Dear Mother and Dad,

I love you. Thank you for the love which you have shown in caring for me. I feel more about me recently. I remain the same person, you know.
I just wanted to know. I am grateful that I have been able to tell you, but out of a compelling sense of honor and not even out of a broken spirit. We all need our families, but likely we will frustrate any real communication if our need is so overwhelming that it would alter or destroy that which it depends upon. I felt strong enough to tell you, and I felt you were strong enough to know.

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homoeroticism. I understand and respect your desire. I would warn you, however, that much of the material written on the subject approaches tripe. This is surely to be regretted of writing about a condition forced by social convention to be kept underground. Of course, too, most studies have had to be made on people who were sick enough or criminal enough to come to the attention of the experts. And the queers who paddle dreams of change are hardly more numerous than those who sell hair formulas to bald men. I do not want to change what I am. Fifteen years of frustrated attempt have proved futile, unrewarding, and I see now that the greatest error was to feel that what I am is more important

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than who I am. We do not choose the objects of our sexual attraction; but we possibly (and I believe, definitely) may exercise some measure of humanity in our behavior with them.

Undoubtedly, undoubtedly, your in private will be concerned to know how your son became a queer. You looked can give you dozens of formulas, and undoubtedly each will have perhaps a small portion of truth. But we human beings do not live by formulas, thank goodness. I have been through all of the vicious cycle of mental retribution, the attempt to fix the blame; but now both efforts seem irrelevant. While it is hardly to believe that our behavior good and weak, has precedents, human events, still the acceptance of the
State of being human, together with the struggle to make our humanity meaningful, then seem a more worthy endeavor than the miserable tasks of fixing blame and debilitating self-esteem—your or mine. Your prophet Isaiah told you some of this long ago: "All we like sheep have gone astray."

No more than I condemn myself for being queer can I condemn you for any past your behavior might have had in my developing this. Your own background will likely not allow you to accept the inevitability of my homosexuality; I understand. And I certainly do not demand or expect that you be pleased. Nor am I pleased. I did not choose to be. Nor can I know not to be. These things past our kenning and finding out.

Nevertheless, all is not grim. It seems to me that you should delight in the compelling desire for honesty which has been your most beautiful gift to me; for believe me, I delight in it. Strangely, this letter and my dear conversation with you, mother, pay homage to you both for your kindness, for your love. Too, in our world in which there is so little honesty and so little love, we are rich indeed. Perhaps to declare the point of my (or anyone's) homosexuality is to miss the greater gratitude—namely, that one can love anyone.

I appreciate your desire, Deare, to come for a long talk. I look forward to such an occasion. You know, of course, that this will be difficult for both of us. Quite frankly, I should most like to delay it until after I have been to Washington to visit Octavius, and possibly even until the play is over. There is so much, surely, on a matter that has for over half of my life been far more of a strain than it is now. I have shared it with you; I hope, not as a strain but as an IS. Not to have shared it would surely have been my considering you a little less than you are.

In a separate parcel I am sending some elementary but sound information published by an outstanding organization of which even the Archbishop of Canterbury is a member. I had the good fortune to attend many of their informative public meetings last year, and wise counsel thus also directed me to people who have meant much to me. But more on that when I see you.

I am also returning your book, as you requested, somewhat guiltily for have found no time in so many months to spend on it. The role of bicycle grows more interesting.

I look forward to seeing you next month.

Love,
Lorie
Notes

- I had turned 30 three months earlier.
- I was an only child and very close to my parents.
- My parents were serious Southern Baptists. Five years earlier I had become an Episcopalian.
- A few months after writing this letter, I told my grandmother that I was gay. She said huffily, "What did you expect?! You became an Episcopalian."
- At the time of writing, I was in my first year of the doctoral program at the University of Alabama, and I was an instructor in the English Department.
- The previous summer I had returned to the USA following a year of teaching in London, where I came out to myself as a homosexual person. I taught in the Penge Secondary Modern School near the Crystal Palace.
- At the time of writing I was cast as Shylock, and the play was in production at the University of Alabama. I won "Best Actor of the Year" for the performance.
- When I wrote this letter I knew personally no homosexual couples, nor any lesbians.
- I did not meet my future husband, Ernest Clay until six years later. See Two Grooms:  http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/2grooms.html
- This letter was firrst published in SFI [San Fransisco Integrity. July 1, 1980
- See other biographical material at http://rci.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/pubd/index.html#autobiography