

Arse hole. Bung hole. Heiny hole. Shit spitter. Sphincter. Anal Opening... There's lots of colorful words or phrases to choose from when referring to it. The Play Dough Pumper. The Fecal Factory. The Pooh Popper! Potty Port. Poop Shoot! Remember "Hershey Highway"? And one that takes me back to Farmer's Field, a section of the forest preserve by the house I grew up in just outside Chicago, where a group of burnouts smoking the weed on a hot summer day were mooning us kids as we rode by on our motocross bikes. One of the guys would bend over and spread his skinny acne riddled butt cheeks then yell, "Brown Eye"! And, as if we didn't get it, would point to his Asshole.

That's the word I like best: Asshole. Ass Hole. It's simple. Concise. Comprehensive. A word that just spills from the lips without really thinking too much about it. Asshole! Wow, what an asshole! Did you see that asshole? Look at that asshole!

It's one of those powerful curse words, much like motherfucker, that you may actually remember the first time you or someone else used it. I remember my brother and I fighting over something really important, dire, in a house with ten brothers and sisters, I'm certain it was about something like finishing the box of Captain Crunch Cereal or the last bag of Fritos. He pinned me up against the wall, breathing that sour corn-chippie scent- so yes, it was about Fritos- and I said, "You're an"- and I remember this moment because my dad came around the corner and looked at us- not to break up the fight but to hear what I was about to say- and I turned back to that Frito stank and called my brother an "...asshole!" The most remarkable thing happened; my brother released me from his "Varsity wrestling grip" and, even more the oddity, my dad walked away like nothing had happened. Not a slap upside the head, not even a dirty look. No extra chores. No stupid essay on "Why I should never use that word" - My dad actually made me do book reports as a punishment when I was a kid. But, this time around, nothing. I could hardly believe it. Wow. I love this word! It was amazing.

Actually, all things "asshole" are truly amazing, of course, in an anatomical way. Might I be so bold to say that the asshole could be the most important functioning muscle on the miracle that is the human body. There, I said it! An arm or a leg can be replaced. And, we have two lungs. The heart, though extremely important, has certainly had it's days in the sun and some might consider its function a bit over exaggerated... The asshole, however, hardly gets its fair shake. There aren't any marathons for assholes. There's no American Asshole Association. You never see slogan's like "an asshole is a terrible thing to waste". And why? Why, I wonder? I can only come up with one thing; people just don't like shit.

Which is all the more reason to embrace the asshole. It literally takes care of the shit. Literally. Cuts it off. Ends it. You're done when it - your asshole- decides to close up shop. I mean, tell me what other muscle goes that extra mile to keep you and your icky make apart? None. The asshole takes it for the team. Gets in there and mixes it up with the baddies. It's tough. It can handle things that would make most of our other organs totally wimp out over. So, when it's not working, you know about it.

Mine stopped working right. For no certain reason the cells in and around its area mutated and multiplied. Something grew. And spread. It perforated my intestinal walls and reached out to my lymph nodes. I couldn't believe it, my asshole had turned on me...Looking back, why was I so shocked, it was, in fact, an asshole!

So much so, that I began, only what I like to think of as, a trial separation. I was cut open and cut apart. When they sealed me they stitched up my colon, cutting off the need for my asshole, while crating a "fake" asshole in my intestine. I was certain the new asshole would make the old asshole jealous. It did. And to some degree that made me happy for what my first asshole had done to me. Anyway, this brand new asshole wasn't really an asshole at all. It was a stoma, which is a surgically sculpted hole made in the small intestine and then pulled to the skins surface... Yeah. The intestine is exposed. It's red. And wet. It looks like it breathes on it's own. And, it expels shit. Watery shit. Shit that doesn't go through your colon and dry out kind of shit. Shit that smells so badly it will peel the wallpaper off a house from a mile away. Shit so putrid, if one of my faithful dogs ran into the bathroom while exposed, it would singe their hair. Shit so vile, I had to, no lie, suck on peppermint candy and apply vapor rub on my upper lip just to maintain consciousness while cleaning up my own make.

There were a lot of reasons to love my new asshole. The granola eater in me was pleased that I saved a few trees while eliminating my need for toilet paper. But then, the granola eater in me also couldn't eat granola, because my new asshole couldn't pass the grain, oats and dried cranberry. My new asshole kept me entertained making some of the funniest noises at the most inopportune moments of my life. There's a gurgle and pucker that, on occasion made my eyes pop, it also alarmed strangers in the check out line at the grocery store and that man, who was curved over with scoliosis, in the elevator at Cedar Sinai. The sounds reeled him into a stammering tizzy as he tried standing to get a glimpse of the face of whoever was polluting his space, his head bent downward, did after all come up to about my waist. But, what I loved most about my new asshole was the fact that it was saving my life.

Still, there's nothing like your first. And while I found my new asshole loyal, earnest; fluent in five different languages and some might even say, charming. I couldn't let go of what I had with the other. And, so I agreed to give it another chance. I explained to the new asshole that it wasn't it, it was me. Please. I hope it understands... It did. The good docs reversed my ileostomy. All that remains of the new asshole is this swollen, puffy, scarred abdomen and the tender memories.

I know I think differently about my asshole. I don't take it for granted. I truly appreciate what it does for me. I think I will give it more praise! I will think about it in a loving manner. As it has showed so much love for me! I will go so far as to take pause when about to call some mother-fucking idiot an asshole; because, the meaning has changed and it would be insulting to my asshole.