

Swarm

When you see us swarm — rustle of

wingbeat, collapsed air — your mind
tries to make us one, a common

intelligence, a single spirit un-
tethered. You imagine us merely
searching out the next

vessel, anything

that could contain us, as if the hive
were just another jar. You try

to hold the ending, this
unspooling, make it either

zero or many, lack

or flurry. *I was born,*
you begin, & already each word
makes you smaller. Look at this field —

Cosmos. Lungwort. Utter each
& break

into a thousand versions of yourself.

You can't tell your stories fast enough.
The answer is not one, but also

not two.

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Nick Flynn was born in Scituate, Massachusetts, on Boston's South Shore, in 1960. He worked as a ship's captain and at a homeless shelter in Boston before being awarded a fellowship from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. After the two-year fellowship he moved to New York, where he got his M.F.A. from New York University and taught in Columbia University's Writing Project.

He is the author of two books of poetry, *Blind Huber* (Graywolf, 2002), and *Some Ether* (2000), which was the recipient of the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award.

Nick Flynn is also the author of the memoir, *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* (Norton, 2004), which received the PEN/Martha Albrand Award and has been widely translated. He was awarded "Discovery"/*The Nation* Prize, and received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, The Library of Congress, and the Amy Lowell Trust. He teaches part time at the University of Houston.