After taking part in a mini Venetian Carnival on the Île Saint-Louis yesterday, (look at photos #13 and #28) we went along with all of the other participants to a party hosted by the neighborhood merchants.

Between dinner and dessert, someone at one of the tables in the back of the room started singing, in fact, it was Marcel, the waiter from La Cavetière, our neighborhood bistro. He loves to sing, and does so often.

This was the invitation for others to start singing "their" song. In Europe, people sing more that they do in the States, and everyone seems to have a song that they sing reasonable well. When someone starts singing, everyone else joins in and sings along all the way to the end. They all know the words, and for the most part, everyone carries the tune.

The songs danced in the air, and we felt as though we were in the middle of a French film. Conversations and laughter filled the room and were only silenced by a new round of songs. We knew that we were lucky to be the only foreigners, and we had smiles on our faces thinking that life doesn't get any better than this, when the owners of Bertillon arrived with their world famous sorbet for dessert.

A cheer rang out from the crowd, and everyone got up to form the French version of a line, (something free form, like a glob of mercury), while the couple scooped up double cones for the crowd. The Carnaval Vénétian had been a big success with crowds of people taking photos of the beautiful costumes against the back drop of the Île Saint-Louis and Notre Dame, and as everyone sat back down at their tables enjoying their Bertillon sorbet, we thought that this day was so amazing that we may be dreaming.
Suddenly, someone started singing *La Marseillaise*, and everyone stood up raising their cones in the air, and sang their national anthem with passion, only stopping occasionally to lick their cones to keep them from dripping. It was spontaneous and pure, and it was the highlight of the party.

When the evening was over, we opened the door to find a warm spring night, and crossing over the Seine, we smiled our way home.