

## My Life in Colors: Embracing the Rainbow

**Roberto Jimenez**

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*My Life in Colors is an exuberant LGBTQ+ memoir that celebrates embracing one's individuality.*

Mental health professional Roberto Jimenez's memoir *My Life in Colors* covers his challenges with coming out, but it also finds joy in that struggle.

Jimenez grew up in the Dominican Republic with Catholic parents. Without any clear role models who spoke to his burgeoning sexual orientation, he felt "strange and alone." But he remained inquisitive, which put him at odds with a local priest who found his questions about baptism and other Catholic practices to be objectionable; he was dismissed from his catechism classes. He was sent to a military school to purge him of his "feminine qualities."

Jimenez alludes to other challenges as well, including a brief mention of childhood sexual abuse, the effects of which caused him to leave the Dominican Republic and move to the United States. There, he found more support with new friends who accepted his identity. He met, dated, and married his longtime partner, Ariel. Over time, he also received support from his family—support that he once thought was an impossibility.

Its prose clinical, the book hones in on the emotional aspects of coming out. It credits Jimenez's instincts to question authority with creating the personal space to ask himself deeper questions about who he was and who he loved. It celebrates how he learned to be true to himself, even through difficulties.

The book is organized in a way that complements Jimenez's flourishing, moving from childhood questioning to personal explorations and affirmed adulthood. Still, its metaphors for these transformations are strained: he grows from an egg to a caterpillar and becomes a butterfly. It also includes frequent pauses to describe feelings and sensations, as with the shame Jimenez felt over being thrown out of his cousin's house after coming out to him. But in its focus on the feelings of mere moments, the text often forgets to contextualize its events better for outside audiences. Its emotional power is diminished as a result.

Still, the book does an able job of tracing the psychological changes that occurred during Jimenez's coming-out process. It leans into hope throughout, avoiding centering the most difficult moments of Jimenez's past to instead focus on his happy present, sharing time with friends and family. Photographs from Jimenez's travels and personal life complement the book's happy energy.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (February 2, 2023)

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