Twitter Thread by Chris Jones

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After I shit the bed with my dad in it in Hong Kong*, my bowels were never quite right and got progressively worse. My calamitous movements became legend. At one friend's house, there was a sign in the bathroom. PEOPLE WHO CAN'T TAKE DUMPS HERE: CHRIS.

My guts were so rank, I remember my GOOD poops more than my bad ones. In 1996, I took a poop in a French youth hostel that I still think about like a lost love. That poop was transcendent. People who poop like that all the time… They have no idea how lucky they are.

Things came to a head, so to speak, when I went to university. (Hi, @UBishops!) I lived in a dorm, Mackinnon, that had two big bathrooms for, like, 40 kids. They were co-ed. Absolute nightmare. But my first day, I somehow got in and out without anyone else seeing me.

Unfortunately, the stench got out, too, and I'm not joking: It was like a fire drill. Dozens of kids ended up retching on the grass outside the building. I was like, OH GOD WHO SHIT along with everyone else. Meanwhile, all I could think was: Where am I going to poo for a year?

At 24, I was finally diagnosed with Crohn's. Anyone with a bowel disorder will tell you: They have a secret network of secluded, relatively unused toilets they've scouted out all over town. Sort of like the Floo Network in Harry Potter, except it's places where they shit.

At Bishop's, I became the manager of the radio station mostly so that I'd have a key to the Student Union Building, which was locked at night. I'd creep over there and take these magnificent midnight dumps. That toilet became sacred to me. It allowed me to graduate.

Next, I went to the University of Toronto. I lived in a wonderful residence called Massey College. It's a beautiful building, only 60 students. You wear gowns to dinner. But once again, I had to share a toilet. At least this time, it would be with only one other student.

First day, I look at the name on the other door: V. Nemoianu. I wait in my room, like a deer hunter in a blind, until I'm certain that V. Nemoianu has not yet arrived. I creep out into the hallway, dart into the bathroom, unleash terror, race back out, and shut my door. Victory.

Except. About ten seconds after I shut my door, I hear V. Nemoianu open his. And I hear him walk down the hall to the toilet. And I hear him go into the toilet. And I hear him scream like Homer Simpson. I can close my eyes and still hear his high-pitched wail. Like a banshee.

And I swear to you, this is what happened next: I saw V. Nemoianu march across the Quad, go into the Registrar's office, and demand to change rooms. I sat in my window and watched V. Nemoianu PACK UP AND MOVE rather than risk a second encounter with my colon.

By the time a nice boy named Glenn moved in, I had found my Floo Network. A fab toilet in the basement of Sidney Smith, the geography building. Another oddly private poo closet in Robarts, the library. Massey had a chapel with a loo. Friends thought I was surprisingly devout.

But I still had to see V. Nemoianu every fucking day, and feel this weird hot shame that my poo had compelled him to pack up and leave, like Tom Joad and the dust storm. "That's the guy," I could imagine him saying. "That's the guy who took a shit so bad that it made me move."

We didn't talk to each other that entire year. Imagine, now: A residence with only 60 students, where you ate meals together. And we never really spoke. I couldn't handle it. But the first day of our second year, I was sitting on a step outside, and V. Nemoianu sat next to me.

He extended his hand. "Hi," he said. He went by Martin, it turned out. I can't remember exactly how he worded it, but he said something weirdly formal like, "I decided this summer I would like for us to be friends." And that was it. We hung out together all the time.

At some point, I apologized for my poop. Martin remembered that day like it was his Vietnam. Years later, I saw him and and his wife in Los Angeles, where he's a professor. We went out for Cuban food. I remember it well because the next day I had to interview George Clooney.**