

standing in line for confession

I remember
standing in line for confession
frantically trying to think of anything bad I might have done
 in the last week
 or the last month
or however long it had been since the last random occasion
my dad had decided
 that I was due to confess.

wishing everyone in line ahead of me
would hurry up and keep it short
as I tried to think of anything I'd done that was
 so horrible
that I should be required to kneel
 in a dark creepy booth
and tell
 some spooky faceless stranger behind a screen
all about it
while dad waited out in the car.

for some reason
the requirement to confess wrongdoing
 to spooky faceless strangers
 in dark creepy booths
didn't apply to my dad.

despite my best efforts to come up with
an honest list of sins
well
I almost never had anything to say
I mean
I really tried to be a good kid
 follow all the rules
 get along with everybody
 don't lie
 and stay outta trouble
but I knew I wasn't supposed to walk
into the confessional booth
and say
 I hadn't done anything wrong
the priests had made it very clear
that we were all loaded up with
sins from birth
 even little kids like me
so I knew I had to come up with something.

the first few lines were easy
right outta the book
 bless me father I have sinned
then
 it's been
 (fill in random period of time in weeks months or years)
 since my last confession
which would always lead to a bunch of questions from the priest
like
 why has it been so long since your last confession
and
 how often do you attend mass
followed by some stern rebuking
 when I didn't have the right answers
 which I never did
but I knew I wasn't responsible for any of that
cause I was only a kid
it wasn't like I could
 drive myself to church a couple of times a week
 for mass and confession
and I knew I wasn't supposed to talk with anyone about
 what my life was like at home
so I usually made up some stuff I supposedly did wrong
 to fill up the rest of the confession time
 and get myself out of there in one piece
until the next random confession.

I always figured that making stuff up was
probably a sin too
but it sure felt a lot safer
than going in there with nothing.