Sex Talks to Girls
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I’d been to the O’Keeffe exhibit at MOMA one day in October and that night got a call from Clio at college saying she wanted out, she was hitting bottom with alcohol and drugs, could she come to stay with me in Manhattan.

I’d been waiting to hear those words from Clio since she was fourteen, when I’d unintentionally caught her in an alcoholic black-out. She was still living with the two H.’s at the time and had gone out with her friends on a Friday night, called to say she wouldn’t be able to come see me until the next day, then called me the next day to apologize for not calling me the night before. Ah ha! (My daughter’s first tooth, first word, first blackout.)

My spiel was this: *Your two parents have it, your four grandparents have it, most of your aunts and uncles have it.*

We were looking at each other over burgers at the Ossining diner. She got tears in her eyes. *Me and Sophie?*
Very possible, I said.  
But Sophie’s only nine! That’s not fair!  
I know.  
What should I do?  
So I told her about Young People AA and all the help out there. (Actually, Harper and I had both been on standby to help Clio.)  
Okay, honey?  
Okay, Mom.

Three and a half years later she was with me at Katya’s, waiting for a bed across town in a rehabilitation program.

Mars and I wrapped up dinner that Thanksgiving and brought it to share with Clio at rehab. We made enough for a whole ward of newly recovering drunks and addicts who were playing ping-pong when we clomped snow down the hall and passed out paper plates. We all sat around and chowed down: turkey, cornbread, collard greens, stuffing. Gravy over the works.

Normally, I have to say, I don’t feel comfortable using the word blessed. It seems to imply that some are chosen, saved from the fire, raised from the dead, and some, oh well, just aren’t (they must have really fucked up somewhere along the line, poor saps). I don’t believe anyone’s creator could or would operate that way, doling out blessings to certain kids, withholding them from others.

But this is a story of chunky cornbread and ham hocks in collards and turkey legs and yams and rich gravy with little shiny puddles of butter rising to the top. Of hungry people involved in personal events that just might have picked them up and spun them around 180 degrees until they didn’t recognize where they started or who the hell they were—all enjoying a great meal on a blustery November afternoon. Blessed. What other word can I use?