

Only *After* Stonewall

I remember Joe Brainard.
I remember when men were *swish*
and women were *librarians*.
I remember *The Well of Loneliness*.
I remember *Giovanni's Room*.
I remember when AIDS became a verb.
I remember Tory Dent, Renaldo Arenas,
I remember James and Donald and Essex.
I remember their *Persistent Voices*.
I remember *Tender Buttons* and Ann Bannon
and Jane Chambers and *Last Summer*
at Blue Fish Cove. I remember Edie's love story,
the first time I heard it. I remember Thea's
love story, and how, and when she told it. I remember their voices, and how every time
one told it, the other told it,
the same. Love is Love. I remember.
Their story never grows old.
I remember the too-tanned men on the ferry
my first trip Fire Island, Brooks Brothers
by day, Givenchy by night. I remember
shopping for size 12 high heels for my friends
who were men. I remember "short back
and sides." I remember not wanting to look
like a dyke. I remember wanting
to look like a dyke. I remember not
holding hands in the street. I remember not
kissing in a cab. I remember calling my lover
"a friend." I remember lying about love
at the office. I remember NOT lying
about love at the office. I remember
marching, and crying, and marching and *not*
crying. I don't remember the riots.
I don't remember the fires. I don't remember
the days of the police raids
and explicit humiliation. I don't remember Stonewall
at all. But I do remember Edie, and Edie remembered, so I remember.

- Elaine Sexton