



The Queer Foundation Scholar

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A Little Wish

By **Brandon Lambert**
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Katie is the kind of girl I would marry if I weren't a homosexual. She's a sexy, 17-year-old tomboy. The perfect way to introduce her is to show you her room. Picture this: pink walls, a California-King sized bed covered in Build-a-Bears, a glass cabinet full of softball trophies and an Xbox 360 (turned on, too; she's playing *Elder Scrolls: Skyrim*). And she's stunning. She has big brown eyes and golden hair that floats halfway down her back. However, my favorite part is she knows how to listen. Not to just me and my ramblings, but to the whole world. She's quiet, but in a present way. Sometimes I come over to her house and play piano for hours. She lies underneath the baby grand with a pillow and lets herself be carried away by the music. Yeah, I could marry this girl if only she had a penis...

She called me earlier today.

"Brandon, I have a surprise for you. Come at 11." Weird, because it's a school night but because it's Katie my Mom lets me stay out late. My Mom secretly hopes that Katie will "convert" me. My Mom wants grandchildren. Lots of grandchildren.

I ring the doorbell. No answer... huh.

"Come on," shouts a voice behind me,

"we're going on a little adventure."

We hop into her SUV. The windows are down and the music is playing. Country music. Probably her only flaw. She loves country music.

"Where are we going," I ask. I've never went this way before and I've lived here my whole life. "This is the middle-of-nowhere."

"Exactly," she smiles. We're driving down a seemingly endless road with green fields on either side. "You ready?" she questions.

"Ready for wha-!" We're off the road driving through the field. "This can't be legal..."

"Hey! If anyone is breaking the law it's me. Don't complain." She throws me a wink as she continues plowing through the field. About a quarter mile in Katie turns off the headlights and parks the car. I get out of the car and look around.

"So what now?"

"Get on the car," she orders.

"On top?" I ask. She responds by running up the hood and getting on the roof. I follow.

"Now lay down and look up," she commands. I oblige. At first there's nothing to look at. Not even the moon is out. Just faint stars. "And don't give up too soon. Your eyes'll

need time to adjust.” I keep looking up. After five minutes I begin to wonder if I should have stayed at home tonight.

“Katie, what am I looking for?” She shushes me and points toward the sky. Just when I’m about to roll off the roof and get back into the car she points again and laughs.

“Look!”

A falling star scars the sky! I’ve never seen one before. It’s gone in an instant, but the memory lives on for a minute. It’s like the sky is being scratched by a golden light, yet the wound heals instantaneously. As our eyes adjust more and more to the darkness we begin to see more falling stars. The rate goes from one a minute to over ten a minute. Each one feels fresh; no two falling stars are the same. Though all have a golden, red color, each has a different length, speed, and location. For someone who loves space, I’m surprised I’ve never seen a falling star until this night.

“Katie, this is…”

“You’re welcome,” she whispers without looking away from the skies. The biggest comet yet cuts deeply into the heavens. “Make a wish.”

And I do. I wish I was straight. Not because I’m ashamed of being gay- I’m actually really proud of my sexuality- but because Katie is exactly what I want in a person. She’s smart (a 4.0 bio-chem major), spontaneous, fun, politically minded, artistic. The only thing she isn’t is a boy. The only thing I can’t see myself doing is having sex with her. There isn’t that physical spark, right? I can’t be with her because I’d never be able to get it up. Or would I?

Curiosity takes hold. Nervously I nuzzle Katie’s shoulder with my nose. She looks at me, smiling. I must be looking at her weird though, because her smile quickly melts into a look of confusion.

“Brandon, why are you looking at me like-” I interrupt her question with a kiss. My left hand holds the back of her neck, my right hand is clenched tight. I search within that kiss for a sign- any sign- of sexual desire. She isn’t resisting, which is a relief, but she isn’t giving much either. And then, after a minute of searching, our lips part and I sit up.

“Katie, I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be,” she says. “What’re you thinking?”

“I’m thinking,” I’m surprisingly not embarrassed or confused while I say this, “I’m thinking that I wish you were a boy.”

“Ha!” she laughs, “okay, you pay for the surgery and I’m down,” she jokes as she punches me in the shoulder. See, this is why I love her! With any other person this whole exchange would’ve been awkward and overly serious. With Katie I feel free. “But I’m not getting rid of my boobs,” she warns. We both laugh, and then she tackles me with a hug that almost knocks both of us off the car. “Brandon, there are billions and billions of guys on Earth. So many people. Like the stars in the sky, a countless amount! And one boy will outshine all the others, I promise.” Then, with a chuckle, she adds, “and I’ll be the best woman or maid of honor or whatever at your wedding.” I give her one last tight squeeze and the hug ends.

“Deal.”

We lay back down and look back up at the falling stars. There are so many stars in the sky. Billions and billions of stars. And then my mind wonders to the billions and billions of people on Earth and I can’t but think that one of those people will be just as great as Katie *and* be a boy. I smile as a golden shooting star scars the sky. And then I revise my little wish.

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About the author.

A previous QF Scholar and QF Publications Award recipient, Brandon Lambert is a junior at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, majoring in Theatre Arts and minoring in business. Mr. Lambert was recently named winner of the Pittsburgh Concert Society Young Artist Competition, and he was the recipient of the Mary-Catherine Dykhouse Scholarship for Voice. His most recent project, a new musical for which he wrote music and lyrics, received a staged reading at Point Park last spring. He spent part of the summer of 2012 at home in Aurora, Ohio, as music director of a production of *The 25th Annual Putnam Counting Spelling Bee*.

Mr. Lambert states that he has been very fortunate in that his family has always been extremely supportive, both of his career choices and of his sexual orientation.

The editor

From the editor's desk

Two of my favorite “teenage” movies are *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986) and *Charlie Bartlett* (2007). In each we have a totally smart-ass teenager (Matthew Broderick as Ferris; Anton Yelchin as Charlie) who drives the school principal to the edge of insanity.

I occasionally watch both, but there is a scene in *Charlie Bartlett* that really cracks me up. Towards the end of the film, Charlie heads to the home of the principal (Robert Downey, Jr.) to convince him to come see his daughter perform in a school play. The inebriated principal is out on a deck, wielding a pistol that he fires into his pool and into the air, or he points at himself and then at Charlie—at which point he demands that Charlie explain the meaning of life to him. And smart-ass Charlie, who had literally taken over the high school, cowers in a deck chair and suddenly pleads, “I’m just a kid, sir! I’m just a kid.”

Charlie’s plea came to mind when I watched Pat Robertson try to explain to his 700 Club viewers why he had so misunderstood God. Robertson, like many evangelical ministers, had prayed to God for help in defeating Obama and the Democrats. God had assured Robertson, among others, that his prayers would be answered.

So just why did he so misunderstand God? Robertson wasn’t Karl Rove on Fox TV still thinking he knew more than even Fox’s election analysts. No, he had morphed into a contrite teenager, like a repentant and sniffling Charlie Bartlett telling his principal, “I’m just a kid, sir! I’m just a kid!” Even after a lifetime of talking to his God, and God responding, he’s still a kid at the game. Ah, the irony.

The current mayor of Reykjavik, Iceland, recently stated that there are no homophobes. “They’re just assholes,” he said. I suppose he’s partly right.

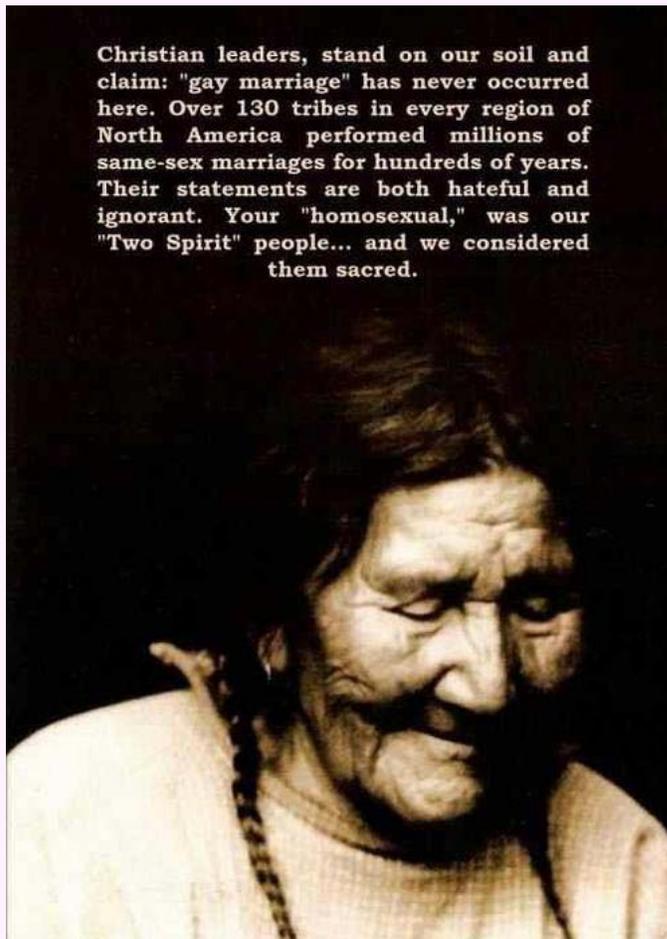
Opponents of marriage equality aren’t necessarily homophobic or, at least, not exclusively so. They are equally fearful of heterosexuals who engage in recreational sex.

As long as marriage is the state-sanctioned

union of a man and a woman, the patriarchs can still pretend that reproduction remains its sole rationale: Men and women get married in order to procreate. Forget about women who marry after they have gone through menopause – modern medicine produces miracles (including an Italian woman who gave birth in her 60s). Forget about couples who marry even though they do not want children (contraception isn’t 100% fail-safe yet).

However, once the state sanctions same-sex marriage, it is putting society’s final seal of approval on recreational sex. Two men or two women do not marry solely to have children; further they may use contraceptive devices to reduce the risk of acquiring an STD, but not to avoid becoming pregnant. Of course, gay marriage isn’t going to change traditional marriage; heterosexual couples already did that decades ago.

Christian leaders, stand on our soil and claim: "gay marriage" has never occurred here. Over 130 tribes in every region of North America performed millions of same-sex marriages for hundreds of years. Their statements are both hateful and ignorant. Your "homosexual," was our "Two Spirit" people... and we considered them sacred.



Why be surprised by the hysteria of certain church leaders at the very thought of same-sex marriage? There is a god of war (the *Dies Irae* of the Old Testament); he demands obedience, which is what the patriarchs demand; he also has an insatiable thirst for human blood. You can't win wars without legions and legions of young soldiers. If you listened carefully in the months leading up to last November, you heard several religious leaders say that the pope and his followers are the spawn of Satan, and others that evangelical Christians are heretics, and some of each claim that Mormons are not Christians at all. This is what their leaders really think of each other, despite their outward talk of tolerance. Catholics and Protestants have been engaged in a war against each other since the 16th c., subsequently joined by new American denominations, which is what led to the resurrection of the Old Testament and its Canaanite god of war.

A Mormon procreationist chose a Catholic procreationist as his vice presidential candidate. Yes, as Churchill said, *Politics make for strange bedfellows*. Today's enemies are liberals, including educated women, gay people, and their supporters, all of whom have been ignoring the patriarchal procreationists for decades. And if they were to re-criminalize all forms of non-reproductive sex, then who would be their enemy? Each other.



Marseille, France. Oct. 23, 2012. The newly elected Socialist government in France had promised immediate action on marriage and adoption equality laws, but has been stymied by a wave of protest by Catholics. Here, two women show their disdain for a group of Catholic women protestors.

Early Christian Church Fathers were only sporadically concerned with human sexuality.

They condemned prostitution (male and female); they condemned men who took women for wives but continued to engage in sex with men. More often than not, they seemed little concerned with issues of human sexuality. Only occasionally did a bishop here and there condemn oral and anal sex or masturbation.

All of that began to change at the end of the 14th c. for reasons historian and humanist Jacques Barzun attributed to attempts by an emerging middleclass to differentiate itself from both its peasant ancestry and the still dominant nobility, but it would reach its peak in the 16th c. "Breed baby, breed" became the motto of both Roman Catholics and Protestants—which is why both resurrected Yahweh. If you are going to war, you aren't going to pay much attention anymore to the peace and "turn-the-other-cheek" guy in the New Testament. They would profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, but in any war, you need a god of war who can help you put fear into the hearts and minds of everyone.

So yes, the more recreational sex gains acceptance, the more vociferous the patriarchs become in condemning it. It is not the end of civilization that concerns them, but the end of their own power. Their god of war can't scare us anymore, so they can't scare us either, and they begin to act like hysterical fools. Worse than the fools who make ludicrous proclamations that same-sex marriage will bring about the downfall of the US are the fools who believe them. Luckily, they are a diminishing number. The vast majority of Catholics already use contraceptives; a solid majority now support marriage equality; a slim majority continue to be pro-choice. And to the dismay of Republican procreationists, more Catholic Latinos are pro-choice, pro-family planning, and pro-gay rights than non-Latino Catholics.

Unfortunately, the promised end of America as a civilization doesn't mean the patriarchs are going to pack up and move to another country--perhaps to Uganda, which Scott Lively has proclaimed is on the verge of becoming one of the world's great civilizations – thanks to the fact that nation may soon start killing gays. [Stay tuned, since Lively's trial on charges of "crimes against humanity" in Massachusetts, brought by Ugandan gays for his role in promoting Uganda's anti-gay law, began on January 7, 2013.]

No, these clowns will all hang around, like Lively—who is running for the governorship of Massachusetts and is telling his followers that he will win (I'm not making this up!). So we shouldn't be surprised if the patriarchs (and yes, a few matriarchs) who have been crying doomsday since the re-election of Obama will be back soon assuring their followers that they have prayed and prayed, and god has told them that America has another chance to redeem itself. "Please send money!" Oh, Pat Robertson and NOM have already made that request as they gear up to fight marriage equality in Illinois and Minnesota. It really is all about money even when it isn't. The patriarchs do love to live in splendor.

Lake City in 2011. The event has apparently spread to Manila and several other cities in SE Asia. LGBTIQ people and their supporters, most of them wearing pink t-shirts, gather in a park or other public place for a day of festivities. It's perhaps a little less threatening than a gay pride parade. I mean, if you're celebrating in a park or public space with LGBTIQ people in Salt Lake City and your Mormon mother or her good friends are in the area, they'll avoid the park or public space, right? If you're marching down the street in a Gay Pride parade, and one of them happens by I'm not being critical here of the Pink Dot movement. One has to start somewhere.

Who knows if the Pink Dot celebrations in Salt Lake City helped change the position of Mormon elders on the issue of homosexuality? They've pretty much now caught up to Rome: homosexuality is not a choice, but we must forever remain chaste. Sorry, folks. Go back and read Martin Luther on the impossibility of remaining chaste even in old age. Go back and read the works of dozens of 11th to 16th c. very old priests who rejoice at finally having conquered "the beast" when they reached their 80s. Gee, if I live another five years (I turn 75 next month), maybe I will as well – but I hope not (conquer "the beast" that is)!

- The Pink Shirt movement apparently traces its origins to a Nova Scotia school several years ago. Two boys who witnessed another boy being bullied because he was wearing a pink shirt showed up wearing pink shirts the next day. Every day a few more students came to school wearing pink shirts until all the students were wearing pink except for the bullies.

The idea of using Pink Shirts as a symbol of an anti-bullying campaign then seems to have crossed the continent to British Columbia, first, with a flash mob dance in a Vancouver mall (January 2011), performed by students from two public schools (an elementary and a high school), and then to another flash mob dance in the cafeteria of a Surrey, B.C., high school. On February 28, 2012, students from eleven schools in Vancouver, B.C. and one in New York City celebrated a Pink Shirt Day with flash mob dances in both cities—all of them dancing to Lady Gaga's "I Was Born This Way."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhYyAa0VnyY&feature=relmfu>

Meanwhile elsewhere, Pink Dots, Pink Shirts, and LGBTIQ flash dances.

- The Pink Dot movement apparently began in Singapore in 2009, and it was picked up in Salt

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7k_7FyWjLCo
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJUNQv54zQ8&feature=related>

- Vietnam got a taste of gay pride with a relatively small flash dance in Hanoi on Sept. 8, 2012. On Sept. 22, several members of the same group organized a flash mob dance in Saigon.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7bUK7EUfJQ&feature=player_embedded

As I watched this video, I couldn't but remember that two things happened in the 1960s that deeply divided this nation, a divide that has never fully healed, and that led many Americans on both sides of the aisle to distrust government: first, the Civil Rights movement [the Tea Party still argues that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is unconstitutional] and the Vietnam War [when we were repeatedly lied to by a Democratic administration and the military generals]. And here are Vietnam's LGBTIQ youth dancing to Madonna and Lady Gaga. Oh the irony again!

- In another part of the world, LGBT individuals who would face death if their sexual orientation were known protest in the only way possible.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZokzICWdb4>

- Macklemore (Ben Haggerty) and Ryan Lewis (both straight) released "Same Love" in support of Washington's Referendum 74--that, approved by voters, legalized same-sex marriage:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlVBg7_08n0&feature=player_embedded

- "Ronan's escape,"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XLcfdkkHQE>, is an Australian video about one lad's escape from school bullies. Sadly, such tragedies happen everywhere, and as suggested in this video, they don't necessarily have anything to do with sexual orientation. Just why is Ronan the victim of bullying?

- On a more positive note, 15-year-old Noah St. John got a standing ovation from NPR's Snap Judgment audience with his narrative, "The Last Mile," about the trials and tribulations of his life with two moms. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Lug_IxFKo8 He was proclaimed NPR's 2012 Junior Grand Slam Champion. He's the 3rd teenaged lad in 2012 who's attracted national attention for somehow making his mark with the help of his two moms. Ben the Filmmaker was featured on Disney Channel's "Make Your Mark" by talking about his anti-bullying film "Stop!"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZsyyL21Lpk>

Typically, the procreationists were outraged at Disney for daring to allow an outspoken young teenager (14) with two moms to have a national audience on the Disney Channel. Ah, yes, blame everyone except your own myopia for the fact that youth are leaving religion in droves these days. As Roman Catholic Cardinal Martini of Milan, Italy, said in an interview he gave while on his death bed this past September, the Church is 200 years behind the times in terms of its position on human sexuality. His advice to Pope Benedict XVI: get out of the Vatican and visit churches that are empty on Sundays. Instead, Pope Benedict doubled down. The result may be another mass exodus of European Catholics, starting in The Netherlands where numerous Catholics are said to be considering leaving the Church over the

pope's recent remarks on same-sex marriage.

- This article in *The New York Times* on genderqueer boys is worth reading.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/magazine/whats-so-bad-about-a-boy-who-wants-to-wear-a-dress.html?_r=3&pagewanted=all

Ray Verzasconi, editor
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Publication Scholarships

If you will be enrolled in a four-year college or university (undergraduate or graduate) in the United States in the 2013-14 academic year, and if you previously submitted an entry to QF's English Writing Contest for High School Seniors, you are eligible to participate in our 3rd Annual Publication Awards Scholarship Program.

In 2013-14 we will award at least four \$500.00 scholarships to students whose entries are selected for publication. Additional or larger scholarship awards will depend upon contributions received from our donors.

What are we looking for? Written submissions preferably of not more than 1500 words. Genres: short story, poetry, essay, drama. Must focus on an LGBTIQ theme or issue.

Submission deadline: June 15, 2013.

Please email me for more detailed information: rverzasconi@msn.com . Put "QF Scholar" on the subject line.

From the Executive Director

The Queer Foundation is now conducting its eighth annual High School Seniors English Essay Contest, the major project of The QF's Effective Writing and Scholarships Program. Based on teachers' continuing encouragement over the years of their students participation, it's beginning to look like this is a permanent enterprise.

The Board of Directors of the Queer Foundation wants to make sure The QF is on firm ground—thanks to our legal counsel, it has been a 501(c)(3) since its inception—and has the wide public support and recognition needed to remain viable for decades.

To this end, the Board has established an Advisory Board consisting of gifted and effective artists, writers, and educational leaders who are well known critical thinkers in the field of LGBTQ affirmation. Current members and their most recent books are

Kevin Jennings, *Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son: A Memoir* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

Ritch C. Savin-Williams, *The New Gay Teenager* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005).

Judy Shepard, *The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed* (New York, NY: Hudson Street Press, 2009).

The overall goal of The QF remains the same as it was in our founding year 2004: improving the educational opportunities available to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.

Nominations are sought for up to four additional Advisory Board members. Inquiries may be addressed to The QF Executive Director Joseph Dial, jdial@post.harvard.edu .