

You met me and, without knowing it, loved me in the most radiant years of your life. Do you still remember me? I was in the fabric of your existence...

I was the spirit of the party. Your meeting with friends, with your family, at a wedding, on the road, at a political conference, in or outside a bar. Without anyone telling you with how many people you could be with, the distance measured among individuals.

I was your motivation at work. I was the one who gave you the strength to believe in yourself and work for your future and, perhaps, for the future of those around you and those you gave birth to, without indiscriminate closures preventing you from even trying.

I was with you when you were imagining how and where you would spend your holidays. Sea, mountains, countryside, city, it didn't matter. I was the dream of a carefree trip. Maybe a ticket to fly to Paris the same day, because the world was moving fast and you were dancing to its rhythm. Without Covid-19 tests.

I was with you when you decided that in the evening you would have gone to a restaurant, to the theatre, to the gym, to the cinema, to ballet, to a disco, to the opera, to a bar. Or you would have gone to the museum or an evening class. I was there, ready to accompany you as you got dressed and thought about the first dinner with your crush, the Shakespeare show, the miles you would have run, Bizet's Carmen, the movie you would have watched, the dance steps, a carefree evening, the chatting with friends. Without green passes or vaccines' IDs.

I was with you when you were preparing your children to go to school and thought that your taxes were also to pay for a state that would have given them the education and the rules to be a man, helping you in the effort to educate them, without distance learning.

I was with you when you went to the doctor and, after explanations about the treatment to be done, after buying all the medicines, after the heartfelt advice to stop eating junk food, drinking, or smoking, you opened a packet of Pringles, served yourself a Martini, rolled your tobacco and thought "tomorrow I'll quit".

I was with you when deciding to participate in a drug development phase was a choice, not a social or governmental imposition. Your body belonged to you in those days, as did your health and the possibility of living your daily life without worries or paying for it with your physical integrity. And, of course, your employer, your neighbor, the bartender couldn't care less, back then, about any vaccine you might have taken. You didn't need to trade your job, your evening out for being a guinea pig. No one called you no-vaxxer or a conspiracy theorist.

I was with you when you were flicking through a book, a newspaper, or surfing the Internet to get information and make up your own informed mind about something. Anything. Without Facebook, Google, or Twitter informing you in advance that there is only one truth. Theirs, indeed.

I was with you when the State was there, but not even that much. It asked you to remember civic respect. It maintained social cohesion, and the police, back then, dealt with real problems. Not about enforcing your curfew or lockdown and treating you like a criminal.

I was with you when you took to the streets to protest against the most insane dictatorships that annihilate man. Holy crap, I was there.

I was with you when there were two sexes, but many variations on how to have fun in bed and with whom to make love. I was with you when you could afford to use the word "faggot" without worrying that you had said something politically incorrect. Your faggot friend would have understood and wouldn't have been whining wrapped in a multi-colored flag, asking for particular laws and special rights to make sure that no one would ever tell him that he likes to have his ass fucked.

I was with you when you naturally built a better world where sex, sexual penchant, origins would not be an issue. There were no impositions of pink quotas, multi-colored quotas, racial quotas. There was a meritocracy.

I was with you when you could believe in global warming, in God, in science, or in gnomes. You could also have no opinions, and it was perfectly legitimate. You could decide whether to pollute or recycle without anyone weighing your carbon footprint, your shiny new car, or the packaging of the goods you buy. No one was imposing their beliefs on you back then.

I was with you when, by changing channels, you could listen to several versions of the same fact and not just one continuous, disturbing bell. You could also listen to things other than propaganda.

I was your secret. Your privacy. The space where the State does not enter. A text message from your phone company might welcome you home from a faraway country. Still, it didn't tell you that you'd got too close to an infected person, who might not even have realized he was infected, and you'll have to stay quarantined now or shove yet another stick up your nose to measure if you're infected. I was with you when the secrecy of correspondence was a sacred value. None would take it away from you, be it Apple or the European Union or someone else you did not even vote for, just to check in advance that - in the masses - no criminals are hiding.

I was with you when epidemiologists were experts worthy of esteem, but your days, dilated in an immobile and infinite time by catastrophic predictions of astrologers and lockdowns, did not depend on them.

I was with you when a little girl who does not go to school does not become the symbol of a struggle that you alone pay for. I was with you when you thought of taking her by the ears and scolding her, "study, ignorant!".

I was with you when they were still saying that the Amazon rainforest would be gone by 2000, and it is still there. I was with you when they told you the panda would disappear, and it is no longer in danger.

I was with you when you could afford to think about you, about you alone, without it being a crime.

I was with you when no one was yet telling you to carry on your shoulders, like a debt, the brave or not so brave history of your country. The whiteness of your skin. The class you were born into. I was with you when no one was telling you what was right to think, say or do for the development of your personality, for your joy, for a third party that - to be honest - you don't give a shit about. I was with you when history was not being rewritten.

I was with you when you were still looking ahead with confidence, even if a little less so from time to time. The future would be bright. Preventive assessments of any risk to be reduced to zero were not what your State lived by, ready at any moment to nip life in the bud.

I was in a handshake that sealed a pact, in an embrace that sanctioned friendship or forgiveness, without distance. I was in a smile that hides a new love, without a mask.

And maybe... maybe now, you understand who I am...

So many have fought in my name over the centuries. The bravest of them. I wonder if they did it for me, or the community, or some distant ideal. Maybe they did it simply because, each on his own, they understood what - with me - they would have gained and what - without me - they would have lost.

I exist where the possibility of being oneself exists. I exist where you personally calculate your risk. I exist where there is free will. I'm your choice, and I belong to you. Nobody else's.

Now, notice this. Look around you and ask yourself where I still flourish. Because, whether it is clear to you or not, I am disappearing in the fear of some and the indifference of others. In apathy and fear, every day a little more, you too lose your potential, your opportunity.

If you have come this far and agree with me, if this letter of mine has made an impression on you, then make as many copies as you like and send them around, to people you know and to strangers. Leave a copy at the bar, in the hairdresser's, at the supermarket, on the train on your way home. Wherever you want. Share it online. If you agree, if this letter of mine has made an impression on you, if you know how to do it, then take the time to translate my writing into another language and, beyond all borders, let my spirit soar...

The time has come to fight, to raise my head, to declare loudly, in every place, latitude and time, that I matter, that no one can erase me. Before it is too late. And if you decide to do it, remember that you will not be doing it for me because I am just a concept. Nor will you do it for the community because we are first and foremost individuals. Do it for you. For you alone. Because you want that your voice and your actions allow you to be the best version of yourself. By so doing, you will stop the annihilation of

Your  
Freedom