Farm Boys
Fellows, Will

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Clark Williams

Born in 1965, Clark grew up with four brothers and sisters on a small honey and produce farm near Eau Claire, in Eau Claire County, northwestern Wisconsin. Clark’s introduction to his sexuality at rural, highway rest stops is the focus of this brief narrative.

MY PARENTS WERE pretty open about sex. It was never something to be ashamed of or to hide from. We all had “the talk,” and if we needed birth control, that was fine, we could have it. But homosexuality was never discussed. As much as my parents allowed us to explore who we were, being gay was not an option.

When I was nineteen, I was walking in downtown Eau Claire one night and a guy pulled over and said he wanted to give me a blow job. So I had my first sexual relations with a man, in his car. I told myself I would never do it again, but a couple weeks later I found myself walking down the same street, looking for the same man. I didn’t find him, but I found someone else, and that started the whole thing. Suddenly I realized there were men everywhere who were looking at me and who would have sex with me.

After I got my first blow job, I went gangbusters. The rest areas that dot the rural highways were very active if you knew where to go. There was a lot of great sex going on out there, some of it young—sixteen- and seventeen-year-old boys. But most of the guys that I’d have sex with were married. Sometimes they’d take their rings off, sometimes they wouldn’t. One time I had sex with the father of a kid I knew at school. Sometimes people my own age would come by, but for a long time my only experience was with older men. I didn’t have to do anything but lean back.

There was a very active rest area about two miles down the road from the farm. It was dangerous, not knowing if the state patrol would drive up or if my dad was going to pull over to take a piss. But I really got into that game one summer. There was always a wide variety and I was good-looking, so I never had any problems. I could do that and still date women. I never really bothered myself wondering whether or not I was gay. It was just something I was doing at the time, and I did it until I was about twenty-three.
I wish I hadn’t had to go through all that. I wish I could have fallen in love with a boy at sixteen and had all the experiences that two sixteen-year-olds should have with each other. My first role models were the older men I was having anonymous sex with. I’m glad I was able to break away from that, because I know a lot of people don’t, and they go on and perpetuate it. I’ve always wanted to know about those men—what they thought, why they were like that, how they could do that and stay married for so many years. They’re still doing it, with someone younger than me who’s taken my place. They taught me about sex, but not once did one of them say that what we were doing was okay. It was always over quickly. They were always wary: “No, don’t give me your phone number. Let’s meet tomorrow night at 9:00.” I wonder what I would have done if one of them had said, “You really should find someone your own age, and I think I can help you do it.”