Sex Talks to Girls
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This October Clio will celebrate nineteen years without a drink or drug.
I will celebrate thirty-one.
Sophie will celebrate five.
This is, of course, as my Irish grandmother, Frances, used to say while downing a quart of warm Rheingold, puffing a nonfiltered Chesterfield, or handing me a whiskey-soaked maraschino: *God willing.*
Mars and I decided (and have continued periodically to renew our un-vow) not to jump backwards over the broom, although we’ve mostly stayed separated. We’ve morphed into friends then back to lovers then friends again on numerous occasions. It’s an interesting way to love someone: this liminality, this keening. I personally have no clear vision of the subjunctive whatsoever, and, to Mars’s sometimes dismay, I actually don’t mind our flipping coin, our slated
peace and tension. We’re both still sober, after all, which makes absolutely everything possible.

Here we are at the Best Pride Parade Ever, Chicago, 1994 (almost as good as African American Day in Harlem). We’ve patched ourselves up long enough to go public, and we’re standing on the corner of Broadway and Buckingham when Sophie, her hetero eighteen-year-old self, marches past with NARAL, a pro-choice group she joined in high school.

Mars and I know Sophie will be solidarity marching. What we don’t know is that NARAL has joined up with the Dyke Drum Corps, so she’s surrounded by women with snares and a bass and homemade percussion instruments, who, whenever the drumming stops, kiss each other on the lips.

There’s my beautiful daughter, smack in the middle of queer society at its most Windy City flamboyant, drum strapped around her waist, sticks raised. Mars and I jump in and dance with her down Broadway, surrounded by dazzling, outrageous, Chicagoland women.

That is what I’ve chosen as my penultimate image. I hope you like it.