

**Lyla's Speech for the 2003 Hamilton Pride March and Rally (Saturday, June 14, 2003):**

*Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops  
Away above the chimney tops  
That's where you'll find me*  
- excerpt from "Over The Rainbow"

I sang that song at my elementary school graduation almost twenty years ago. Somehow, by design, but more often by divine coincidence, queer anthems, especially musical theatre ones, have been a part of my life for a very very long time.

Songs like . . .

*There's a place for us  
Somewhere a place for us  
Peace and quiet and open air  
Wait for us somewhere*  
- excerpt from "Somewhere"

But these songs are all rather melancholy. Songs that hope that maybe, someday, we might, find a world that will accept us as we are.

Then I discovered songs of empowerment. Songs like . . .

*I am what I am  
And what I am needs no excuses*  
- excerpt from "I Am What I Am"

or. . .

*Nobody, no nobody  
Is going to rain on my parade*  
- excerpt from "Don't Rain On My Parade"

But these days I think there are a few new songs we should add to the queer anthem cannon. As Canadians we have a lot to celebrate. For example. . . .

*I'm getting married in the morning  
Ding Dong the bells are going to chime  
I found me a wife  
And she loves me lots  
So, get me to the church*

*Yes, get me to the church*  
*Ding, Dong get me to the church on time*  
- excerpt from "Get Me To The Church on Time"

This is a great time and a great city, province and country to be queer. To commemorate this joyous thought I'll sing the closing words of an anthem that Bart Simpson, yes, Bart Simpson deemed an anthem of peace and I'd like to add of hope and acceptance as well.

*Oh Canada, we stand on guard for thee*  
*Oh Canada, we stand on guard for thee*  
- excerpt from "Oh Canada"

My brothers and sisters we have come a long long way, but there are still many barriers and struggles to come for gays, lesbians, bis and trans people not only in Canada, but across the globe. To highlight that thought I'll share with you the fact that I wrote this speech while I was at the Pussy Palace – a women's only bath house event – on Thursday night. The raid which took place there two years ago is a sad reminder of all the archaic sex laws that are still in the books in Canada that need to be abolished. So don't give up, but don't despair. There is still so much to celebrate. Freedom only come when you fight, fight for it every day of your life.

*This is my quest*  
*To follow that star*  
*No matter how hopeless*  
*No matter how far*

*To fight for the right*  
*Beyond question or pause*  
*To Dream*  
*The Possible Dream*  
- excerpt from "The Impossible Dream"