

Shortly after I told my mom about me, I told my grandmother. She had a brother who was gay, he died before I knew who I was, probably from the same thing all of *my kind* whisper about in our hushed fear. She understood better than my mother, but had trouble understanding how I could know for sure when I was so young. Of course, I had pointed out that she had been married and living in a different country when she was only a year older than I was then, but that didn't seem to carry any weight with her. How could I know without fully exploring everything? I told her that I had done plenty of exploring, much to my and my lovers' detriment, and I asked her, had she ever made love to a woman? She replied no.

"Then how do you know that you're straight?" I looked at her hard and she realized:

"You just know."

By Martin Halprin (RC Sophomore), excerpted from *Walking in Shadow*, winner of a 2005-2006 Hopwood Award/ Roy W. Cowden Memorial Fellowship.