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Guilt

by Nick Parnell

Guilt crept into me like a tiny worm, making its shameful journey to that part of my mind that houses my conscience. I had not done my homework.

On finding and entering my conscience the worm began to speak to me. It told me a lot of things that I knew already but didn't want to hear. It was pretty insistent though. For a start it said I was lazy. I tried to shrug this off.

"Come on," I said, "I'm pretty busy actually, give me a break."

"Oh yeah," said the worm, "busy, huh. So busy that you managed to watch TV for two hours last night. So busy that you couldn't put down that crime novel? Just do the damned homework."

I wanted to get rid of this pesky worm, it was giving me a headache, so I said I'd definitely do the homework tomorrow. That seemed to shut it up so I went to bed but slept fitfully. The next day the worm reminded me that I had promised to do the homework. What a nag I thought.

"I know I have to do the homework, you don't have to keep telling me," I told the worm.

"Yes I do. You know you'll feel better once it's done."

But I was really busy that day; there was no way I could fit the homework in as well. The worm seemed to understand this and didn't bother me too much. Just the occasional squeak to let me know it was still there.

Then it was the weekend and the worm knew it was the weekend too, at least for me. The worm wasn't taking any time off though. In fact it seemed to have multiplied and some of its offspring squirmed around in my abdomen every time it mentioned the ruddy homework and my inability to sit down and just do it.

Right, I'll do the homework, I said to myself and the cohabiting worm. And I did. I sat down and wrote it all in one go. I haven't heard from that worm since.