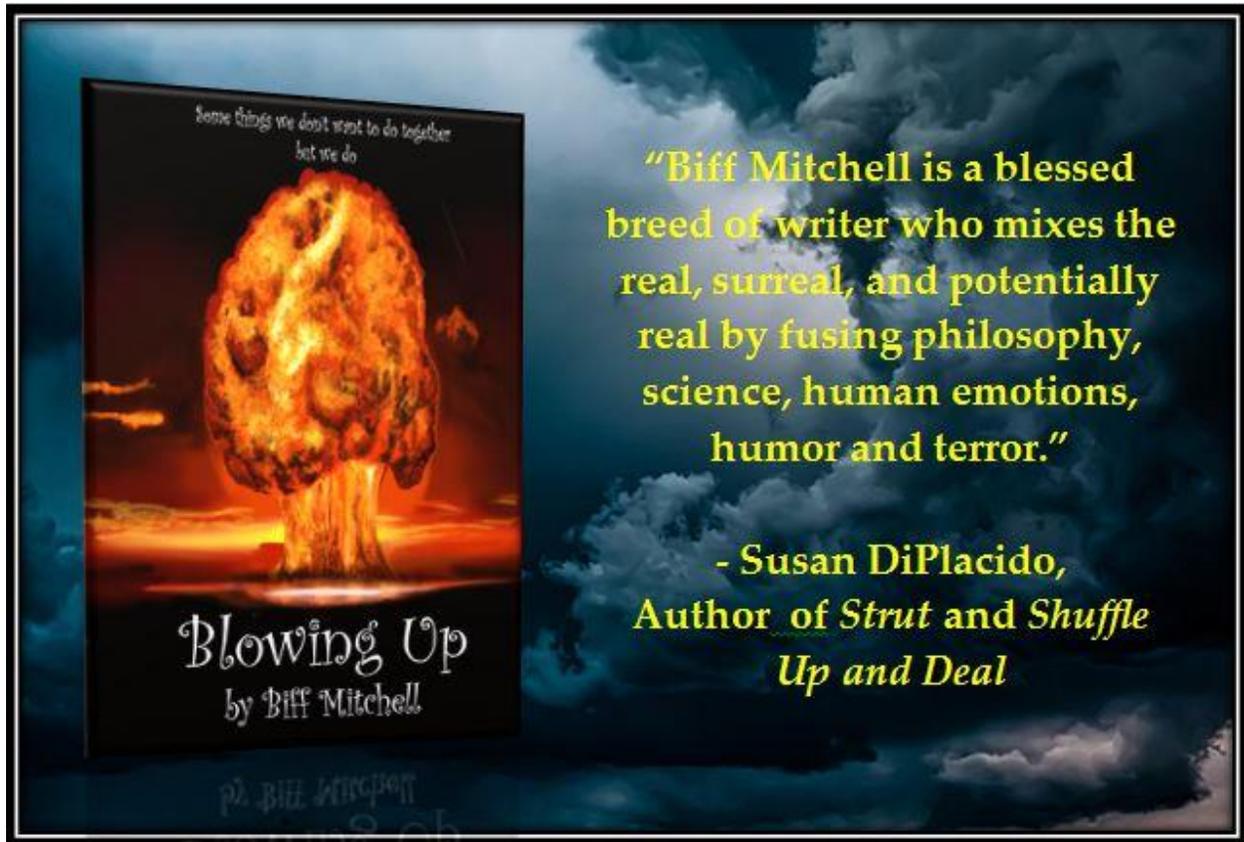
To be continued...

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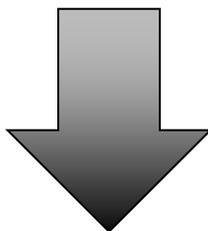
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About the picture at the top of this article: the Westmoreland Street bridge in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. (Has absolutely nothing to do with this article.)



A NEWSLETTER TO REMEMBER



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