

## **I Raise my Flag, with Pride**

Celebrate me, accept me, love me  
for all that I am ... just as I am  
like the onion, wrapped in its layers,  
it begins with a sad story  
hidden, fearful of your prejudices -  
for not being the boy who would grow up  
to be the *macho* of the house,  
for not being the man you'd flatter,  
for dishonoring our holy father,  
for feeding gossip to strange ears,  
for denying you the grandchildren  
you dreamt about,  
for my choices, your shame,  
for being the pity of the neighborhood,  
the stain of the family,  
for not having told you before,  
before my condemnation.

Peel me,  
for all I am ... as I am  
like the onion, discover me.  
Unveil me, feel your stinging tears  
wash your stigmatizing blindness  
so that you realize how much,  
in your disappointment, I needed you  
and how alone I have felt.

And on this road called Loneliness,  
assimilating I go to a strange culture,  
a language, to a foreign world, of new  
possibilities to reinvent myself, to succeed ...  
but never arriving,  
lost and captive  
carrying I go, in my body a pain  
that doesn't let me love or get sick.

My identity, the simple fact of my being,  
is notoriously guilty until  
proven innocent to deaf judges.  
Because all that I am ... as I am  
exists within a racist rhetoric,  
xenophobic politics, a homophobic culture.  
The same people who dictate our paths,  
those who separate families and homes destroy.

And because of all that we are ... as we are  
many of us hide,  
for not being part of the heteronormativity,  
for not having "papers",  
or counting with geographical-sociocultural privilege,  
for surviving, despite the virus, our companion.

And in the shadows, protected by the  
dark's mantle, we take a stroll, free, as we are.

But the shadows are heavy, they are exhausting.

That's why today, I raise my flag, not in defeat,  
but proudly signifying the ongoing struggle.  
Its colors paint the days to follow,  
my spirits reflected in them.

The red of my warrior blood,  
forever changed by the illusion of a love,  
which gradually in the orange of  
June sunsets, finds hope that is  
illuminated in that yellowish sun, shining  
the purity of my nature, like the green of the grass,  
vibrant, fiery despite being trampled on,  
causing me sorrow in the indigo of the night;  
and when I'm lulled, snuggled up with an "everything's fine",  
a serene tranquility envelops me, safeguarding me  
against the purple rain, my spirit invincible.

Poetry, my shield, through its protection  
I let out my cry of war that  
these verses are of courage, resilience, and of protest; that  
these verses are yours, and mine, and ours

and of all those brave ones  
who persist even in the shadows  
with the love of our mothers,  
abuelas, our fathers, and  
each other, our stories, our strength,  
lighting the way.