

"Italians sunbathe as Gypsy girls drown."

Joey Skee (July 25, 2008)



On vacation, Italy's rightward turn haunts me.

Scanning CNN for news about the tropical storm raging across the Yucatan where I was vacationing this past week, a headline scroll jumped out at me from the bottom of the screen: "[Italians sunbathe as Gypsy girls drown](#) [2]."

Again, we have become a nazione of racists, heartless bigots defined by our xenophobic fears.

Just when the [rigorous examination by intellectuals and writers](#) [3] helped Italian Americans distance ourselves from the blood-stained mantle of racism bestowed by the ignominious violence that transpired in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in 1989, just as Italian scholars and artists were scrutinizing Italy's legacy of emigration and discovering its diaspora, just when you would have hoped that our



collective memory would have brought some clarity of our own history and consequently empathy with those today struggling with economic inequities and political injustices, it was at that moment fascists – yes, Lucca, there are still fascists in the world – claimed victory in Italy, as they have always done, fanning the xenophobic and homophobic fires of fear.

Without a single Italian staying at my cloistered resort with whom I could engage, question, vent, or castigate, I was left with the darkening storm clouds gathering overhead to ponder, as do family, friends, and colleagues, what is happening to our dear Italy?

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[2]

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[3] <https://segue.middlebury.edu/index.php?&action=site&site=fyse1077a-f04>

[4] <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/07/21/italy.drowning/index.html>

[5] http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1T4SKPB_enUS281US281&q=Bimbe%20Rom%20annegate%2C%20%27indifferenza%20della%20spiaggia