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How to Conquer the Flying Black Rats

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How to Conquer the Flying Black Rats

First you must make the fear with
a quivering back,
two hands covering
a pair of squeezed-shut eyes,
a bucket full of
useless tears, and
a couple of traitorous knees,
bowing, shaking,
and clattering together.

Then start the screaming,
when the flying
black
rat,
is thoroughly mixed with hundreds
of vampire stories,
mashed into an irrational mind.

Now take two steps forwards,
jerk,
and take one step back.

Start the crying,
shake and shiver—
mix the ingredients well—
when the rats take flight.

Once thoroughly shaken,
move one hand,
pop open one eye,
add a dash of humiliation
and serve with a batch of home-made
laughter.

— Laurie Cartwright