

Amor

“

I can't even be who I am sometimes without being looked at a certain way. And it's not even just with my appearance, but it's just who I am on the inside.

”



My name's Amor. I'm 25 years old. I was born and raised in Southern California, and I'm the youngest of six children. I work full time, so I understand what it's like when people say they're so busy all the time, even though all they do is work. But also, my story is that I am a lesbian.

I only realized it a few years ago. I thought about it before then, but then I would say, "Oh no, everyone feels this way." And so I just tried to repress it, and I was in denial. "No, it's a phase, it'll pass." That's what they say "It's a phase." But it won't go away.

The coming out process is very emotionally and physically exhausting. You have to spill your heart out and explain how it is that you feel this way. "How do you know? Are you sure? Is it something that happened to you? Were you touched?" And I'm just like, 'No. I just know.'

I was scared because we grew up traditionally Catholic and went to church every Sunday. When I told my mom, I was crying my eyes out. I told her that I was afraid of what the family would do. I could see she was confused. She was looking at me as if, "That's not why you should be afraid. You should be afraid for your soul." And she is very loving, so she was saying, "I still love you, I still love you" and she was comforting me when I was crying. But at the same time she was saying, "But, it's a sin."

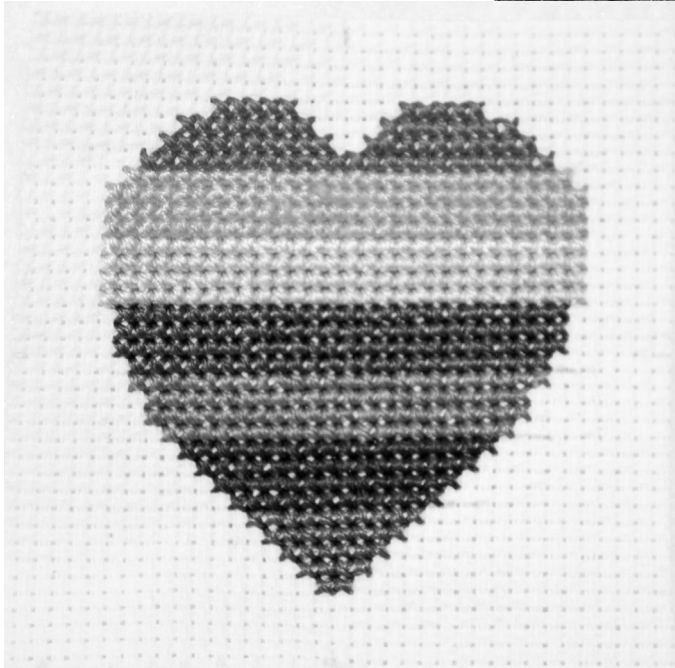
My mom says that we're all sinners. But it's like there's a tier of sins, and being gay is near the top. I've looked into conversion therapy. There is also electro-shock therapy. It still crosses my mind every now and again. Like, maybe I would be happier if my mom was happy for me and I was just brainwashed or electrocuted.

My mom still loves me and cares for me, but it just hurts when my girlfriend comes around and my mom is unwelcoming and not genuine. She's not like that with anyone else. I've been asked to hide being gay. For my sister's wedding my girlfriend and I were told to act just like really good friends, gal pals, and not talk about the elephant in the room. My girlfriend decided it was better for her just not to go.

It's just not fair. I get to see everyone else so open and loving with the people they care about, and I can't do the same, because of my mom. I shouldn't have to hide who I am in order to make other people happy or comfortable. I want to be allowed to express freely who I am.



"There's gay people from all walks of life – Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses . . . They're not always white males . And, it's not always sunshine and rainbows! There's so much love and acceptance out there, but there's still so much hate. Those things have to bring us all together."



One of Amor's hobbies is cross-stitching. In this example of her work, she has stitched a heart with the colors of the rainbow.

My mom brought us up and cared for us and loved us, which is very well and good. At the same time, a parent can't pick and choose who their children turn out to be. People tell me I'm selfish and only thinking of myself. But, I feel like it's selfish for everybody else to just expect me to act how they want me to.

Sometimes I try to tell myself that I can't complain because others have it worse. My mom could be much more hostile, and be like, "Get out; I don't want her here." And it's true, she could have kicked me out or disowned me. But still, I don't want to just be tolerated. I want to be accepted.

A lot of people only see gay pride. And it's like, no – not necessarily. It's not always sunshine and rainbows. They call it "pride" and we have safe spaces so that we can feel okay being who we are. Because while there's a lot of acceptance out there, there is also a lot of hate. And sometimes I do look down upon myself. Like, "I'm going to

hell, apparently, because of this." It's one of those things that keeps you up at night. What's gonna happen to me?

People say, "Pray. Pray it away. Pray the gay away." I tried, but it didn't work. Obviously I didn't choose this, but I have to accept it because I can't change it, or the ways to go about changing it aren't very valid.

There's a song I always think of, somewhat relating to my situation. It's a song by Gwen Stefani and Andre 3000. In this song they talk about being in an interracial relationship, and they're getting looked down upon. And the title of the song is "We've got a long way to go." That's what I always think of. I think positively, but we've got a long while to go till we get there.