

Today I stepped into a puddle and it went deeper than I thought. My foot just kept falling and next thing I knew it was bringing the rest of my body with it. Soon I was fully submerged, steadily sinking lower and lower into muddy water. And looking up I could see the dim coin of light I'd fallen into flying away from me, taking the shapes and sounds of other passerby's with it. It was pretty cold.

I'd just been walking back from the store where I'd been buying toilet paper. Three 16-packs for ten dollars. They'd been on sale and I was pretty thrilled about it as you can imagine. But now, deep underwater, I began to realize to my horror the real reason the TP had been so dramatically marked down.

That's right. I'd bought three 16-packs of white snakes.

For ten dollars.

And as they came to life in the water, wriggling and seething in their thin plastic packaging, I thought about the time I killed my first snake as a child.

I'd been riding a red tricycle up and down the sidewalk in front of my house, feeling whole and carefree when this little wriggler threw himself in my path. And by the time I slammed my brakes and looked over my shoulder to see what had happened, it was too late. Where once there'd been a single snake, now there was two. The original split and multiplied by the power of my big-wheel.

"If only I had that tricycle with me now" I thought, as the water around me slowly filled with discount snakes.

But my childhood ride was long gone, probably rusting away in some Illinois landfill. And sensing this lack of defense on my part, the snakes began to twist and contort their bodies into crude shapes all around me. The shapes they made looked curiously familiar, and after a moment I realized why: they were forming themselves into letters of the alphabet and spelling out cruel words to mock me. Words like "dummy", "stinky" and "suck-face".

I was hurt. I closed my eyes to block out the words but I couldn't shake the snakey vision of them loose. "I'm not really a suck-face am I?" I wondered, as I steadily sunk further from the light.

I could feel consciousness slipping away from me as the snakes pulled me low. I began hallucinating images of red tricycles emerging from the depths to rescue me, pedals spinning furiously in the void. But there's no such things as tricycles anymore.

And so in a last, desperate gasp I struck out and grabbed the nearest snake-letters to me and began to throttle them silly. I choked and twisted them into new shapes and new words, words like "accomplished", "employable" and "popstar". And this made me feel a little better as I slipped into profound unconsciousness, thinking "we all need to learn to kill snakes on purpose".

