

CRAIG COTTER

For Alex Hanfland

My memories are lies because I lie every day and that has affected my memory.
Like we had this perfect love
when in reality I was dating a girl through some of it, and you were jealous,
and I didn't know what to do with it.
Then you got married on me and Rose dumped me.

I have one photo of you at the front counter at Clover Pool.

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Your 6-1 spidery 130-pound frame sat on the sand cliffs overlooking Lake Ontario.

I sat in front of you.

Your long arms held me.

We didn't talk for hours.

■

I was 17, you were 15 when we met in the pump shop of Clover Pool.

After we'd bombed around a few weeks in my '69 Monte Carlo (gold with black
vinyl top)

your brother John came up to me at work: "I just want you to know Alex is
gay."

I looked into his dark eyes and went back to stocking shelves.

I watch you at Don's

with the stainless steel counters and walls

eating a burger in 3 bites, your long fingers.

■

Walking to my car in Pasadena tonight, Christmas 2005,
not cold like Rochester.

We pissed on the door of a closed Chinese restaurant, drove on the shoulders
and the wrong sides of roads, you washed my hands in your pump shop,
saw David Bowie in the Carrier Dome, threw our empty Coke bottles in the
backseat.

By the end of summer the car chimed as we turned corners.

I asked a guy last week
if he goes to the cliffs above Hamlin Beach.
He said you can't, they're fenced off.
Can you believe it Alex? The fence and signs keep him out?

If we could meet at a summer job now when we are 17 and 15—

Walking the 11 p.m. streets of Pasadena
I thought that everything I've written has been a lie, sometimes clever ones,
that I want to stop lying.

