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Reflection

As an educator and a queer resident-of-color of Athens-Clarke County and Georgia, I often join my colleagues in knocking on the doors of local and state government organizations to show our collective dissent when diversity or diverse thoughts were in danger and demanded support for minorities to thrive, live on their term, and feel safe in the city we lovingly call Athens. This piece is my poetic storytelling of the first Pride Parade organized in 2022 by Athens Pride and Queer Collective (see Rymarev, 2022), a local queer organization, and the installation of rainbow crosswalks downtown that acknowledges and uplifts queer voices in the city. I see pride parades as an essential community-building exercise that bridges and represents local community members' diverse histories, leading to a broader purpose and meaning-making of their living experiences. Through my thoughts in this poem, I intrinsically argue the importance and inevitable connections of communal equality and equity endeavors as parts of pedagogy and andragogy.

Contributing to such ongoing participation in my city, I show my commitment as a queer educator to community partnership initiatives and the relevance of the strong connections between what happens outside my classroom, such as at home or with family or in other social places, and their connections inside my classroom. This poem is a small step in showing how storytelling legitimizes queer experiences I teach and hear within and beyond my educator's and/or queer individual capacities.

Work Cited

Rymarev, E. (2022, June 13). Athens hosts first annual pride parade. *The Red & Black*.

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June 12.

Athens' noon. Close to 100 degrees, yet hearts were over the moon.

Because,

that day, the matter all gathered for, and the cascades of the past that we all use to contemplate mushroomed – bloomed into the Pride victory – to celebrate us, our histories.

Voices,

which were sadly getting used to being shunned, drummed, the band of their throne. Through sincere deliberations, we sow “atypical” foundations. Love prevails across bridges, forms, and colors. I saw a toddler and her mothers sharing happy kisses. Pride in air and hearts.

Cheered,

Seeing the crowd, pals in college gear, my heart nudged me to teach about our city's better reach. Athens' Clayton Street or College Ave are not just routes – they house people's rights, gotten after long fights. They're the sites where all-of-kind love resides, taking Athens to a better societal height. Our city is now a better place, y'all. Plumb!

Author Bio

Saurabh Anand is a rhetoric and composition PhD student and an assistant writing center director in the Department of English at the University of Georgia. *The English Journal*, *The Autoethnographer*, the *Washington Square Review*, the *Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, and the *South Florida Poetry Journal* featured his creative works.