

# REAPPROPIANT-NOS de les nostres vides

## MARCO

### Solidarity forever

I went to my first Pride without knowing what a Pride was, without being fully aware of my identity or my sexual orientation.

It was 2007 and I was in Catania, the city where my girlfriend lived. After spending the morning with her I had the whole afternoon to myself, so I left the B&B to get some food when, while I was closing the door behind me, I saw a whole lot of people in front of me standing on the sidewalk, looking at something. Obviously, I made my way through the crowd in order to see what was drawing people's attention. Once I got to the very end of the sidewalk I witnessed a "Gay Pride" for the first time and... I can't deny that... it had a strange effect on me.

I can only summarize the thoughts I had that day like this: "Look at that guy who's swaying his hips on that parade float! Hey, those two are kissing! Hey, that dude wearing only a G-string and nothing else is really ugly to look at. And how on earth are those dressed? Hey, they all look very happy, though!"

Meanwhile, someone from a parade float was talking into the microphone. I only remember a few words of the whole speech because my mind was elsewhere. Freedom, rights, equality, blah, blah, blah...

I was standing there, looking for oddities, amazed; during the parade, I could not see anything else; I did not understand the differences, the shades of colour, all the many, many kinds of life and identities.

I was only seeing what is usually portrayed in all the photos and videos made by the journalists, not deprived of a certain amount of morbidity.

I could not understand that burning feeling on my face, that knot in my stomach. Making eye contact with the people standing around me who were witnessing the parade from the outside like me, I was feeling judged, mocked, yet nobody was staring at me.

I had three options: staying put amongst those people and their looks of disappointment, perhaps even disgust, and thus looking like one of "them" by occupying the same space as them with my body, leaving and getting back to my path, or joining the parade and sympathizing with those freedoms, that happiness.

I chose the third option, and less than a year later I understood that I did it also for myself.

The first time I marched in a Pride I did not know whether I was straight, bisexual or gay. In those moments it actually did not really matter; once I cast my doubts aside, I understood the importance of having a body, occupying a space, standing on one side or another.

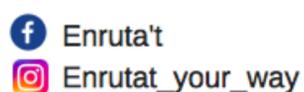


While I was marching with my quivering legs, I was asking myself what I would have felt if on that sidewalk I had seen a friend, a colleague or a family member. And if in the parade there was a friend, a colleague or a family member what would they have felt if they had seen me on that sidewalk, occupying a space different than theirs? I then realized that there are only two options which can be summarized by quoting the words of the Sicilian poet Nino Gennaro: "You are either happy or an accomplice."

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