

Flash Nonfiction  
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356 Words

### Blackboard Announcement: Unlimited Attempts

I really don't know anything about your words--which ones wound, heal, limit, or free you. I only know that words do all of those things and more.

For me, words are sometimes the stuff of childhood delights. I want to jump into mud puddles full of them and watch the syllables splash up. I want to tie them to strings and run until they are riding high on the wind, bucking and dipping like kites, their tails fluttering. I want to scribble them in white glue on bright construction paper, and sprinkle them with glitter. I want to pull all of the hidden or forgotten ones from every neglected closet, cobwebby attic, dusty high shelf, or moldy basement nook, spread them around me on a clean floor, run my hands over them, read them like tarot cards.

But sometimes they are elusive. They won't be spoken. Keyboards refuse them. They are the incantations that resist utterance, no matter how urgently their magic is required. Then, they seem like vivid dreams that fray at dawn, or ghosts that haunt but never materialize in the wee and lonely hours.

Or they are missiles shot, knives thrown, land mines buried, and I suddenly lack all capacity to take shelter, to duck and weave, to step lightly across dangerous fields.

Too often, they make me cringe. They are coffee spilled on a crisp white shirt right before that crucial meeting. They are a zit on my nose on the night that might have been meant for a first kiss. They are pit stains darkening a silk blouse in a cool room at a moment that calls for never letting the opposition see that you sweat.

Often, they are simply not enough. They dance frenetically around the thing that must be said, but never pin it down with calm precision, and the more desperately that thing must be said, the more likely they are to fail, to disobey, to tap dance and twirl themselves fetchingly but annoyingly, even heartbreakingly, away from some urgent truth.

Here is all I can really give you: every assignment is set to unlimited attempts.

Details	
Words	356
Unique Words	217
Characters	2,010
Sentences	20
Longest Sentence (words)	52
Paragraphs	8
Reading Level ?	9-10th Grade
Reading Time ?	1 min 17 sec
Speaking Time ?	1 min 59 sec