Sex Talks to Girls

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My name isn’t really Molly and this worries me. Do I think I’m protecting myself? And why did I pick a name I don’t particularly like and that some might recognize as a character in a famous, complex novel? What’s worse is that I recently passed Ruth Meek’s mailbox in Benzie, Michigan, and decided that Meek would be Molly’s last name if she ever needed one. Molly Meek. That’s just wrong.

I’ve changed most of the names of the people in this story for absolutely no reason except that as a poet I know I will never write a novel, and I wanted to see what it would feel like to have characters. You always hear about how characters do whatever they want in a novel, and I wondered if that could be true for a memoir as well. Sure enough, Mars said recently that the day we had our first date in 1988 she was waiting for me at the Gay Community Center and watched me walk down the street, not the other way around. Maybe
Molly just went ahead and did what she wanted in that chapter, regardless of the facts. Molly remembers peeing three times in half an hour but I don’t remember peeing at all.

Some names from my life I kept, like Bruce, the excellent kisser. And I really did call my grandmother Mom Mom, although her name was Frances Angela, and if I had become a nun I was going to be Sister Frances Angela unless they’d made me take a male saint’s name, in which case I’d have been Sister Francis of Assisi. I once put Mom Mom in a poem that I wrote with one of my collaborators, Alphabet (a name he chose himself), during hurricane Frances. Alphie has lived his entire life in Florida, which is where I live now, so obviously Alphie’s been waiting for Molly to show up for a long time so they could write poems together.

Now I’m getting Molly confused with a character other than myself. Perhaps she is complex after all. I like to think so.