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I am an American-born citizen. My parents were born here, and their parents were born here. I was raised by God-fearing Roman Catholic conservatives in the beautiful state of Arkansas; a home I had to leave to find love and acceptance in my life... maybe especially from myself. I love myself today, because I know who I am. Nothing will change the reality of who I am. Not even federal law can dictate that. The truth of who we are is something that lives within each of us as human beings; it is ours to discover.

Watching the messages and rejection I received from my own family as a queer child be exacerbated and played out on a country-wide scale has been... retraumatizing, to say the least. My heart breaks not only for myself, but for thousands of my transgender siblings as we watch on in horror; our very identities publicly challenged, debated, and soon-to-be outlawed entirely... What comes next? After we have our legal autonomy stripped, our right to tell the world who we are, what will happen to us?

Is this the land of the free? Am I not free to forge my own path, to pursue my happiness? Happy, healthy, whole and honest citizens create a just society built in love and community. We are not many, us transgender Americans... but we are Americans, and our rights, our freedoms, our contributions matter just as much as any other human being's matter.

I am afraid of what the future holds for myself and my loved ones. I am afraid the day will come where I am not welcome on this land at all.