

FALLING LOVE WITH HUNTER TULLY

by Bob McDiarmid (October 2009)

In the eighth grade (circa 1980.81) I fell in love with Hunter Tully. Utterly and completely. He was a blond kid on my bus - and I fell in love with him. and the thing is - several childhood friends I've reconnected with on Facebook mentions the affair as one of the things they can remember about me.

His father got transferred across country - and the summer following 8th grade - he moved. Thing was? My family had packed up the travel trailer and left the very last day of school - and we spend literally every day till about a week before school out on a trip through the Canadian Rockies. I sent Hunter a postcard from every single place we stopped - and long letters about our trip when days would pass and we weren't near post. I spent my allowance on stamps and postcards for the entire three months. We returned to Oak Harbor Washington that fall - and waiting in the box of mail was every single thing I'd sent Hunter marked 'undeliverable - return to sender' - and then it was coupled with the news that he'd moved away while we were gone.

I cried about it - and moped around most of my freshman year of high school about not having Hunter there. I tried to contact him - but it was to no avail. I've always been interested where he ended up these many years later. I don't think that I realized "i was in love" with Hunter in a sexual fashion - and honestly - I'm not even sure if it was "sexual" attraction. In long discussions with Mom years later, it was her first inkling that I saw boys in a different light. As loves go - a childhood experience I can replay over and over.

If I'm honest - I know my fondness for Hunter wasn't really reciprocated. I know that other friends of mine were closer to him - and probably missed him more after he left. but that was part of the reality of a military town - friendships were best left transitory; because you never knew when they'd come to a sudden end.

There were other boyhood crushes - all of them were warm affectionate crushes... I didn't figure out the 'physical' part of who I am till many years later in my early twenties. The interesting thing was that each of these people helped shape what I admired in people.

It's interesting - I don't look back on my childhood despite it's amazing stories and uniqueness (travel and adventures that most kids dreamed about) with much old-fashioned reverence or particular fondness. There are personalities and circumstances that dominate that keep me from looking over my shoulder much, a trait that has remained with me as an adult.

But I will always remember taking the longer bus ride home - so I could greet Hunter on the bus each morning and watch Hunter Tully walk the dirt road that led to his house at the end of the day.