The first day I have ever cried

- Virgil Moore -

The first day I have ever cried since my arrival in this country is when Brian dumped me. I could not remember having felt so lonely in my whole life. Or if ever I had already met that feeling before, that moment of loneliness certainly did not appear to me like a good reason to cry. I do not like to cry, anyway. Maybe it is too close to what people want me to be....

I hadn’t identified what Derek Jarman called the Heterosoc before I was quite old. Actually, I could say that I grew up as a little king, protected by adults who sincerely wanted me to live a good life, and I was thus happy.

My childhood took place in a boring little town in France, from which I escaped as soon as I could to flee to the city. My parents had lots of friends who were queer. One of them, JF, was very important to me, since he often babysitted me. Later he took me to the cinema or the theatre. Already when I was four, going to his place, I could see Gay Pied Magazine, French weekly journal for gays. What I realised later is that my parents, who I would qualify as open-minded, had only asked him to remove the medium sections in it, those with big hard-ons on A4 pages. I quite understand their point of view.

Most of the time, going out in theatre or for exhibitions, I could meet middle-aged queers, my parents friends again. Some of them looked like caricatures, some like any middle-aged teacher in any school in the world. Some used to live together, others were leading a very official single life, people whose night habits were quite obvious to all, and not hidden to me.

It was no problem to anybody when I was discovered at 10, with my best male friend in the toilet at school. Well, to anybody except for the teachers who are certainly still traumatised by my parents unambiguous attitude: “you should not do that in a public place, you know, it is often a bother to be discovered when you have sex with someone, even when you grow older.” The other parents were not so tolerant and while I was the hero of the weekend among my parents’ friends, my lover was almost beaten up by his father, and changed school within two weeks.

I could not feel guilty about that. The idea could not even be formulated in my mind that a normal person could find something shocking in my behaviour. I discovered actual sex as a
living event when I was seven, watching Steph and his cousins. He was twelve and the others were twins of eleven. The older and one of the brothers had attached the third one on a bed and masturbated him. His first orgasm was in his brother’s hand. Fair enough for me. It was so normal.

For my whole youth, I never had to live as an alien or a freak. I hardly imagined it could be a problem for a boy to have stories with boys. Luckily enough, I was not shy, and I never pictured myself as ugly, like most teenagers do. I was the official Homo in my high school, almost as soon as I arrived: at fourteen, I could tell almost at first sight who would accept or reject me as a lover, and seduced anybody. There were so few boys who felt secure with their homosexuality, the simple fact that I dared propose to them was enough to have sex whenever I wanted. That was very uncommon among young males, apparently, and I had quite a good time. I also had a lot of heterosexual friends, who didn’t fear me, or look at me as a weirdo. Actually, I remember that they sort of envied me, without being tempted at all by the kind of life I was leading. Those who wanted to be with girls couldn’t have such an easy life. There are codes that are much more difficult to transgress in that society (the famous Heterosoc) than in ours. And even more, one can recognise in their stupid morality most of the social defaults that exist on earth: to be able to shag, boys have to be dishonest, cowards, and they end up having a power relationship instead of a love relationship. Normality is usually a quiet place to hide a huge fear of difference: most of the imitative behaviours lead people to take what they think is easy to get and not to look for what they really want.

I must admit that, although I had no a priori, I never thought that sex was any fun with girls. For a while I indeed turned out to be heterosexual. For quite a few months, I have to say, when I changed high school. Did I feel in the new place that things would be quite different from before, couldn’t I find any boyfriend or was I in a different mood? Anyway, I began having a lot of female friends, which was pretty new to me, and Helene turned out to be my confident. Once you put a foot in a community, everything is organised so that you stay in it. The girls talk to each other, and though Helene knew perfectly what I was interested in, she transmitted me the information anyway, and some affairs took place. I was rather gentle, and more precisely, I think I was among the very few who were not so desperately looking for sex that they turned to be aggressive. In that school indeed, there were very few of those who could apparently get laid regularly. The level of frustration was the highest I had ever met.
Quickly, the girls began to express their wish of going out with me. My parents being still so tolerant let the girls stay overnight, although they were rather surprised by my quick, unexpected change of habits.

Girls talk. Or they need that someone talks. Girls need to know that you love them before they fuck, just as if the two elements were correlated. And of course they also need to be reassured right after the orgasm. Do you know any worse moment? The physical difference, at the beginning I felt uncomfortable without a dick to handle, was nothing compared to that bother: to have to take care of someone when you want to rest quietly. None of the girls I met could just trust me right away. They just thought that my sexuality could in no way be the same as theirs, and that I was necessarily cheating or lying. I don’t say it is their fault: most of the boys I met at that moment were real twats. Those babes could not accept a simple shag.

Anyway I kept on for a while, and actually appreciated quite a bit. There is something that you can only find on earth with fat girls with big tits. Real rest. A smell...very different. Everything has another taste in girls anyway, and can certainly be appreciated. What you can grip, where you can touch, is nothing alike. Fucking a vagina is also quite exciting at some moments, just like any new feeling. But I stopped shagging girls quite suddenly and never did it again. One has to try everything, but it usually passes with age. Now I can talk to them...maybe easier. And maybe I would feel less uncomfortable to refuse one, now that I have experienced a few relationships.

My falling in love with Sylvain was indeed quite sudden. Real love, like never before. I stopped everything. I was beginning to be really interested in archaeology, at that time, and went to study history. He was doing maths. I abandoned the mystery of Pope Joan, to spend three months on a beach in Italy. We weren’t back for the exams. My parents stopped giving me money, wanting me to come back. It eventually happened when Sylvain decided to prostitute to get money. I felt disgusted by the idea and let him on his beach. I know I should never have done that. He meant no harm. It was natural for him to go and see these old men, since he had identified that behaviour as normal when he was a teenager. For me it was degrading, a real caricature, and I couldn’t accept my boyfriend would behave like the oppressor wants us to. It was a moment of political consciousness, that had been unknown to me before. It had revealed itself in the high school, facing all those frustrated future Heterosoc components whose speeches against gays had made me feel insecure for the first time. Associate it with the usual intransigence of youth, and you dump your true love.
At that moment, coming back, I would never have specialised in the study of Greek civilisation. Why should I? I liked it better to search for traces of homosexuality where it was hidden. Nobody could tell that I was obsessed, but I know I was. Tracking to prove scientifically that homosexuality was more normal as a social behaviour, and that a repressive heterosexuality had necessarily led to relational disasters: this was the best way I could ever find to discharge my fears. They were new, and grew even bigger when my mother died and I left France for England. Manchester is a beautiful city with a great community. The village. There, I have had some great parties. Exciting and new life, going away from home. But also having to realise everyday more precisely that the place I had always thought to be mine in society could actually be denied. The bigger the community I was part of, the lonelier I felt. Just because the others, outside, could immediately see me as a stranger, as they had never before.

Only now I realise that my life as an individual, whose sexuality was his own, dropped in an ocean and could not be identified anymore, when I began caring about politics, fighting for rights I had never thought I could need. Retrospectively, I see it like “name the problem, it will touch you”. It took time to happen, though.

Brian was my new boyfriend. He was blond and had the biggest dick I had ever seen. This was not really important to me, but fun to notice. We lived in a house in Hulme, and were going out every night, to parties, theatre shows or live concerts. I went to my first Gay Pride with him and all of our friends, in London. Coming back, on the bus, a bunch of hooligans---if ever that word has a meaning---took us as a target for throwing their empty cans. They insulted us, and didn’t seem to appreciate our sexuality. For sure most of our friends were quite easy to notice, dressed in pink, perched on their heels. I had always found judo a useless activity, but I have sometimes silently thanked my parents for having insisted that I should keep training for years. One of the only constraints they put upon me. On that occasion, I could be once more grateful for their wise foreknowledge. The shouting men were stopped by the elimination of their leader. Real cowards like you can see in films.

Hanging around with the same friends, I was often in meetings and organising demonstrations---politics and arts being subtly mixed all along. Brian was much less interested than I was in associative life. One night, Brian asked me to go back home before the end of a meeting. I told him I would come later, having a new text to write for an exhibition. He was found the next morning three streets away from home and stayed in the hospital for five weeks. He had been raped by five guys, all of them being on the bus coming...
from London, who had more or less chased us since then. He never wanted to see me again, not even in the hospital. He knew he was unfair, but couldn’t help thinking I shouldn’t have let him go alone. No trust no more, he wrote to me.

I have been crying for weeks. I don’t know who I am, and can’t tell if he is right. I feel my identity has been dissolved in something that is not a human but a slogan. I hate communities, but I am part of one and can’t deny it. I cannot choose, history chose for me. And being unaware of it, as I was for years, makes me a danger for my friends and lovers. The reality of what the Others expect from me, and the necessity to fight against it, ran faster than me and caught me by surprise. For a long time I thought nothing could touch me, but I fear that once the cloud breaks into rain, it is not easy to climb on it again.

I look at most of my friends’ children, wondering if any of them is going to have the kind of life I lead now. I would like to help them without lying, without hiding the reality of hatred, but protect them anyway. I doubt it is possible. They will grow older and will never be prepared: innocent or frightened, there is no other alternative. Fear makes you stick to those you believe alike; feeling at ease makes you forget that everyone has their own experience and knowledge.

“What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger” said someone. Might be true, but for the moment, all I can do is cry, and wait until I can be light again.

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