

## The Existential Adventures of Crazy Man and the Dog, Sidestepper



Episode 111: Wherein Crazy Man and the Dog Sidestepper, and the duck training camp.

(New here? [Click here to see what it's all about.](#))

A noisy commotion from a river running parallel to the path of adventure and new meanings drew the attention of Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper.

“Wow,” said Crazy Man.

The dog, Sidestepper, was too blown away to say wow, but he *thought* it as loud as he could. In his head, it sounded like this: **WOW!!!** To the rest of the world, it sounded like this: (!!!). He was that blown away.

Before them, stretching as far as they could see up river and down river, were thousands of ducks, all of them roiled up about something. Some were quacking orders at the others. Some swam in very un-duck-like formations reminiscent of WW II bombing runs. Others swam in columns like Roman legions and shot their heads forward in unison every five seconds as though stabbing some invisible enemy with their beaks. A group of ducks noticed Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, and duck-stroked up to them.

“What the hell are you two looking at?” said one of the ducks.

There was nothing friendly about this group of ducks. They swam around in a confused mess of feathers and beak trying to decide what to do about the two interlopers. Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, had had enough experience with mean birds to last several lifetimes and weren't about to be bullied or cowed by a bunch of obnoxious ducks.

“I might have a kitchen,” said Crazy Man. “And a pizza pan. And I'm going to buy a flame thrower.”

The ducks went silent. They stopped swimming and floated in thought for a few minutes or a few hours until one of them (the fourth one from the right) said, “Can your pizza pan be weaponized?”

Crazy Man thought about this at a very deep level and said, “With or without pizza?”

The ducks exchanged confused looks and quacked quietly until the second one from the left in the downriver direction said, "Without. We only eat bugs and more bugs. And worms if we can get them."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, were suddenly fearful for all the bugs and more bugs and worms in the world.

"With lots of relish and mustard," said the duck in the exact center of group. The others laughed insanely and it was apparent that these ducks with their un-duck-like behavior had developed some serious mental health issues.

"We've had it!" said the fourth duck from the right.

"Had it with what?" said Crazy Man.

"The hunters," said the same duck.

"They keep shooting us out of the sky," said the seventh duck from up river left. "We don't know why they do that but it's really annoying and this is our training camp. We're going to start attacking them when they shoot us."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, conferred privately for exactly thirty seconds, possibly longer, and turned back to the ducks.

"It's because you taste good," said the dog, Sidestepper. "It's kind of a compliment."

The ducks nearest them were suddenly still, looking at each other until a murmur of subdued quacking spread through the entire flock of thousands. A moment later, the murmur grew louder until it was a roar of quacks so intense it swished and swashed the water until the river, once a quiet gentle flow, became a turbulent maelstrom of anger.

"Bastards!" said the seventh duck from downstream somewhere. "There's no compliment in tasting good if you're the one who tastes good."

"How would you like to be shot out of the sky on your way to vacationing?" said the fourth duck from the right. "Just because you taste good."

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, thought about this for less than a minute, depending on how long your minutes are.

"I guess we wouldn't like it," said Crazy Man.

"Right!" said the same duck. "And we don't like it either." That same duck turned to the swimming duck horde and yelled, "They shoot us because we taste good! What should we do about that?"

The horde stewed in thought and considered the horror of being shot down and eaten. One of the ducks in the center began quacking quietly and then louder and its message spread across the water from duck to duck and became louder and louder until it was a roar of rage.

"Eat them raw, quackers, eat them raw...we're the ducks, we eat them all!"

"Eat them raw, quackers, eat them raw...we're the ducks, we eat them all!"

It grew into a chant the ducks repeated over and over until even the puffy white splotches in the sky commonly referred to as clouds turned dark with outrage and shot lightning bolts at each other. Behind them, the deep dark scary woods shook and wobbled as a baleful moan spread throughout the bushes and branches.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, backed away, fearful that the duck horde might ask them if they'd ever eaten a duck because Crazy Man wasn't sure if he had, not having much of a memory before traveling the path. Some of the ducks closest to them noticed their fearful retreat and waddled onto the shore, approaching them, chanting, "Eat them raw, quackers, eat them raw...we're the ducks, we eat them all!" Their eyes blazed with fire and hate, brimmed with unaddressed wrong...insane for revenge.

Crazy Man and the dog, Sidestepper, turned and fled. They'd long since learned that this outside thing could be a minefield of danger in a world out of whack with itself. Behind them, the war chant of the ducks faded till it evaporated into the recent past.

"That was a close one," said Crazy Man.

"Sure was," said the dog, Sidestepper. "Guess we ducked out of that one just in time."

Around them, the deep dark scary woods, the calming clouds above and the path of adventure and new meanings, itself, groaned.

To be continued...

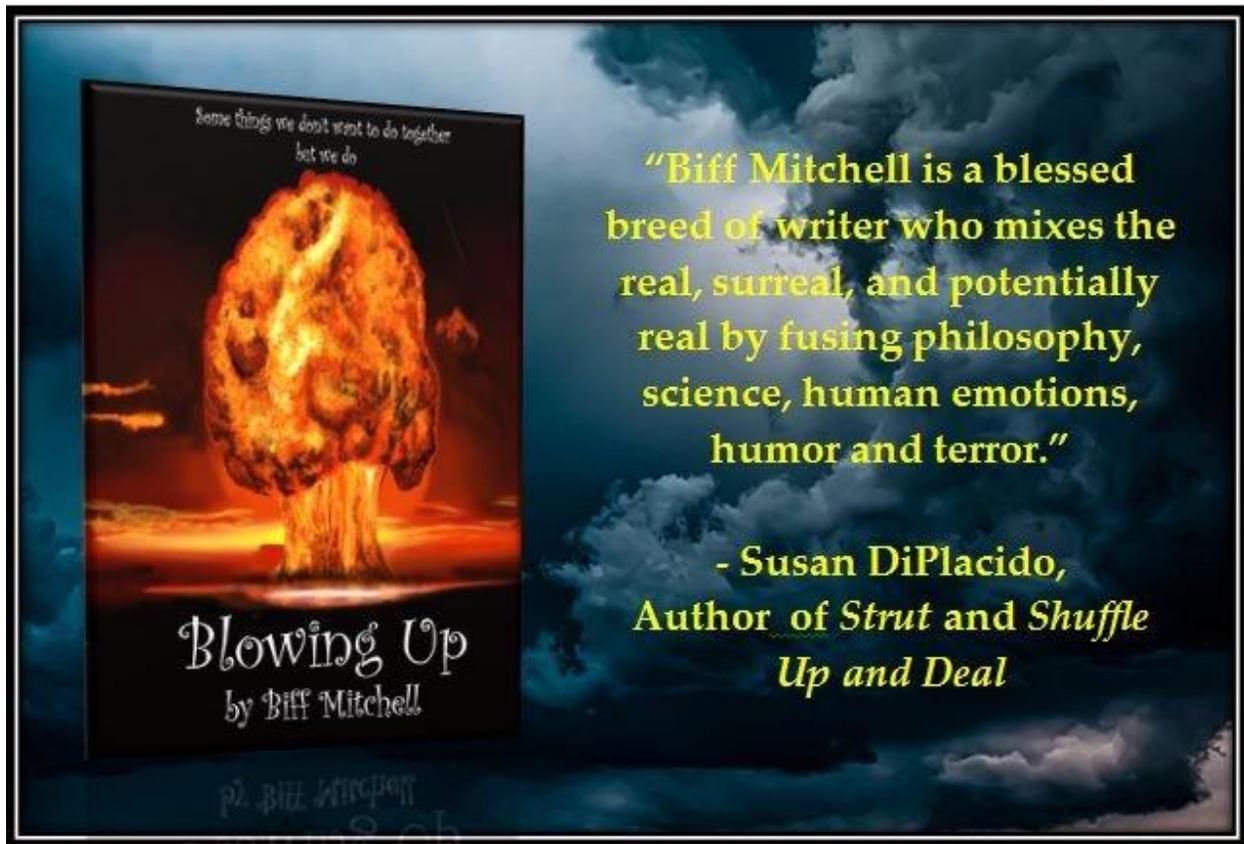
© Biff Mitchell

[www.biffmitchell.com](http://www.biffmitchell.com)

Check out the blog at: [www.crazymanadventures.com](http://www.crazymanadventures.com)

## Hey look! Just in time for Christmas!

At a loss about what to give those people difficult to buy for because that already have everything they need or they need a Porsche and you're a bit short on the price for a new one and you don't want to give them a used Porsche? Well, look no further. You can give them the gift of apocalyptic laughter.



Now available through Double Dragon Publishing (an imprint of Fiction4All)  
[Purchase now on Amazon.](#)

Got nothing better to do with your time than read newsletters? Try this one just for chucks...



Sign up for the newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/f66qtMn/Biffed>