

I don't cry. I'm not afraid of crying, I'm not ashamed of crying, I just don't. So I couldn't believe I was lying on my bed, head stuffed in my pillow, wet, salty tears pouring down my face, sobbing, weeping, crying.

Ten minutes ago I had inched down the stairs to my mother. I stood and stared, my heart pounding.

"Mom, can we talk?"

"Sure. What is it?"

"Can you turn the TV off?" My heart raced, and now that I had her

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undivided attention, I couldn't think of what to say. I would have to spit it out, no warning, no subtleties, just straight to the point. I took a huge gulp of air to push down my heart, which had made its way to my throat.

"Mom, I'm gay."

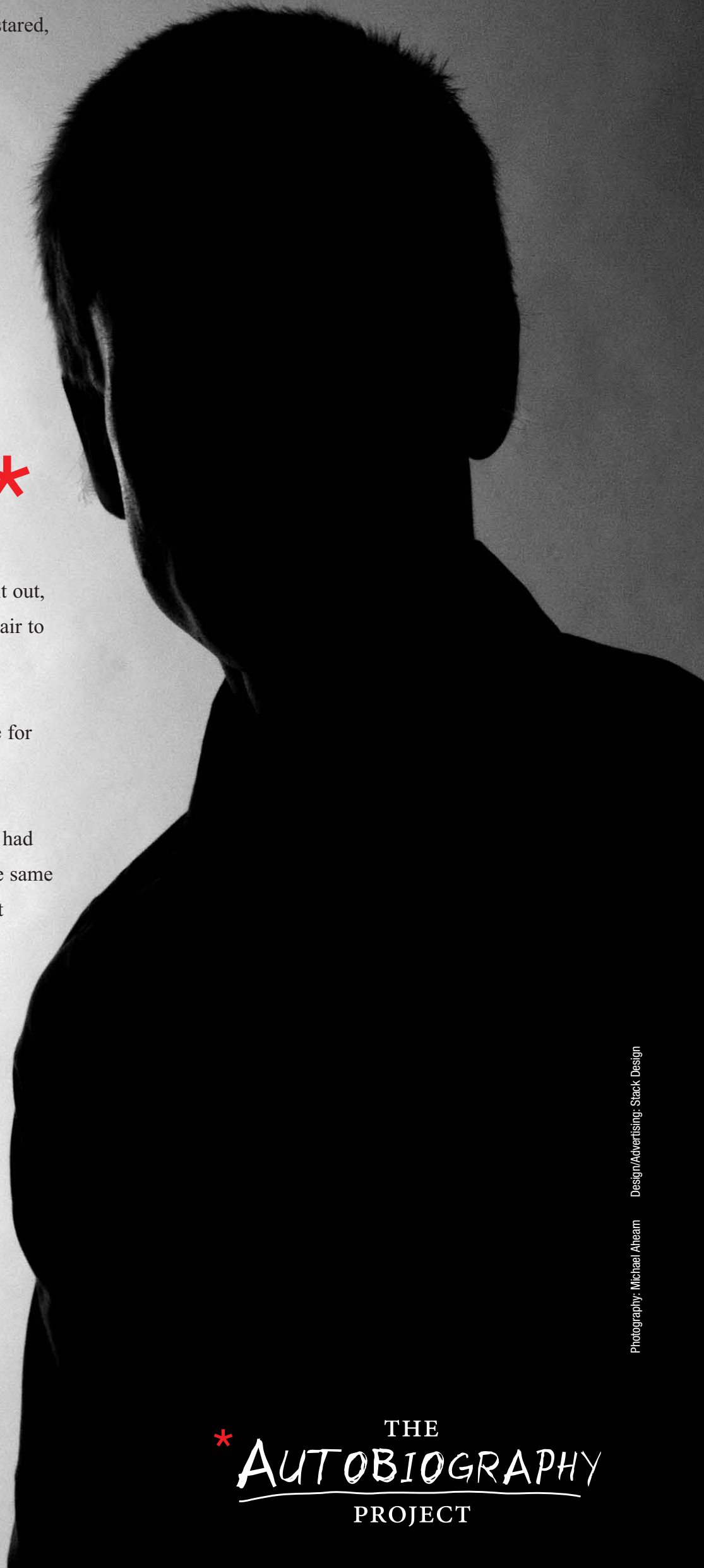
I had said it. I thought I had made it, but nothing could have prepared me for what she said next.

"I don't think so." She sounded shaky, yet full of power.

I gawked at her, dumbfounded. What did she mean, I was wrong? I, who had hoped and dreamed for over a year that another guy would look at me the same way I looked at him. She had taken my fragile glass heart and shattered it against the wall. Anger, confusion, despair, and disbelief filled me.

She continued, lecturing me about how I was really too young to know if I was gay, "or if you like girls for that matter," and how I shouldn't tell anyone, "it's really a private thing." I half-listened, half-wished I could collapse on the floor and just stop thinking, stop living, that she would just STOP TALKING. And, when it was clear the conversation was over, I went upstairs, stuffed my head in my pillow, and sobbed, wept, cried.

— Anonymous



\* THE  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
PROJECT

*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin's 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today's Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit [www.theautobiographyproject.com](http://www.theautobiographyproject.com) for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor's Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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