Dark Secrets

Barton Benes makes art combining images with text from the thousands of letters his Aunt Evelyn wrote to him in the ’70s, when he was a young gay artist in New York City and she was a lonely Florida widow who hung on every word of his adventures.

November 1, 1998 By Barton Lidice Benes

I DON’T LIKE THAT YOUR MOTHER REFUSES TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT YOUR FATHER AND WHY HE WAS IN PRISON. YOU ARE A GROWN MAN, NOT A CHILD. THAT PRISON TERM GIVES YOU STRANGE FEELINGS NOT KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS. I GET THE FEELING HTAT THEY WANT YOU TO THINK THAT IT WAS WORSE THAN IT WAS, SO THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBLE CHANCE FOR YOU TO HAVE ANY GOOD THOUGHTS ABOUT HIM. THIS IS SAD, LIKE YOU KEEPING YOUR GAY LIFE SECRET FROM YOUR MOTHER. I FEEL ANYONE MIGHT HAVE BEEN BORN GAY, AND THE WAY I GOT TO THINKING GOOD THINGS ABOUT THEM WAS, THAT I MIGHT HAVE BEEN I THEIR PLACES.

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