

I'm afraid) against his grip as we rolled on the sand and I finally pinioned him on his back, astride him, my hands holding his arms.

He looked up at me. "Uncle," he whispered.

I released his arms. They glided around my neck, pulling my head down to his. I stretched full length on top of him, our heads touching. Our heavy breathing from the struggle gradually subsided. I felt my penis grow hard against his body, and, pressed against mine, I felt his grow hard too. I raised my head and looked at his face. He was looking at me. After a long moment I lowered my head till our lips touched. And held.

Then I moved over on my side next to him, and my hand reached down, slowly, until I touched the flesh of his cock. It stiffened still more and Jamie's hips stirred. I felt a wonder. I had caused this to happen in someone else. Someone else felt as I did. I wasn't alone. There was Jamie. And now we had *our* secret.

We shared the wonder of that secret, touching, exploring, responding, till we heard voices—adult voices—calling our names. We clutched each other, then scrambled to the hiding place of the overhanging embankment and lay absolutely still, pressed against each other, our heartbeats racing.

The voices passed into the distance.

"I guess it's late," I said. "We better get dressed."

"Yeah. I guess so."

We drew apart. We dressed in silence, not looking at each other, gathered up our fishing gear, and trudged back to the hotel. We didn't say much of anything to each other. All I could think of were those voices, the voices that had wrenched us apart as surely as those adult hands might have done. What we had done was wrong—to them—and if they ever found out . . . ?

I glanced at Jamie, staring straight ahead as we walked. Would he tell? What if his parents made him tell or tricked him into admitting what we had done? Would his mother tell my mother? And would one of them tell the hotel manager?

Suddenly that slender body walking shoulder to shoulder beside me was an ominous, dangerous thing.

As we walked up the steps of the hotel, I saw Jamie look at me, and there was fear in his eyes. "You're not going to tell, are you?"

I shook my head violently.

from

The Lost Language of Cranes

David Leavitt

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1961, David Leavitt is the author of Family Dancing (a collection of short stories) and Equal Affections and The Lost Language of Cranes (both novels). In the passage below, from The Lost Language of Cranes, Philip Benjamin, the novel's central character, and his boyfriend, Eliot, are describing their respective experiences growing up gay. Eliot, who was raised by two gay men named Derek and Geoffrey, advises Philip to consider the costs as well as the benefits of telling his parents that he is gay.

“How old were you when Derek and Geoffrey found out that you were gay?” Philip asked Eliot. It was four in the morning, and they were lying on the blue futon, nowhere near sleep.

“Oh, let’s see,” Eliot said, stretching his arms out behind his head. “I guess it must have been—but no.” He smiled. “The thing is, with Derek and Geoffrey, I’d only have had to come out if I was straight. Come to think of it, I don’t think I ever actually did come out to them. I just remember, when I was twelve or so, Derek walking into my room and finding me making out with Timmy Musseo. And he just said excuse me and closed the door.”

Philip’s jaw dropped. “You were making out with boys when you were twelve?”

“Eleven,” Eliot said. “Geoffrey and Derek only found out when I was twelve.”

"Then how old were you when you first had sex?"

Eliot shrugged. "I'm not sure," he said. "How do you define sex? If orgasm is the criterion, twelve. If anal or oral penetration is necessary, fifteen."

"And was that with Timmy Musseo?"

"No, no," Eliot said. "Timmy Musseo had a girlfriend by that time. My first experience was with a much older man, a friend of Derek's. He and Geoffrey never found out about it. Probably they still don't know."

"How old is older?"

"Oh, let's see," Eliot said. "When I was fifteen, he must have been twenty-nine, thirty. My age now. He came and stayed with me at the house whenever Derek and Geoffrey went away."

"Did he seduce you?"

"I seduced him," Eliot said, and laughed. "Oh, he wanted to for as long as I did. But I think he was afraid Derek would send him up for statutory rape or something. I was irresistible at fifteen. I kept asking him to give me massages, playing the little nubile waif. And finally—well, he couldn't hold back anymore." He sighed. "It was a wild night. We did everything."

Philip's mouth was dry. "When I was that age," he said, "—well, I never would have dreamed, no matter how much I might have wanted to—" But he knew enough about Eliot's childhood in that rambling brownstone on West Thirteenth Street to know that it was about as different from his own as you could get. Eliot had been raised not by normal parents, after all, but by two men, by Derek Moulthrop, the famous writer, and his lover, Geoffrey Bacon. When Philip imagined him as a child, he was lying in a brocaded canopied bed, having stories read to him by Colleen Dewhurst, but now the fantasy changed, and it was a young man with long brown hair, dressed in an unbuttoned tuxedo shirt, who sat leaning over Eliot in his bed, running his hand languidly through Eliot's hair.

"I just can't imagine," Philip said, "having that kind of self-knowledge, that kind of . . . wherewithal, at fifteen. At fifteen I was just discovering pornography. I didn't have sex until college."

"Everyone's different," Eliot said, "depending on their back-



**the full
spectrum**

a new generation
of writing about
gay, lesbian, bisexual,
transgender, questioning,
and other identities

edited by
david levithan
&
billy merrell

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Jill Sobule and Four Other Torture Devices

by Ella Pye

One. French-Kissing for Girls.

I am five and Katie is six. Her birthday is in September. Mine is in June. We are both in kindergarten, she in the p.m. class and me in the a.m., but we go to day care together. We are best friends. We both love New Kids on the Block. I like Jordan the best, and Katie likes Donnie. Katie's parents are divorced, and she and her mother move a lot. It seems exciting. I've lived in the same house since I was two. Katie lives in apartments.

Today I am going to Katie's for a playdate. I have never had playdates with anyone before Katie. We listen to the New Kids and have concerts off the end of her bed. We like to pretend we're Paula Abdul, even though I guess we can't both be Paula Abdul. That's okay, though. We play Barbies, and hers have much better clothes than mine.

Katie is wearing ugly blue shorts today. She is too tall and her clothes always look weird on her. We go to her room. Her room is round and the doors are double. It's really neat. You have to walk through her mom's room to get to it, though, and it makes me feel rude. We listen to Eagle 102.1 and talk about going to concerts. We chew New Kids on the Block gum. I thought each piece would be shaped like a New Kid face but they're not. Katie said they would be, but she lied. They're just pink and yellow dots in a plastic case with a New Kids sticker on the front.

Katie pulls her shorts off. She is wearing blue and white polka-dotted Hanes underwear, the kind that I have at home. They come in a three-pack with a matching blue pair and a matching white pair. She lies down on her floor and pulls her underwear off over her butt, and tells me to spank her because she's the baby and I'm the mommy. It seems kind of weird and she yells at me to do it. Then she makes me be the baby and she spanks me, too. She tells me that I should learn how to French-kiss because boys always do that, so she kisses me and puts her tongue in my mouth. I roll my tongue hot-dog style, because that is fun.

Her mommy drives me home, and in the backseat of her white car Katie Frenches me again.

We are in second grade now, and Katie still makes me practice Frenching her. It feels weird and kind of slimy. I am visiting Katie, and she has a new bike for her birthday. She is living in a new apartment and they don't have a good backyard. The whole thing is made out of cement and they share it with the house behind theirs. She rides her bike around the stones and falls. She breaks her wrist and tells everyone in our dance class that I did it. My mother says I can't talk to Katie anymore and I don't mind.

Two. Jill Sobule.

I am thirteen and my soul bleeds poetry. I hate the world and the world hates me. I want to start saving change so I can get my own apartment instead of living with my stupid parents. They think they know everything about me and can tell me what to do. I hate them.

My best friend is Nicole now. It used to be Kim, but she's so annoying. Nicole moved here last year. I sleep over at her house almost every weekend, because my dad doesn't let me have friends over. Sometimes we skip school. I'm really good at faking my mom's handwriting. Once I wrote a note saying that I had to get my wisdom teeth out that afternoon. They didn't even notice. Then I just walked over to Nicole's, and we flipped her couch upside down and watched her dad's porn, which was weird.