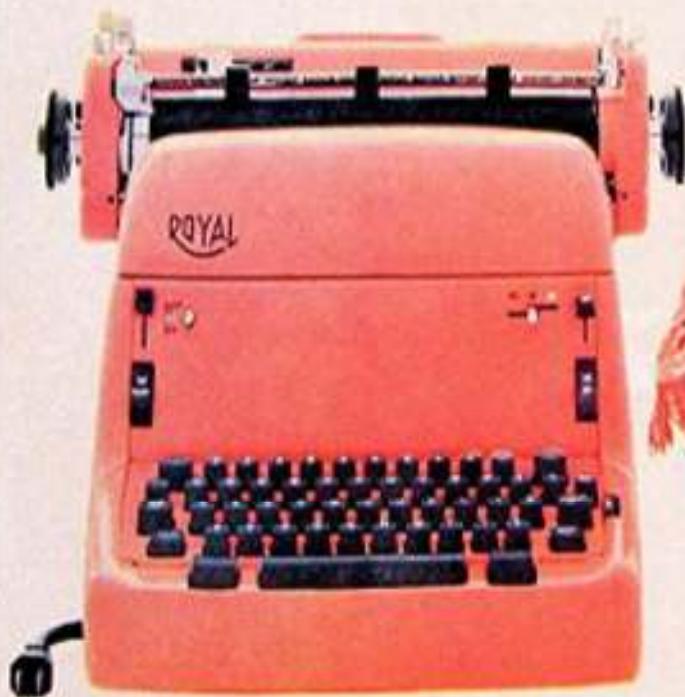


**1-2-3  
PUNCH:**

How Misogyny Hurts  
QUEER COMMUNITIES





This zine began with a conversation between myself and annah about how much we hate misogyny and how much it goes unchecked around us. The information came from conversations we've had over the years with our friends and other queers and just life in general. We put out a call out for submissions and here we are with some folks' experiences about misogyny in different queer contexts. This is not meant to be all inclusive and I would love to hear other peoples' experiences with misogyny. The compilation process has been super validating and eye opening for me, and I appreciate all who contributed either through the written or verbal word!



I tried to get the best flow I could piecing together peoples' work and I apologize for the disjointedness. I recommend reading this zine by savoring each unique piece and including digestive pauses between them...eat up kids!



Femmephobic/misogynist  
language/misconceptions

Nag

Bossy

Bitch

Crazy

Silly/a joke

Flaky

Passive aggressive

Manipulative

All femmes wear heels and  
skirts

You can't bike in heels/skirts—  
like we're an anomaly or  
something

That femmes are mimicking  
straight culture

That femmes are exhibitionists

Femmes are bottoms or they're  
bitchy doms—virgin/whore  
dichotomy

Femmes are  
consumerists/materialistic

Gossipy

Not radical

Not an anarchist

Not queer

Female



## SUB-SPLOITATION & GENDER-FUCKING

"Culture Jamming" and "Subvertisements" have been characterized as forms of public art/activism generally staged in opposition to commercialism and the vectors of corporate image. Such forms of guerilla art take aim at media-based power structures causing the viewer to take a second glance at something that appears common place, thereby disrupting and denaturalizing the original message. This practice sometimes entails the alteration of existing mass media images (using the original medium's communication method) to produce ironic or satirical commentary or counter-messages. It has been said,

A well produced 'subvert' mimics

the look and feel of the

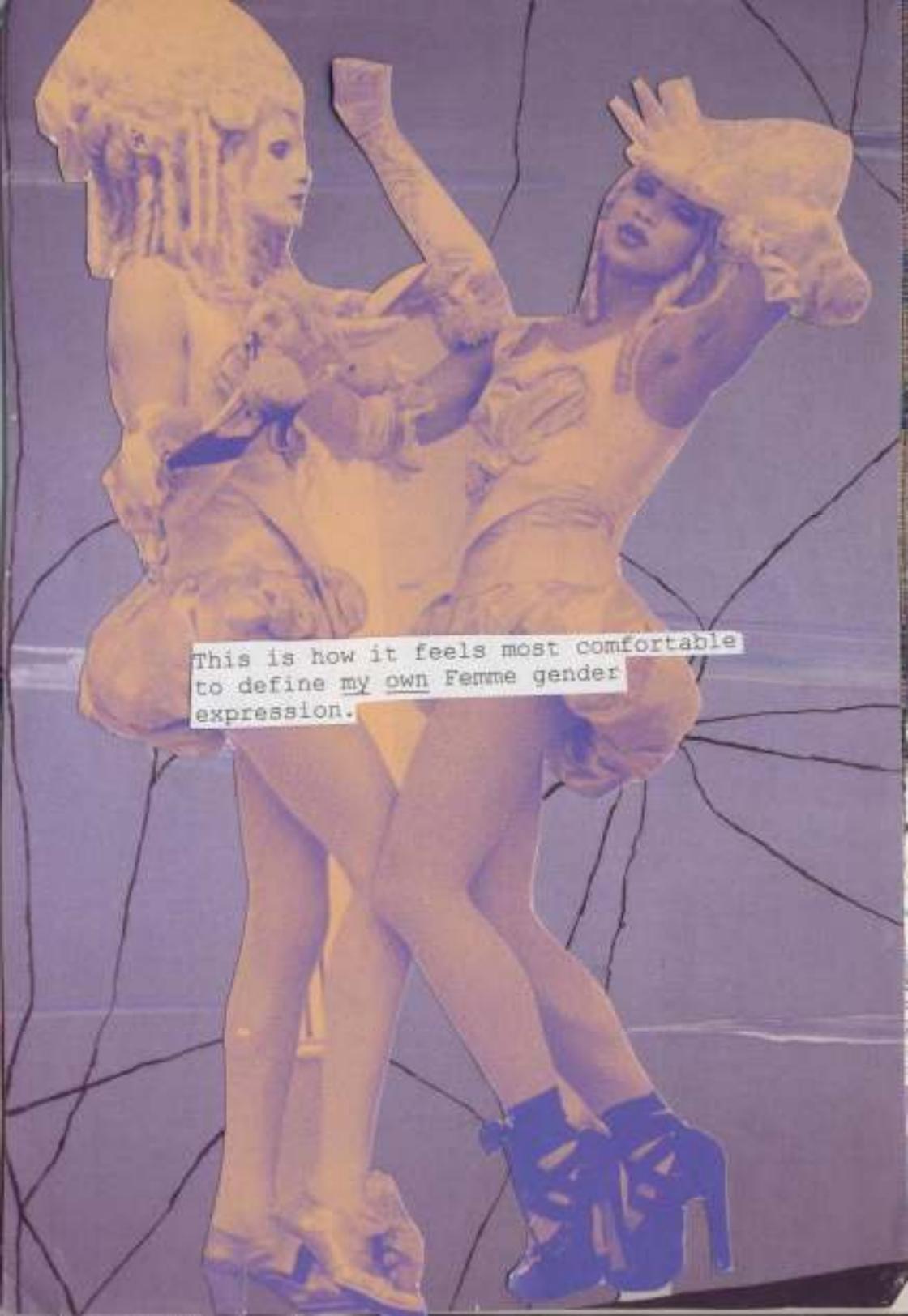
targeted ad, promoting the

classic 'double-take' as viewers suddenly realize they have been duped. Subverts create cognitive

dissonance. They cut through the hype and glitz of our mediated reality and, momentarily, reveal a deeper truth within.

Office  
Core





This is how it feels most comfortable  
to define my own Femme gender  
expression.

I am a Femme identified queer, brought up in the white-trash craters at the base of the Sierra Foothills. I was assigned female at birth, grew up displaying many of the mainstream characteristics required for female-assigned people to pass, and at this point in my life I feel most comfortable identifying with she/her pronouns. Needless to say, this grants me an immense amount of privilege. This privilege is also accompanied by all the shit that comes along with being female-presenting inside the belly of patriarchy.



This commentary is not meant to flaunt the harrows of my white/het privilege... I simply hope to bring to light the ways in which Femme identity can be an actively defiant, radical and revolutionary form of gender expression. As much as I hate starting discussions out from a defensive position, I feel it necessary to remark back to some of the shit-talking sessions I've overheard within queer communities. It's meant to confront statements like: Femme identity is mainstream compliance with

patriarchy, Femme identity is a default-gender expression, Femme identity is a reproduction of the heteronormative expectations of women, blahblahblah: Boring. If you've thought this, I urge you to look more closely. There is a depth of subtext you're obviously missing out on

Capitalist, media-based power structures that assert hegemonic notions of "womanhood" and "femininity" are challenged through the hijacking of feminine images by deviant femme-identified folk every day. These challenges, aside from their existence as signifiers of cultural resistance, also serve as direct modes of power reclamation and methods of ensuring survival. Sex-work to feed ourselves and our families, the shoplifting and distribution of food, weapons, medicine and other essentials, the capacity to charm or distract authority figures by exploiting their own misogynistic tendencies, and many other forms of subversion have been passed down to me throughout the years. My mama's best friend when I was growing up (a self-identified femme-dyke-hairdresser) used to say shit to me like,



"Smile pretty. They'll never see it coming...and if they do catch on, they'll be too shocked to dodge your blows. Hell, maybe they'll even learn something. Buncha sorry assholes."

I have learned throughout the course of my life, how to use these specific components of my identity to ensure my own survival, as well as the survival of folk around me who don't have access to these tools of manipulation. In a world where visibly deviant bodies are punished, oppressed and marginalized, I recognize it as essential that my privilege be utilized as a tool to deconstruct and dismantle the system. On a separate note, I expect that the communities I'm part of recognize the fucked-up effects of patriarchy on people like myself, and are actively working to challenge and confront it.

-annah.

resisting\_palindromes@graffiti.net

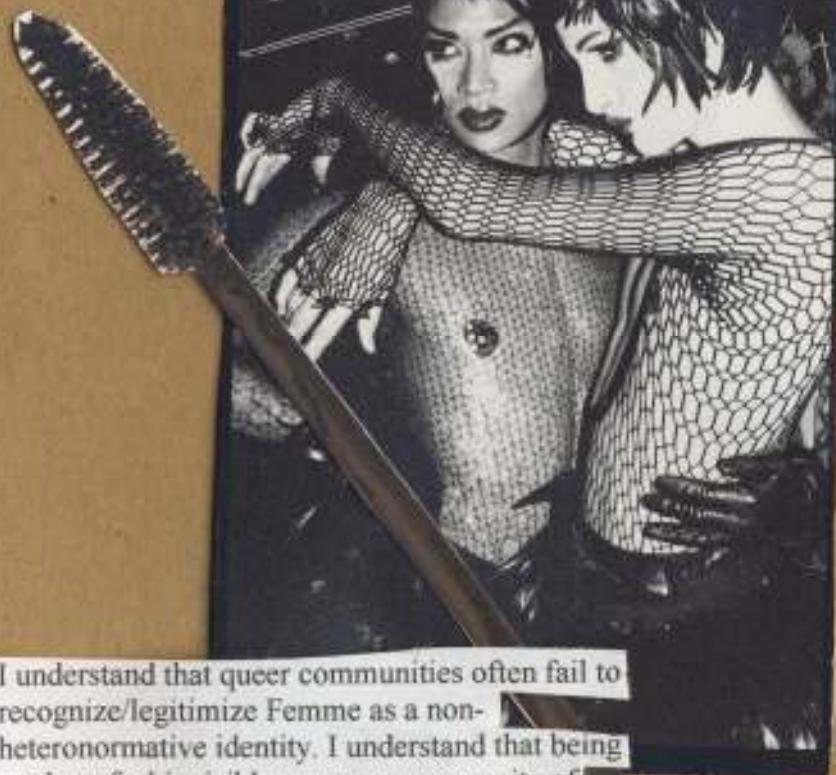


A Callout to QWFs:

Invisibility=Privelege

(Own It, then lets work from there!)

If I hear one more queer white femme (QWF) complain about the "plight of invisibility" they suffer as a result of passing, I might throw myself into oncoming traffic.



I understand that queer communities often fail to recognize/legitimize Femme as a non-heteronormative identity. I understand that being made to feel invisible among a community of people whom you identify with feels shitty. I understand that this form of exclusion is invalidating and divisive. Without a doubt, these things are problematic and should be confronted. But as an Afro-Latina Femme Dyke, I feel goddamn sick of QWFs failing to recognize that this "invisibility" entitles them to more privileges and forms of safety than femmes of color could ever dream of having access to.

NEWSFLASH: Femme's of color not only absorb the constant impacts of patriarchy, but our gender-race combinations are often dangerously exoticized, fetishized and tokenized in the mainstream world *as well as in queer spaces*. For instance, people peg me as hypersexual, Other, deviant/kinky, a hoe before I even utter a word about myself (maybe



some of these things are true about me, but that's not the point). Whether I identify as het or queer doesn't matter in these initial moments—the assumptions noted above first take president and set the stage for any further interaction that may follow.





If more QWFs showed awareness about the privileges that come as a result of their passing, a foundation could be formed for the kind of necessary solidarity work that needs to get done in order to fight patriarchy, heterosexism, white supremacy *and* femmephobia.

Angry-in-Argentina,  
Vancouver BC



Getting Real.  
by alix p. shedd

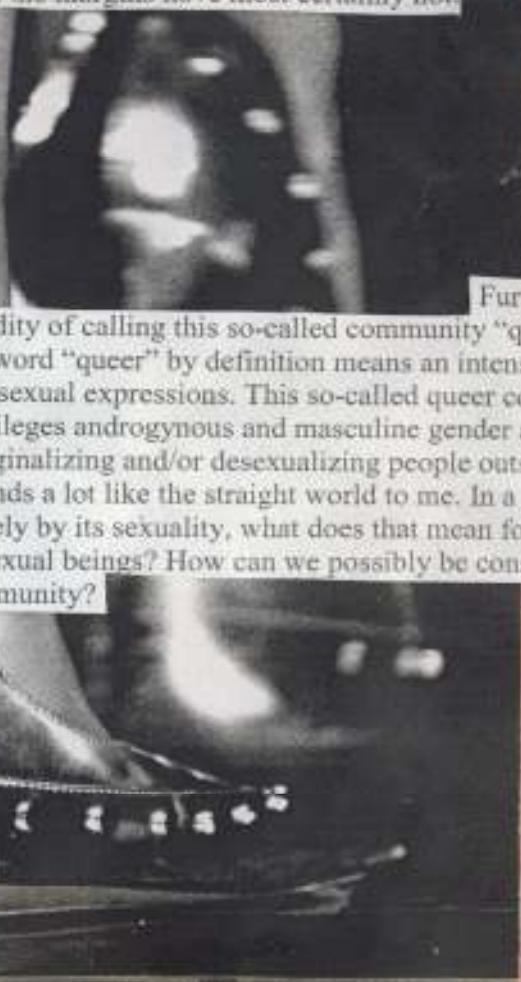
I have SO much to say about my experiences as a high-femme transsexual lesbian. I never write about these ideas and thoughts, and I rarely have a chance to even talk about them. There is an incredible silence about trans-feminine issues within this queer scene, and I want to rip that silence apart and question its very existence. Rather than write an entire book I want to give you just a taste. Each sentence here could easily be its own chapter, and I highly encourage you to reread and ponder deeply. Because I do not attempt to explain everything in detail, some of this may seem off the cuff or flippant. I assure you that every word is carefully chosen, every argument based on years of difficult experience and observation. Let it spark a heated discussion, thorough investigation, or just a long night of thinking...

I am a femme trans lesbian. These are mere words, but we give words and language so much weight. We use them as weapons, as shields, as sources of pride and hatred. For most people in our misogynistic and gender-fascist society, any of those words—or more likely all three—invoke misunderstanding, disrespect or worse; the combination proves unfathomable. Even in my supposed “queer community” most people find the combination confusing.

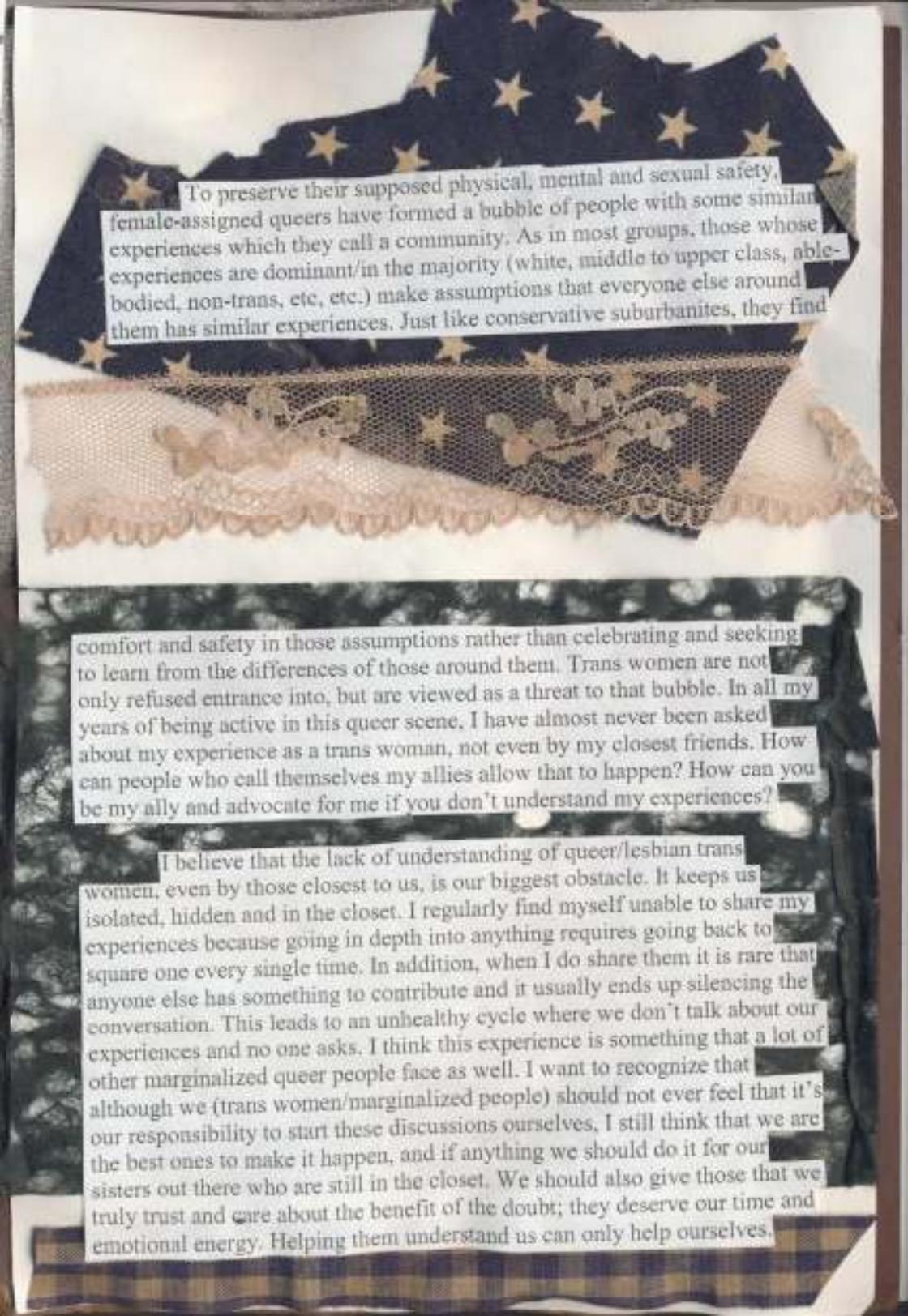




Because we give words so much weight, first I want to dissect what so many people refer to casually as "The Queer Community". Let's get real about what we're talking about here: for me, a more accurate name would be "the dyke-dominated queer scene". First of all, a community is a group of people that grow together, that support each other through change and struggle, and one that truly respects and accepts all its members. Though many people have found those things in this so-called community, those of us on the margins have most certainly not.



Furthermore, I question the validity of calling this so-called community "queer" in the first place. To me, the word "queer" by definition means an intense variety of radical gender and sexual expressions. This so-called queer community, however, especially privileges androgynous and masculine gender and sexual expressions, while marginalizing and/or desexualizing people outside those accepted norms. Sounds a lot like the straight world to me. In a community that defines itself largely by its sexuality, what does that mean for those of us who are not seen as sexual beings? How can we possibly be considered a part of that community?



To preserve their supposed physical, mental and sexual safety, femalo-assigned queers have formed a bubble of people with some similar experiences which they call a community. As in most groups, those whose experiences are dominant/in the majority (white, middle to upper class, able-bodied, non-trans, etc, etc.) make assumptions that everyone else around them has similar experiences. Just like conservative suburbanites, they find

comfort and safety in those assumptions rather than celebrating and seeking to learn from the differences of those around them. Trans women are not only refused entrance into, but are viewed as a threat to that bubble. In all my years of being active in this queer scene, I have almost never been asked about my experience as a trans woman, not even by my closest friends. How can people who call themselves my allies allow that to happen? How can you be my ally and advocate for me if you don't understand my experiences?

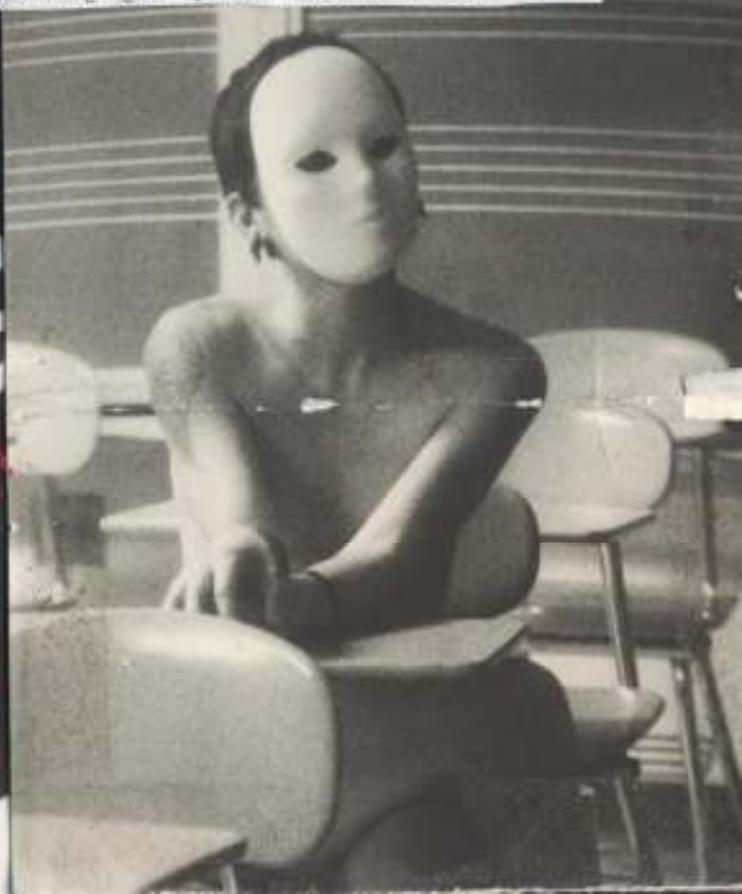
I believe that the lack of understanding of queer/lesbian trans women, even by those closest to us, is our biggest obstacle. It keeps us isolated, hidden and in the closet. I regularly find myself unable to share my experiences because going in depth into anything requires going back to square one every single time. In addition, when I do share them it is rare that anyone else has something to contribute and it usually ends up silencing the conversation. This leads to an unhealthy cycle where we don't talk about our experiences and no one asks. I think this experience is something that a lot of other marginalized queer people face as well. I want to recognize that although we (trans women/marginalized people) should not ever feel that it's our responsibility to start these discussions ourselves, I still think that we are the best ones to make it happen, and if anything we should do it for our sisters out there who are still in the closet. We should also give those that we truly trust and care about the benefit of the doubt; they deserve our time and emotional energy. Helping them understand us can only help ourselves.

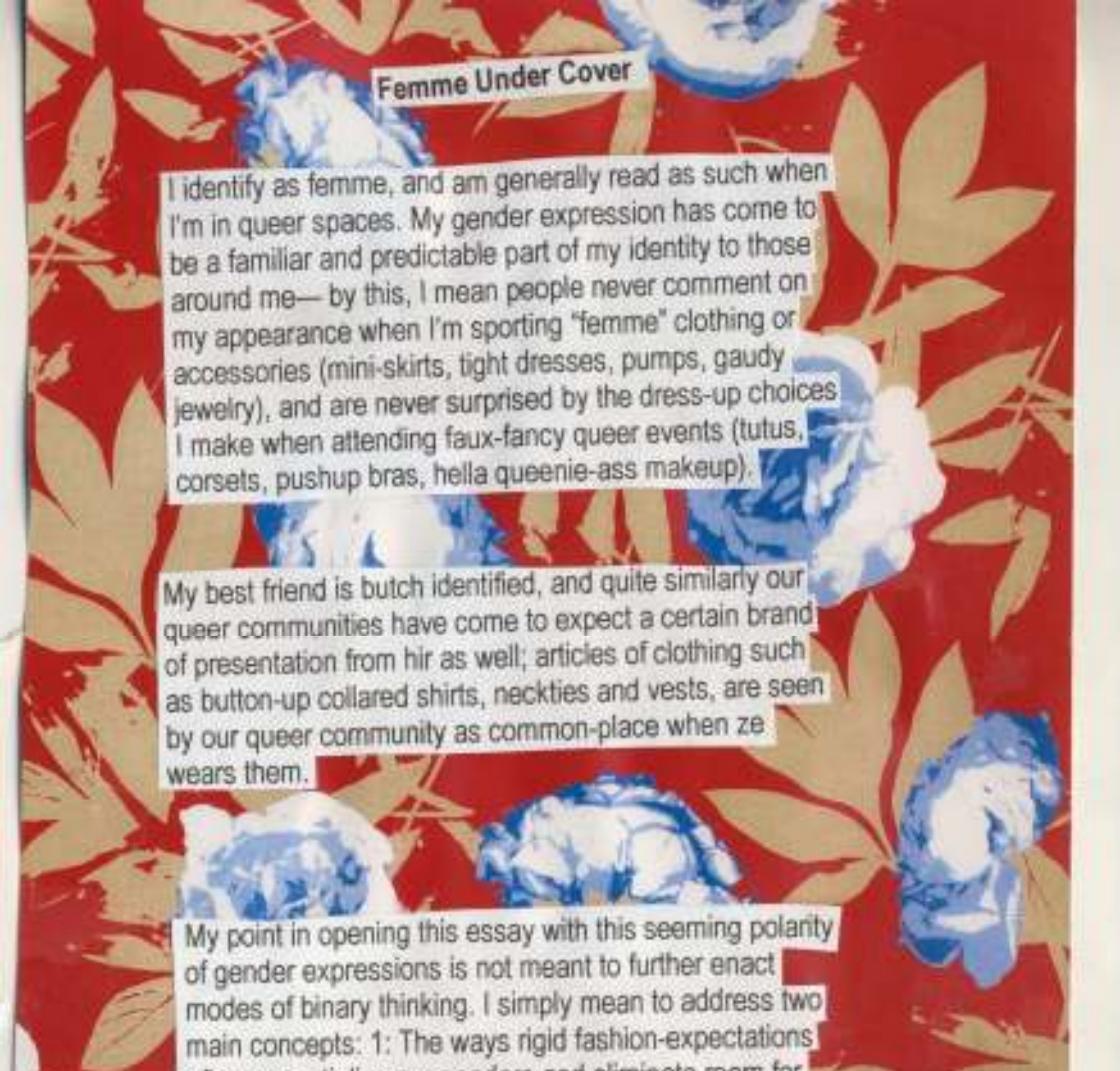
So, let's bring all this back to the primary topic, of femme identity/experience. I think for most of us the most pressing issue as femmes is that of misogyny. As marginalized queers, I think that femmes must accomplish our own goal of dismantling misogyny within a larger goal of rebuilding an actual supportive community—one built on mutual understanding and respect of different experiences, as well as a true commitment to breaking down all systems of oppression. Only through a constant quest of understanding our variety of experiences can we truly become supportive allies to each other and break down our own internalized homophobia, racism, ableism, classism, fatphobia, sexism, etc, etc.

We must overcome our bullshit by being proactive—we must not be afraid to ask the wrong question or say the wrong thing, while also being forgiving when others do. This fucked-up society has embedded its talons of hate deep into our souls, but we must not blame ourselves or those we love for this. Likewise, we cannot simply remove the talons and be done with it, for they leave gaping holes which can only be patched painstakingly over much time. And in the end, they will still be patches. But we must recognize the beauty of that patchwork—the beauty in our ability to heal, to grow, to recover from something so damaging and yet still have the energy to rebuild.

So let's make it happen.

lecolcho@gmail

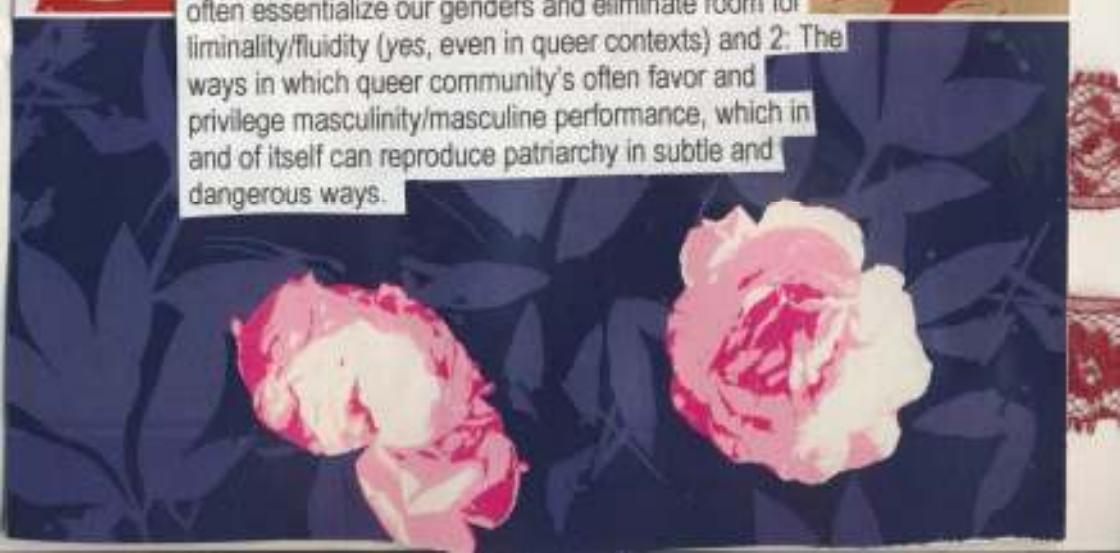




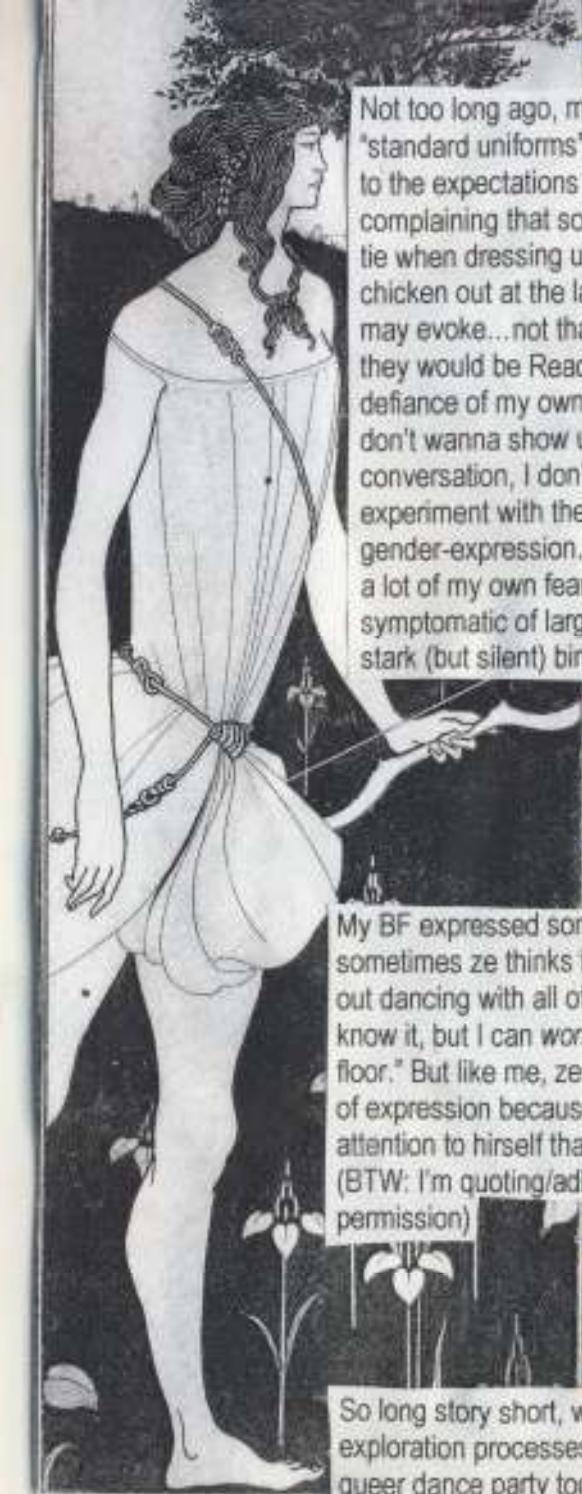
## Femme Under Cover

I identify as femme, and am generally read as such when I'm in queer spaces. My gender expression has come to be a familiar and predictable part of my identity to those around me— by this, I mean people never comment on my appearance when I'm sporting "femme" clothing or accessories (mini-skirts, tight dresses, pumps, gaudy jewelry), and are never surprised by the dress-up choices I make when attending faux-fancy queer events (tutus, corsets, pushup bras, hella queenie-ass makeup).

My best friend is butch identified, and quite similarly our queer communities have come to expect a certain brand of presentation from hir as well; articles of clothing such as button-up collared shirts, neckties and vests, are seen by our queer community as common-place when ze wears them.



My point in opening this essay with this seeming polarity of gender expressions is not meant to further enact modes of binary thinking. I simply mean to address two main concepts: 1: The ways rigid fashion-expectations often essentialize our genders and eliminate room for liminality/fluidity (yes, even in queer contexts) and 2: The ways in which queer community's often favor and privilege masculinity/masculine performance, which in and of itself can reproduce patriarchy in subtle and dangerous ways.



Not too long ago, me and my BF were discussing the "standard uniforms" we often feel limited to wearing due to the expectations of our gender expressions. I was complaining that sometimes I just wanna wear a suit and tie when dressing up for faux-fancy events...but I always chicken out at the last minute because of the reactions I may evoke...not that these reactions would be bad, but they would be Reactions...comments based on the defiance of my own typically adopted gender norms. I don't wanna show up and be the main topic of conversation, I don't wanna shock people, I just wanna experiment with the complexities of my gender and gender-expression. This insecurity is no doubt based on a lot of my own fears, but I believe it to also be symptomatic of larger subcultural pressures that uphold stark (but silent) binary structures.

My BF expressed some similar sentiments, noting that sometimes ze thinks it'd be fun to dress in 'drag' and go out dancing with all of our friends. Ze noted, "you'd never know it, but I can work a pair of heels out on the dance floor." But like me, ze often feels limited to certain modes of expression because ze "never wants to attract more attention to himself than necessary."

(BTW: I'm quoting/adlibbing this conversation with permission)

So long story short, we decided to support each other's exploration processes one night. We showed up at a queer dance party together dressed in our usual clothing. About an hour into the party, we slipped away together

and changed into each other's clothing. Ze managed to squeeze into my floral-print negligee and knee-high platform boots, and neatly fastened hir hair back with my flamboyant gold-Lemay rose barrette. Simultaneously, I pulled hir black & grey pin-striped pants up around my waist, put on hir button-up black collared shirt, and slipped hir grey linen vest over the top. I let my hair fall wild & messy around my face.

Upon entering the room of friends and acquaintances after our outfit exchange, I was shocked by the reactions we both got.

People were all over me, gushing about how HOT I looked. People who had never noticed me before began coming over to introduce themselves throughout the evening. I got more phone-numbers that night than I'd gotten cumulatively throughout the entire time I'd been out as queer. Moreover, throughout the course of the night people laughed at my jokes, people were quiet when I told stories, and they actually listened *attentively* to my responses in group conversations, as if what I had to say may be insightful and important. It wasn't until I experienced this overt contrast that I realized the lack of general respect and camaraderie I sometimes feel in these spaces when presenting as femme.



My BF on the other hand, noted that familiar friends were pretty weirded out all night by hir "Get-Up," which was a constant topic of conversation throughout the evening. Ze noted that while ze definitely expected people to react in

some way, ze was shocked at how much people just **couldn't get over it**. The shock was also accompanied by a series of comments throughout the evening about hir body, such as "Woah, who knew ze had curves!" or "Damn, check out how awkward ze looks with cleavage!" My BF also noted that ze felt the strongest reactions from hir friends who identify as butch or trans-masculine, as though hir experimentation with gender-prez that night somehow destabilized their identities... (?) To top it off, when ze went outside the building to get some fresh air and a moment of alone-time, ze was grossly harassed by a car-full of drunk frat guys who were stopped at a nearby traffic light. Ze called it a "shitty reminder," and noted that this hadn't happened to hir since ze started to present as more androgynous/butch.

Anyway, this is obviously a one-case incident that can't be representative for more than it's contextual occurrence, but I'd like to propose it as a foundation for queer communities to start thinking about the ways in which we may unintentionally enact modes of gendered oppression and fucked-up, binary-focused ideologies.

-Anonymous Femme, Washington DC



## faux femme for hire

I realized I wasn't femme just about the time I realized what femme power means and the ways in which i was selectively using it.

To

clarify, I recognize that there are a myriad of manifestations of femme, some of which utilize stereotypes around gender perceptions and assumptions regarding bodies and mental processing to one's advantage.

My connection with this came when I found out that my tough-guy front isn't the only way to be respected and listened to on a construction work site.

A couple years back, I was leading a job on a high-stress worksite with about eight other crews, a four story building, and a lot of precarious work to be done including a crane lift. Crane lifts are about the most stressful part of big jobs for me. They take tons of planning and coordination. Delicate packages weighing a few tons each are hoisted into the air and deposited on building tops, and I channel the deep anality of my mother while trying to organize my crew to be professional and organized in the face of other critical, onlooking workers. The morning of the crane lift of this particular site, I arrived slightly later than my coworkers to find my crew leader and the crane operator in heated debate. I ran over to hear the operator exclaiming that there was no \*%&^\*-ing way that we would be able to do the lift -- there was





no permit to block off street traffic and besides, there were low power lines between the street and the building. I stared at him, my mind spinning around a roll-a-deck of implications including dollar amounts of how much would be lost if we couldn't do the lift. I looked to either side of the building and saw a large, mostly empty Kragen's parking lot on one side. "How about from that parking lot?" I asked him tentatively. "If we could use it, I could reach but there's no \*%^&-ing way," he snorted, "i talked with the site super before you all got here and he said that Kragen's will tow anyone who parks there in the day." He continued spouting off why this job was fucked and we should have planned better.

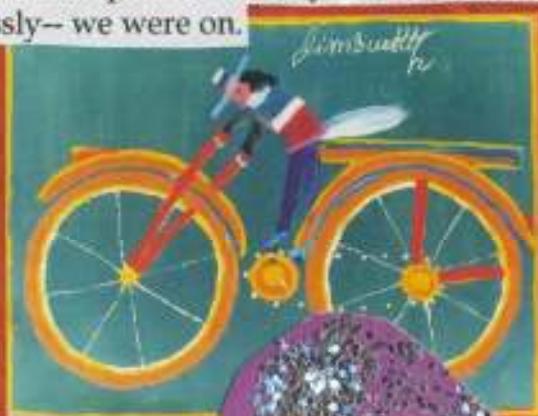
Without

even consciously realizing what I was doing I walked past him slowly, towards the front door of Kragen's. The store didn't open until 8 and it was only 7:30, but I saw a man milling around inside. I briefly glanced at my reflection in the window, swallowed, and knocked on the glass door. "Hello," I called in a sweet, higher-than-normal voice. "Hello, Hello?" The man inside looked out from behind a shelf and over at me. I smiled and waved, stifling my desperation and projecting the girl next door friendliness. Sure enough he came to the door and opened it as much as the chain locking it to the other door allowed. "Hi," I said, "Uh, I'm working with a crew on the job site next door, and uh, we have a



problem. I'm hoping you can help." The man was hesitant, and I could see him taking in my whole package-- boots, roofing tar-splattered pants, dark dickies, jacket, hard-hat, and a faux femme goofy, bobbling face full with batting eyelashes and flashing toothy nervous smile. "Sure what's going on?" he asked. "We need to do a crane lift and we can't do it from the street. It'll only be an hour or two, and we don't need that much space, but I'm wondering if we can use part of your parking lot here." He nodded slightly, glanced behind him and said, "Sure, go ahead-- just be outta there by noon and my boss won't know the difference."

My nervous smiled was quickly replaced by my open, dropped jaw-- and then again with a full smile. "Oh, god, thank you, thank you so much!" I gasped and then tried to throw a last splash of feminine gratitude with a quick cute grin accompanied by a slight tilt of my head and little shoulder lift. Then I ran back to the operator and my crew to tell them breathlessly-- we were on.



I think the most amazing fact of that morning was that I did all of that gender manipulation subconsciously. It was only later when I was recounting the miracle of not losing close to ten grand in a botched crane lift that I suddenly saw that the most powerful tools I had used that day weren't my prized cordless saws or even the 100-ft

crane. A few years and social circumstances later I've thought a lot about switching projected and assumed gender roles to my advantage, and I definitely recognize this choice as a privilege that unfortunately not all of my trans, gender-queer, femme, or butch-identified friends and community have access to. However when it feels appropriate, hell, I don't mind pouring a little femininity over my patriarchy cereal and eating some good gender-fucking breakfast.

k.sugar hill (hardkore@mutualaid.org)

Transmisogyny: misogyny flavored (soy) ice cream with swirls of real transphobia!!! by Katie Kaput

starring...



← Katie, a 26 year old queer transsexual single mother of two

and Cissie, ice cream maker



(with cameos by Cowboy & Rio!!!)



As a trans girl, I don't just face misogyny + transphobic in isolation, but a special blend of the two! This blend can be made + wielded by cis women, trans men, + genderqueer folks assigned female at birth, as well as cis men... + even trans female spectrum folks who've absorbed enough of it to start spewing, + bark out! I notice that when...

Hold on! We're not done addressing misogyny in general, + I'd like to point out that trans women have benefited from male socialization, + often silence other women by taking up too much space, so be quiet now so I can talk more? ...Want some ice cream?



is benefiting from the fact that, as a cis woman, when she interrupts a trans woman, almost everyone will support her intrusion because they view trans women as simultaneously unworthy to take up space and more likely

to take up too much. (Although I've yet to find a space + a community where my voice + life experience as a trans woman is valued on it's own, without cis interpretation)

! Umm...  
Sure. Who are  
you, & what  
are you doing  
in my comic?

I hope you like the ice  
cream!  
My name's Cissie, & I'm  
in yr comic to make  
sure that you apply  
the proper disclaimers to  
everything you say about  
yr own lived experience, &  
that we never talk about  
yr oppression without acknowledging  
mine, as well as yr  
non-consensual, failed indoctrination  
in oppressing me, hereafter referred  
to as "male socialization!"

this ice cream  
is really bitter

What kinder  
disclaimers!?!  
I've never noticed  
any disclaimers when  
~~you~~ talking about  
yr lived experience...

Shh! that's yr  
male socialization  
talkin' right there,  
buster!

Here's an example...  
If you say, "Oh, goodness,  
Cissie, the other day a  
guy outside of Safeway said  
I was disgusting & showed me his  
dick-like it was a favor! I think  
it might be because I'm a woman who  
is also trans!" & you don't say, "but I know  
that women by which you will never deal with  
that all the time" I will say.

I was disgusting & showed me his  
dick-like it was a favor! I think  
it might be because I'm a woman who  
is also trans!" & you don't say, "but I know  
that women by which you will never deal with  
that all the time" I will say.

"There's a perfect example of what male socialization causes - you don't even see how you were ignoring the constant sexism real women (I mean, "cis" women) deal with - how selfish! If you were a woman-identified woman, you wouldn't always make everything about the fact that yr a tranny!" Then everyone will see how male yr socialization really is, if you don't hang yr head & sheepishly apologize!\*



\* which would mean, if you did apologize that you were

apologizing sexist standards for women... not a good move, dude!

Hey, you can't call me "dude!" or "tranny!"

splat!

when people who aren't trans female spectrum use "tranny," it's appropriate

& rude! Read up on the word, please!\*

I think that...

Hey, hey!

Hold on! We're

getting off track

with this "I think..." stuff. What were you trying to say with this comic?





I can't remember now...



Good luck remembering!  
I've got my own comic to go work on!  
It's about how much I love transies & women!



why?

Mama, why won't this comic about us, like so much of yr zine is?



Maybe the next one will be... now let's get ready to go to the park!



The End

Well, except I want to make a disclaimer - Cissie is an amplified composite of a lot of folks I've known, but as soon as you start talking about male socialization it's pretty likely you are headed down a more subtle version of her path... Remember, socialization is also about how you internalize people's attempts to socialize you, & if you are NOT male, but are rather trans female & merely temporarily (non-consensually) ~~passing~~ as male, you are not being socialized as male - you are being (very often violently) coerced into continued passing as male, which eventually becomes intolerable, you come out & yr met with more violence trans misogyny, & others interpreting yr experiences for you.



Katie Kaput is a foxy young queer  
transsexual single mama of two  
homeschooling kiddos. She makes  
the 'zine night cookies, + encourages  
inquiries, hugs, + words of encouragement  
in return to be sent to [KatieKaput@gmail.com](mailto:KatieKaput@gmail.com)



Interview questions for misogyny, motherhood and being queer...

As a mother, how do you feel that you are excluded in queer circles and how do you feel this relates to misogyny?

J: the kids are not included or invited to events and oftentimes specifically not invited. This means I stay home if I can't find childcare. When I bring the kids to push the boundaries a little and want the kids to be involved in queer circles oftentimes

folks won't interact or try to connect with the kids, I want to

hang out with my kids but I want others to be part of their lives

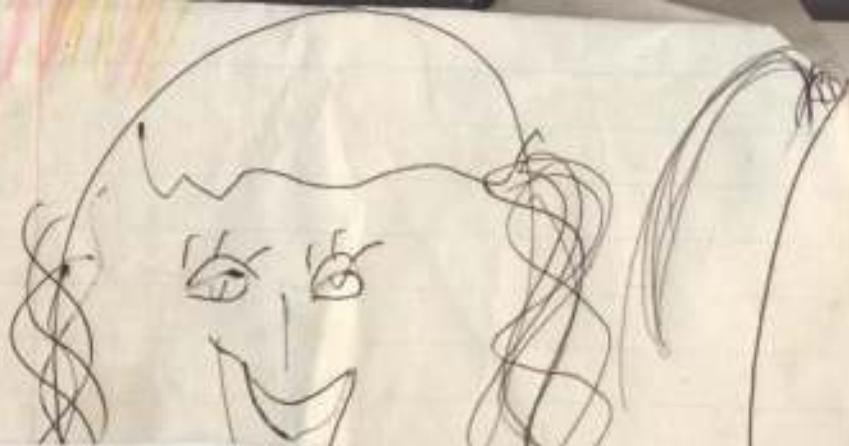
and influences in their lives. When I'm the only one or one of

few talking with my kids at events I don't have time to talk with grown-ups so I feel I might as well stay home because it's

easier. And it's hard to find out about events because I don't

go to all the events where a lot of people talk about other

events.



In relation to misogyny the way patriarchy is set up, mom's are expected to stay home and watch the kids and in social settings mom's are the one's who watch the kids and that's what's expected of us. That carries through in queer social settings usually too. There aren't a lot of parents in general in queer communities and you throw in agism and anti-breeding politics



you get a lot of folks who won't reach out to kids or want kids in their lives.



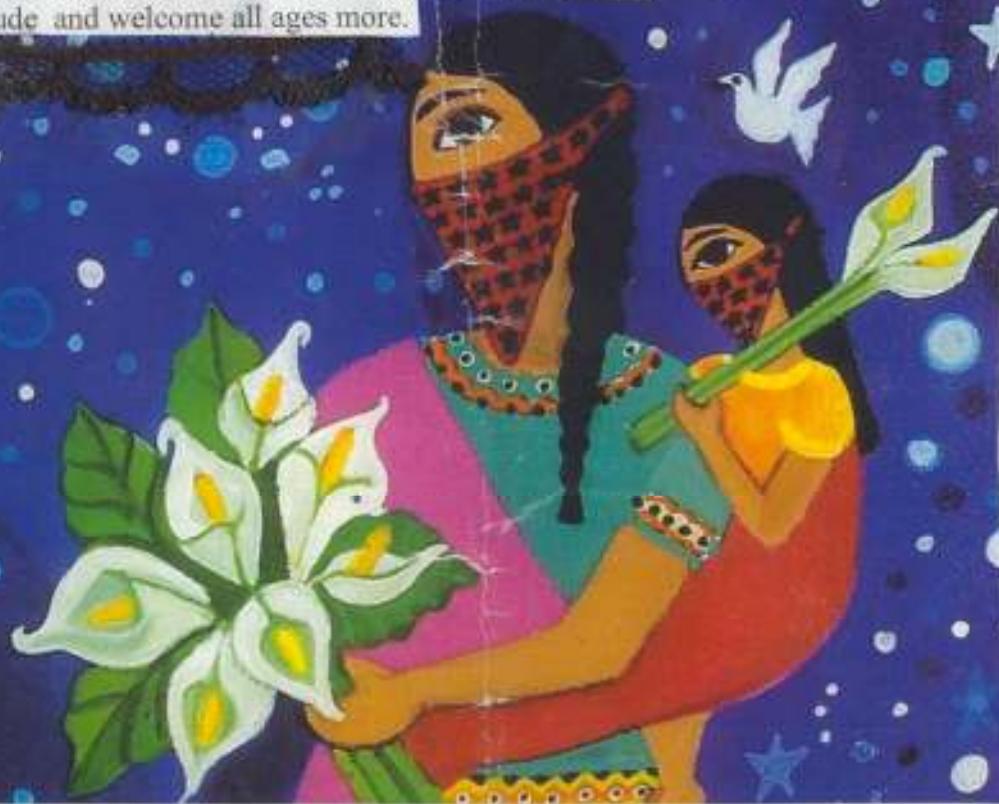
How do you feel that you are included?

J: At times when I do go to events when people are interacting with the kids I feel really good about being there and glad that the kids were involved. There've been a couple times when people have gone out of their way to hang out with the kids and really enjoy being part of their lives and it's always amazing to me because it doesn't happen that often. I'm like oh my gosh woy



## How can people be more welcoming to you?

J: as a parent I need people to reach out to me more and reach out to the kids, and give up their privilege a little and watch the kids so I can go out. For people to have more of an open mind of who's queer and be more welcoming. For people to not automatically assume that I'm straight and that my life is all about being home and being a housewife and if it was that is o.k. too. Have more kid friendly events. And maybe learn how Patriarchy affects moms and care and want to do something about it. Also understand that some moms really like being moms and want to be and that any choice should be supported...the struggle is about women having choice. Include and welcome all ages more.



How does being a mother/parent and femme and/or feminine in your presentation affect your inclusion/exclusion in queer circles?

J: I feel really invisible as a queer person because I have kids. I feel like I don't appear to be queer as a femme. And I don't necessarily identify as femme but that's how I'm identified by other people.

Other:

Women have been being screwed over by patriarchy and even feminism for years. Both of those things hold us to lots of rules and judgements by others who want to put us in a box... even by people in our own community.

Ayla is a woman. It takes a lot of work just to be that, and not have others second-guess or make invisible her female and queer identities. She happens to be a trans woman, of 27 years of age. But don't hold it against her. She's a sober, hibernating, dark soul with a tender, open heart. A Pisces, go figure. She's also a total metal-head and doesn't often fit into expected norms for what trans women dress like or are into. Sound familiar?

She is in this zine 'cause she's got important shit to say.

What follows is an interview between her and Kernan...



Kernan: I know we've had lots of conversations surrounding frustrations/hurts you have in queer circles that stem from reactions to you from queer cis women/lesbians.

Care to elaborate for our readers?

Ayla: Well, I perceive that cisgender lesbians and queer women are sometimes "okay with me" or "cool to me" (as I've put it before) as a fellow queer, yet it feels as if it's only towards a perception of me in a tender, femme-fag, long-haired nice boy kind-of-way. *That's the kind of validation I get, not as a woman -god forbid- such as themselves.*

Like they can play off being "okay/cool" towards me as a trans woman (seemingly, on the outside) and get marks for 'correctness', without ever having to truly recognize and validate my femaleness.



Rarely do i see cis lesbians (specifically) or queer women being challenged on this closet transphobia that I believe still remains alive and well in the negative minds of many.

It feels sometimes like "hey, this is all you're gonna get from me, you freak..."--a niceness and keeping up impressions on the surface. Since what being "cool to me" only really means is that I may not (at least for the time being) receive open hostility, intolerance, degrading condescension, etc. I sense that under the surface, lesbians

are often paranoid around me, like so nervous that i might actually be attracted to them! Like oh shit, what could it mean if they actually believed and accepted me as a queer woman in their midst, with my own valid experiences coming into a queer female identity...

I contemplate these things most often in regards to cis lesbians/queer women who



seem to have lingering (or totally obvious) 2nd wave feminist politics surrounding women and men, transexuality, and gender/sexuality in general. It seems they overcompensate for their own phobias and undeniable ignorance by being overtly nice to me. I also get this reaction that feels like "oh cute, you're one of those trans women I've heard exist sometimes in the world".

This demeaning, condescending, paternalistic attitude like "how cute, you're trying to be a woman".

Wow, that's fun.

Guess I'll go jump off a bridge now that

i feel so validated

by those who own queer female experience... I mean, obviously it isn't just queer cis women who exhibit these attitudes, it's straight women too.

Really it's all cis gendered people.

I've also processed with my close friends about this unapologetic resurgence of lesbian separatism that i've seen springing up in recent years. This resurgency stands hand-in-hand with the 2nd wave politic previously mentioned, held onto so dearly all the while. Maybe it just never left.

Yep, that's probably just a given.

It's really sad and hurtful to see people pretend to give a shit for a time, and now just chuck it all. Holding for dear life to beliefs based on such fucked-up notions about gender, socialization, bodies, a person's "sex"/"birth sex", sexuality, etc. These are people that I once considered friends or at least allies or acquaintances within my supposed queer "community". It includes a sometimes-covert transphobia, or just the downright scrapping of any trans solidarity or advocacy that had been previously - albeit temporarily- shown, as some token of "getting it". And, well, a general eye-roll response to trans issues and people's real needs for safety and solidarity is a very low-integrity road to choose. Sure seems like there is a rampant trend towards this idea of "We did the trans thing, can we fucking move on now? We did, so why can't you? You had your turn getting to express your poor little experience, so get back in your social cage (which isn't *really* that bad anyhow, especially for 'male-socialized transwomen [note the lack of space b/t words]) and let the *real* people claim their necessary space that you all have - for a time- usurped...

" Well, golly. What was I thinking?!? My experience is just for fun, just for pretend, just on the weekend when nobody's looking. Didn't you know? I usually hide out in my little cave like a good little trans girl, so those tough straight dudes won't beat me to death. Silly me, I don't have a job or a life or relationships or anything that I'm trying to survive and find meaning in. Just wallowing in my own woes and self-pity in my closet of shame and make-believe like I'm supposed to. And gee, who am I kidding!? I mean, everything is at my fingertips! The world is my fucking oyster.

I can just choose to not be a woman if I want, and step back in line to receive all the ease and privilege that being "born-male" has to offer me in this world.

Right?

It's not that I'd rather kill myself or anything, right?

Oops. Silly me...



W02-n 00'  
What about your experience with straight cis women?

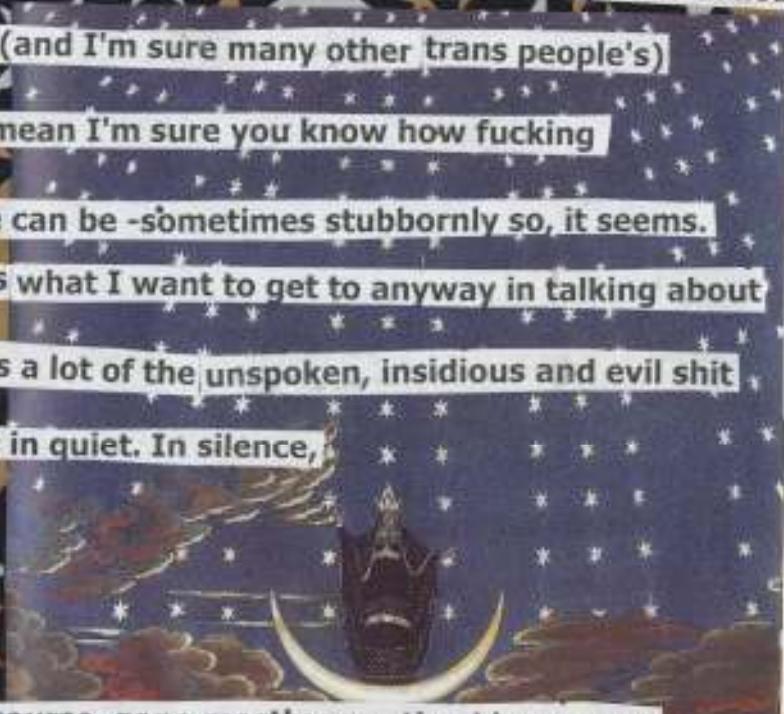
Do you find similar reactions and/or different ones?

I deal with some of the same reactions to me, yeah.

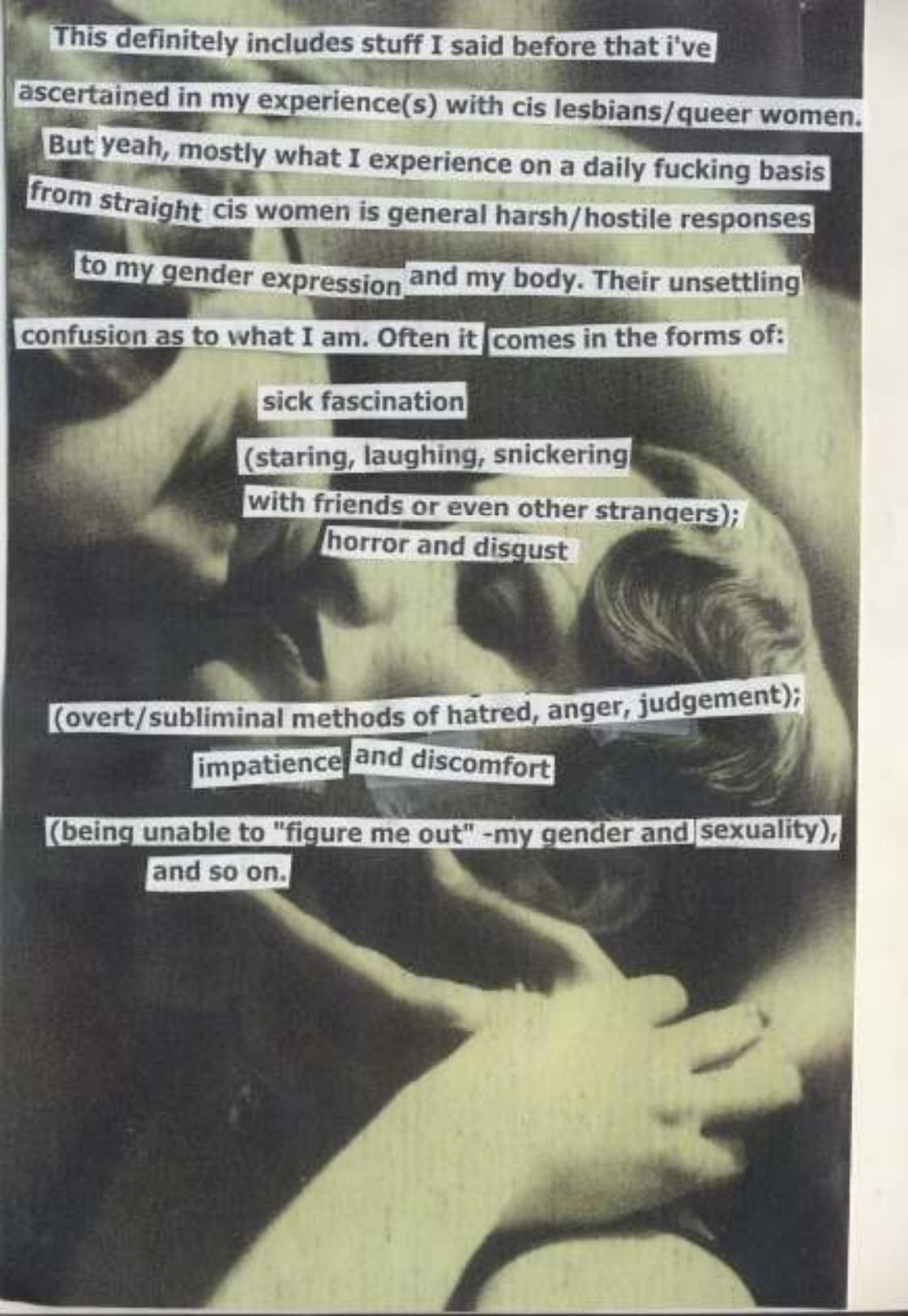
Some of the "oh how cute..." shit for sure. Especially a lot of inappropriate "I heard of that on Oprah -let's ask tons of intense questions and offensively assume I know your experience" bullshit sometimes for sure. Ugh. It is at times ridiculously annoying, wrong, and hurtful. Yet this shit is more of the obvious. Like "oh duh, I can see that happening and how that would suck for you", or whatever. I mean some people for sure are like "really? really? that happens to you?"

about shit that is so expected and unfortunately normalized as part of my (and I'm sure many other trans people's) experience. I mean I'm sure you know how fucking clueless people can be -sometimes stubbornly so, it seems.

But I guess what I want to get to anyway in talking about this shit is a lot of the unspoken, insidious and evil shit that happens in quiet. In silence,



without any recourse, gone mostly unnoticed by anyone but me in my day to day life.

A black and white photograph of a person's face and hands, with text overlaid. The person's face is partially visible, looking downwards. Their hands are clasped together in front of them. The text is overlaid in white boxes with black text.

This definitely includes stuff I said before that i've  
ascertained in my experience(s) with cis lesbians/queer women.

But yeah, mostly what I experience on a daily fucking basis  
from straight cis women is general harsh/hostile responses  
to my gender expression and my body. Their unsettling  
confusion as to what I am. Often it comes in the forms of:

sick fascination

(staring, laughing, snickering  
with friends or even other strangers);

horror and disgust

(overt/subliminal methods of hatred, anger, judgement);

impatience and discomfort

(being unable to "figure me out" -my gender and sexuality),  
and so on.

My job of course is smack dab in the fucking middle of normal-core world, in downtown Portland. All the suburban, straight, middle-class/bourgeois assholes are everywhere surrounding me on a daily basis, and I am interacting with them, trying to stay strong and true to myself.

It's hard. I definitely receive a bunch of shit from normal ass straight dudes on a daily basis for sure, don't get me wrong. Especially in elevators, with rich white businessmen and stuff. It's yucky and uncomfortable, definitely. Lots of staring and sizing up, looking me up and down, lots of 'what the fuck?' looks, lots of tit-staring-in-horror, etc. But yeah, I do feel the need to focus on other women's responses to me in my world.

How painful that is... Especially since, in this zine y'all are talking a lot about misogyny and transmisogyny and relationships between people with some shared experiences in the zine. Cis straight gals definitely exhibit a bunch of that weird, overt niceness a lot of the time... that is, when they're not busy lumping me into the MAN category and failing/refusing to take the time to see me or get a clue/ask me who I am before making assumptions,

making me further invisible. Ugh. Or, ya know, talkin' it up with me without any warning or consent about everything

TRANS they've discovered lately. Things they just could not believe..blahblahblahblah. Ugh. Vomit. Leave me alone. No, I haven't seen that boxer movie. No I don't give a fuck about Transamerica or Oprah.

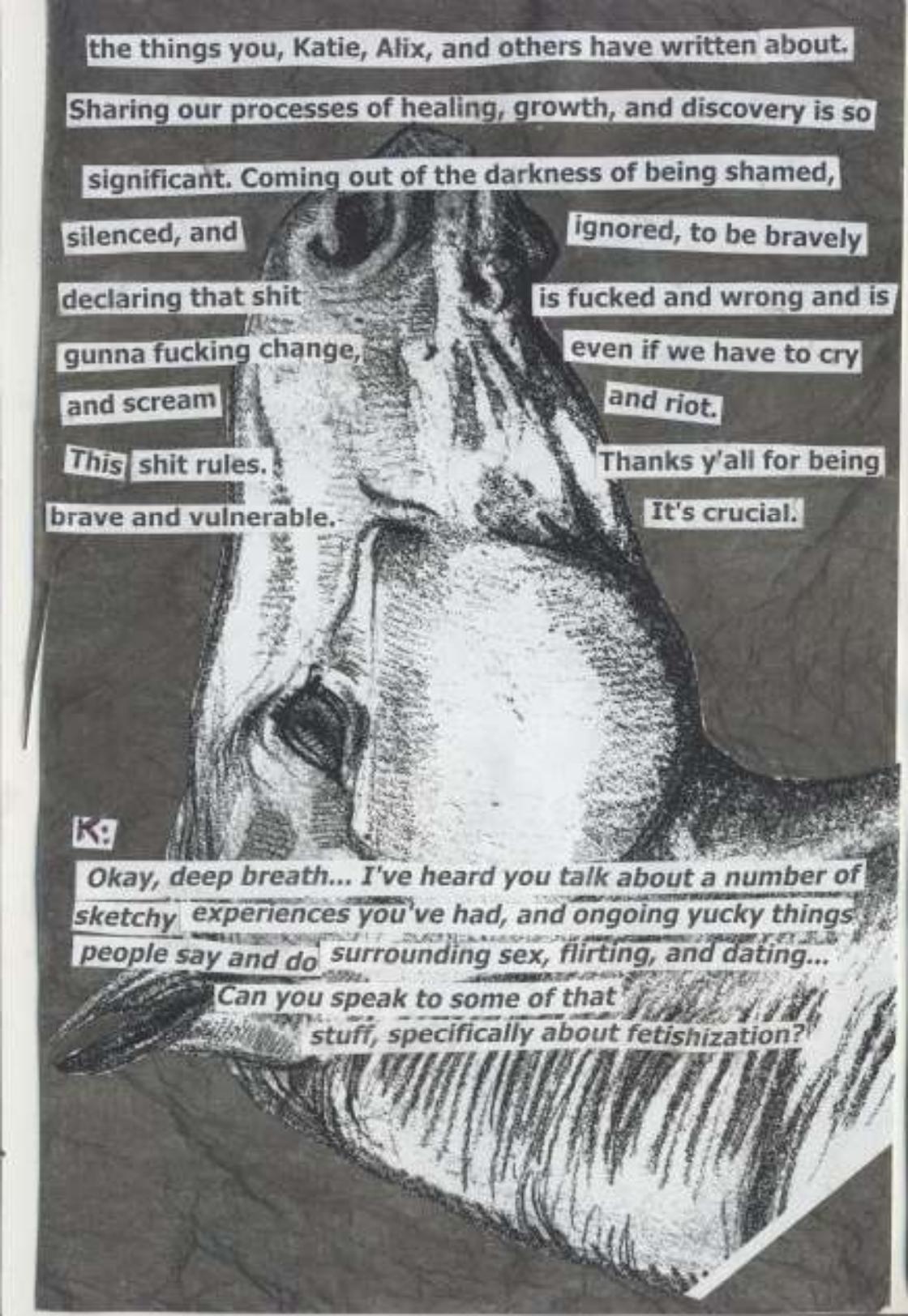
No, let's not talk (again) about Ma Vie En Rose, nor about Boy's Don't Cry, etc. Process that shit with somebody else. Please! No, I don't want to hear the fucked-up shit your family, your best friend, your roommate, your lover said about trans people. I've heard enough on my own to last a while. This is not being a trans ally.

Listening, learning, giving a fuck, giving up some comfortability and doing internal work around gender identity/expression/experience (as so many trans people have to, everywhere, all the time) is a good start. Learning to be fair and appreciative and not judgemental or dismissive of any person's body.

line, yours, anyone. This is one of the reasons I wanted to try and be a part of this zine, and why I am so fucking excited about



PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]



the things you, Katie, Alix, and others have written about.

Sharing our processes of healing, growth, and discovery is so

significant. Coming out of the darkness of being shamed,

silenced, and

ignored, to be bravely

declaring that shit

is fucked and wrong and is

gunna fucking change,

even if we have to cry

and scream

and riot.

This shit rules.

Thanks y'all for being

brave and vulnerable.

It's crucial.

**K:**

Okay, deep breath... I've heard you talk about a number of sketchy experiences you've had, and ongoing yucky things people say and do surrounding sex, flirting, and dating...

Can you speak to some of that stuff, specifically about fetishization?

Ah, good times. Yeah, this is a big one. A big scary monster out there, waiting to unravel and disintegrate me from the inside out. Being fetishized is like my biggest fear, whether as some kind of icon of transsexuality, or just as a "freak" body, a carnival showcase, or whatever.

It's utterly degrading and crushes my body, my soul, and my psyche. A lot of people, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, fetishize and belittle me by limiting my experience to that of a sexual nature. As in, sexual prowess is what I am, my greatest achievement. Or, at least the focus of what it is that is valuable and intriguing about me.

Okay, yeah, I saw that movie too... And yeah, Tim Curry is fucking hot in a corset. But hey, guess what?

There's more to trans women's experience than sex; über sexual-availability, and/or sexual objectivity.

Just as cis women (of all sexualities) in feminist movements have always fought to express the demoralizing nature of being objectified... To have a woman's worth limited and minimized to that of their sexual availability, ability; their body's use to those who would judge them out of their own social privilege, to wield power above them.

I don't want to further alienate myself and add to the indentation of that line in the sand that has and continues to exist between cis women and trans women. That is to say, I don't want to talk about *women's experience* separate to my own when discussing the things I just said, and have that further encourage the disconnect based in transphobia and transmisogyny. 'Cause shit, that is quite often the case, sadly.

I mean yes, we are not the same. Our experiences differ, and often it's important to make that distinction. Like hey, cis women don't necessarily have the experience of fearing they're going to get beat to death by jocks for being a girl with a dick existing in *their* world. And, it's also just that *all* women's experiences differ from one another. There are many many ways of being a woman in the world.

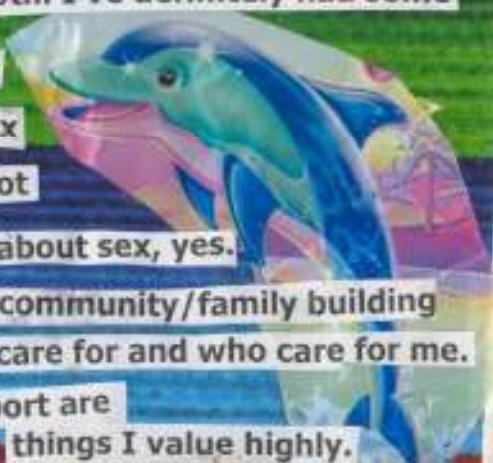


I wish this fact were more obvious to people and I didn't have to say it, but apparently it isn't: Each trans woman's experience is different and all wear the same thing, sexualities/gender identities, fuck the same consistent talk the same, politics

unique. We don't have the same fuck the same, gender of person, look the same, have the same or childhood experience, etc.



This shit is most upsetting to me because I experience it from other queer women a lot, and that's super disheartening. That's another reason why being fetishized feels so deeply wrong and degrading, poisoning. We're not just all like "freaky"-ass, sexually-available fiends with a "try-anything", bdsm attitude and desire, desperately hot and ready to fuck, 24/7. I am not the epitome of that favorite filthy song that you grind up on people to at the local too-drunk-to-fuck lez/queer dance night. I mean shit, I am hot... I've definitely had some slutty, scandalous, polyamorous adventures in dancing/flirting/sex the past many years and I love a lot and am hell-of queer and excited about sex, yes. But i'm also really into solidarity/community/family building within the circles of people that I care for and who care for me. Intimate friendship, kinship, support are things I value highly.



Thanks for sharing all this intense personal fucked up shit.



If you don't mind, I'm gonna ask you to elaborate more...How does being fetishized by people play out towards you?

People like to sometimes use me for their weird experiments or new shifts in their relationships to sex/eroticism, sexuality, or gender in ways that are often veiled but nevertheless creepy and non-consensual. With dykes, it has felt as though they want to "try out" a trans woman and be adventurous, or to be with a *guy* in their mind without losing points as a "gold-star" lesbian. (The latter having



actually been exemplified to me by someone saying, "I'm still gold- star". Like, okay, who is it you're trying to convince here?). Sometimes I get a feeling from fags, gay men, and queer/bi boys like "Ooh, honey. What is it? That's freaky and hot. Looks boy enough to me to fuck." Or something to that effect. I mean, gay/queer guys often sexualize me/cruise me and sometimes it feels great, 'cause yeah I'm queer and attracted to *queers*. So yes, please see me. But really, I'm invis'ble yet again. And invisible to other queers rather than being seen, appreciated, validated for who I really am.

Bummer.



It's saddening because I'm attracted to and often wanna date/make-out with/fuck boys, and straight boys can be really complicated in that regard or are just totally unavailable to me anyway. Especially when I sense that straight boys are "bicurious" and want me to be their mid-way point to, ya know, being with a guy. Jesus, for real. Leave me alone. I don't wanna be your 'coming out' exploration, your science experiment. And then there's straight girls. Ah yes, I feel another sense of curiosity from them, towards dating/fucking a trans woman, having that be an easy middle-ground to test out dating a woman. Ya know, sorta... 'Cause fuck, "This isn't hard to be queer after all, right? You're just a girly dude. I'm used to this shit. You're body is what I normally expect to find when i am sexual with other people, I mean men. You've got a dick, right? Wait, don't you?"



One woman who I made the mistake of



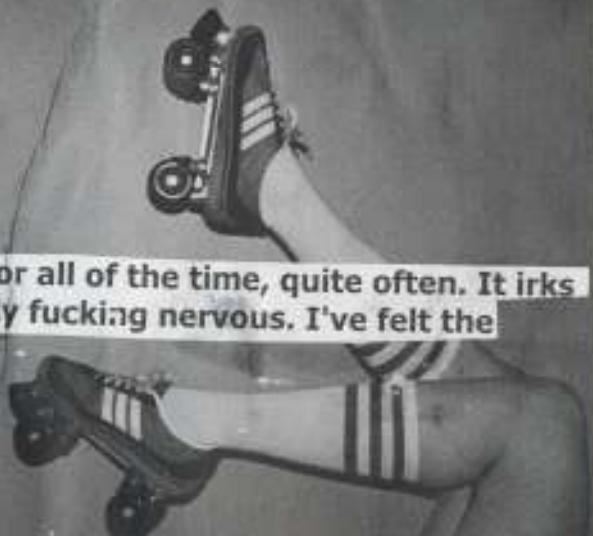
temporarily involving myself with asked me when we were making out, "What do you got goin' on down there?"

It was quickly downhill from there. Fun times. I have a lot of feelings of constant anxiety and nervousness with new people about what they are going to expect of me, of my body. What sexual acts they expect, what they expect my body to

look like/feel like, be able to do, etc. It's unnerving and intense. I end up being such a stone top person when, in actuality I'm not desiring that role inside myself with people. I end up usually keeping all my clothes on, focusing on the other person, all the while feeling damned to constantly repeat this lonely, isolated sexuality in which I never really feel safe, seen, or trusting.



I can't help but wonder though sometimes if some of the sexscapades I mentioned earlier have been encouraged by the mood or general expectation I find in queer communities to be a very sexually-available, slutty, scandalous person. I find an often boundary-skeetchy, pressured environment of competition and expectation to



be overtly sexual most or all of the time, quite often. It irks me, and makes me really fucking nervous. I've felt the

need a number of times to be quiet and solemn in myself to think about who I truly am, what I truly desire, expect, and need in my life in relationships with those in my queer family/community. Without the pressures arising in a lot of the often shallow places that we end up existing together...dance nights, bars, theatrics, Pride, and other queer events.

K

*Yes I definitely think a lot of queers need more consent and boundaries 101...What do you want to see instead, personally and within queer communities?*

I definitely find value in those places and experiences relating to queer community and know they can be really important for all of us. Especially just being able to cut-loose together, away from the fucked-up world we often live in: our jobs, being out in public in the city, in the straight world all the time. Yet I also think these spaces are specifically the reason why people like me, and other dear friends (trans and not) are often estranged, isolated, and disconnected.

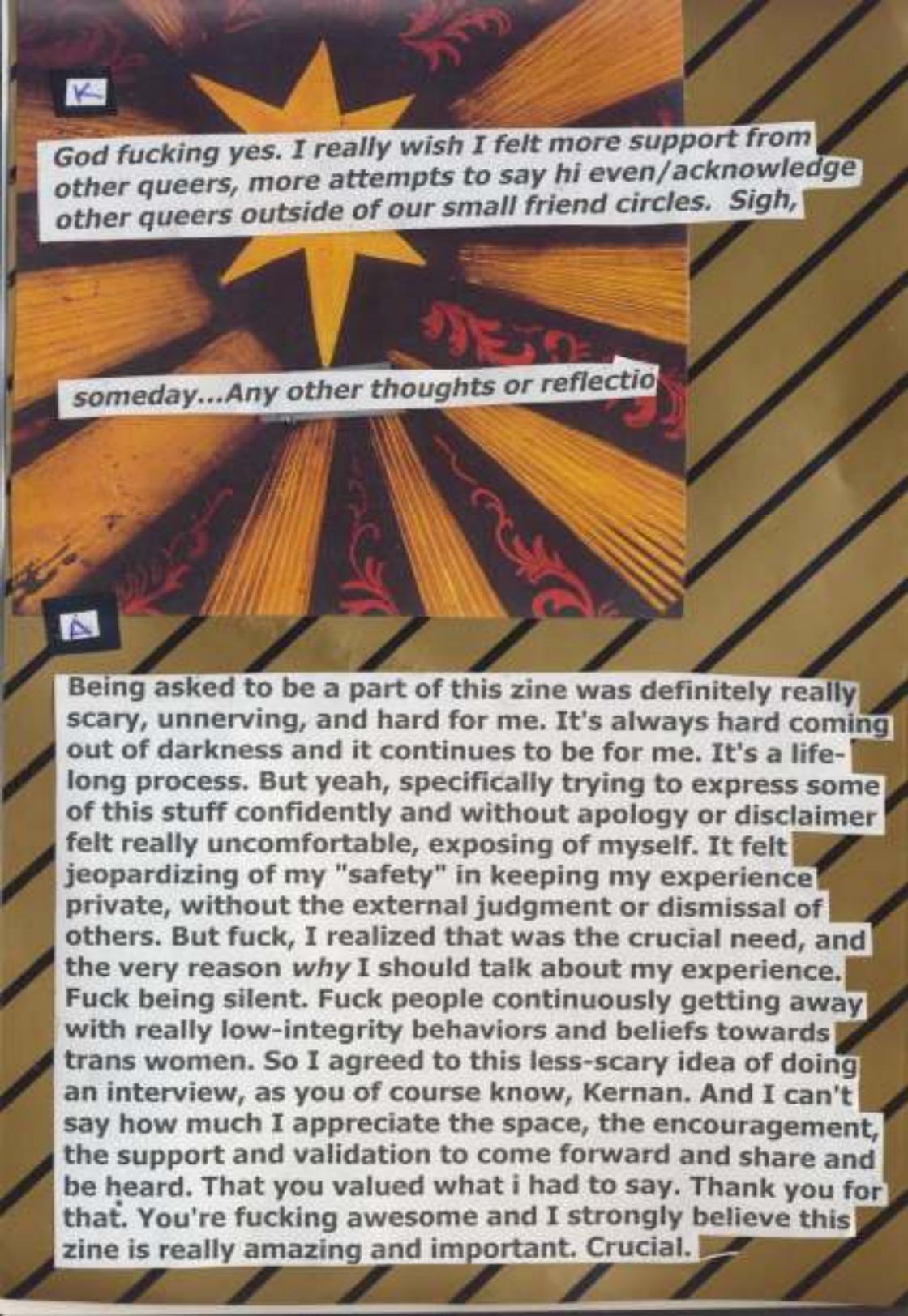
I am left to many of my own devices: anxiety, feelings of loss or detachment, etc. when all I have to go on, the only places I am able to exist and express myself within "queer community" are those I mentioned.

Don't get me wrong, I know I have agency in what I chose to spend my time and energy investing in. I try and I do create community around me, made up of people and experiences that really nourish, inspire and heal me.

Agency is something I am working on in this era of my life, focusing on it to the nth degree. But I want to see more networking among queers towards deep, meaningful change, connecting more with one another in our communities and "families". We all have agency. We can and do make choices, though it's often not at all easy and I see that we get stuck in just surviving sometimes and live in a disconnected yet tangential relation to one another. Kernan, you and I have talked about this shit a lot, I remember... I want to see more solidarity.



Forreals. I'm talking across the board. I'm talking from within me, my close-as-fuck queer family and friends, from "queer community" at-large. Because this shit isn't going away anytime soon. It doesn't go away. My experience isn't something I can take off or store away or worry about some *other* day, no matter how hard I try. I want to heal, and I want a so-called queer community to support me in that, and to heal as well.



K

God fucking yes. I really wish I felt more support from other queers, more attempts to say hi even/acknowledge other queers outside of our small friend circles. Sigh,

someday...Any other thoughts or reflectio

A

Being asked to be a part of this zine was definitely really scary, unnerving, and hard for me. It's always hard coming out of darkness and it continues to be for me. It's a life-long process. But yeah, specifically trying to express some of this stuff confidently and without apology or disclaimer felt really uncomfortable, exposing of myself. It felt jeopardizing of my "safety" in keeping my experience private, without the external judgment or dismissal of others. But fuck, I realized that was the crucial need, and the very reason *why* I should talk about my experience. Fuck being silent. Fuck people continuously getting away with really low-integrity behaviors and beliefs towards trans women. So I agreed to this less-scary idea of doing an interview, as you of course know, Kernan. And I can't say how much I appreciate the space, the encouragement, the support and validation to come forward and share and be heard. That you valued what i had to say. Thank you for that. You're fucking awesome and I strongly believe this zine is really amazing and important. Crucial.

Writing or talking about a lot of this deep, core, sometimes very painful shit feels really big for me since it takes a lot of emotional energy. In the past I have often experienced things in a very secret, shameful way. Totally closeted and isolated, venting into journals when I was younger only when I didn't know where else to turn. So yeah, it's been intimidating trying to motivate myself and build courage to come out about a lot of this shit. But vocalizing this stuff, and breaking the silence of isolation is something I believe needs to happen again and again. So thanks for reading.

- AH

[gardenarchy@hotmail.com](mailto:gardenarchy@hotmail.com)



## Sober, Queer and Femme:



These three identities collide in ways one might not expect. As a femme-identified queer, navigating my way through the world is most often a complicated and frustrating endeavor. While experimenting with exaggerated femininity and gender-sarcasm in an attempt to give feminine signifiers new meaning, heteronormative culture usually misses the point entirely. Consequently, my body is labeled, fetishized, and assigned roles accordingly based on pre-determined patriarchal standards in the mainstream world. Although I find that my gender is more often understood and interpreted correctly in radical spaces; this phenomena still bleeds in in covert ways. When the politics of sobriety culture AND intoxication culture get thrown into the mix, sometimes it feels like my head might explode. These are just a few thoughts I've had over the past few years that I feel may be helpful for members of my larger community to keep in mind.

MEMO FOR STRAIGHT-EDGERS BEING MYSOGYNIST JERKS.

1: Patriarchy doesn't disappear with sobriety.

2: I don't know you. Just because we happened to both be at the same event, and happened to both be Sober, doesn't mean my guard isn't still up. Refusing to participate in intoxication culture doesn't absolve you of your potential to be a chauvinist asshole. In other words, No, I won't take a walk outside with you alone, ditch my friends who may be drinking, or come with you to your other friends party. I don't need to be rescued/removed from this situation.

3: If I don't know you, I probably have never asked you to monitor my interactions with substances. I don't care if you're Sober too, and you think you're "looking out for me." I do not respond well to paternalistic or protective characters who have made it their job discourage me from drinking/using. This takes away agency. If I wanted to drink, I would. I've decided not to. That's the point.



MEMO FOR DRUNK FOLX BEING MYSOGYNIST JERKS.

1: I will not be your assumed care-taker if you drink too much and get sick just because I'm Sober and my gender may appear similar to that of your mother's.

2: I don't know you and we're in a shared community space: If you're feeling uninhibited and loose in the jaw cuz you've knocked a few back, happened to think I'm cute, and decide to tell me you "have a crush on me," don't expect to be taken seriously. I'm used to being hyper-sexualized without consent, so you may as well just say the sexist thing you mean so I can go back to ignoring you.



## THERAPIST

3: I am not an inherent nurturer. I may not be in the mood to comfort & console you if your alcohol consumption is resulting in an emotional flasco. I don't want to hear about the person who just left you or about your bike that just got stolen.

Finally, a note for everyone: Forms of binary thinking are dangerous. This includes binaries such as: "sobriety culture= good"/"intoxication culture= bad". The overlaps are enormous, and it takes a deeper analysis of the factors involved to evaluate what creates a Safe Space for everyone.

## Femme-Ally Conversation Starter

By Sunny (in conversation with many)

This is a conversation starter (continuer?) about trans-masculine peoples being femme-allies. And feminist. And tearing down the patriarchy (and white supremacy and capitalism... "But I grew up socialised as female, aren't I automatically a feminist then?" Nope.

Before I go any further with my rant, I want to acknowledge that I am white, grew up with middle-class resources and a mixture of middle-class and working class ethics (due to the different statuses of my divorced parents). I am a transgendered person. And genderqueer. I grew up in a body other people called female. Most other people still would mistakenly call me female. Small-ish in body size. Queer (not just in my choices of lovers).

In this writing, I'm going to continue an open conversation with examples of how misogyny and femme-phobia play out in subtle and not-so-subtle ways within radical (mostly white) queer subcultures. I'll follow this with suggestions for ways to be allies to femme-identified peoples. Firstly though, I want to briefly discuss the ways in which non-passing white trans-masculine folks and trans-boys gain privilege. Hopefully it is obvious how passing (ie, where most people read them as a male/boy/man) white trans-boys get a whole set of extra privileges (um, it's called P-A-T-R-I-A-R-C-H-Y). If you're read as a white boy, then you're likely to get at least part of the package of economic, social and political privileges - how much you get will depend on an array of factors such as your class, ability, body size, how "masculine" you are, whether you are read as gay or straight etc. There has been plenty written about how "men" (trans and non-trans) get privileges, however, there seems to be more confusion about how non-passing trans-boys and trans-masculine peoples gain privilege. If most of the world reads you as female, then what privileges are you gaining?



>> Well firstly: Enter, the long-time awkward unwelcome guest inside many peoples who experience some form of oppression (drum-roll): INTERNALISED OPPRESSION! And it's close buddy INTERNALISED PRIVILEGE. Most of us are steeped in patriarchal ideas about gender roles and a gender hierarchy, and racial hierarchy, class hierarchy etc, from the day we were born. Actually - some even before birth if ultra-sounds announced "it's a girl/boy" before even popping out. These ideas, the dominant ideologies, are so incredibly pervasive that they seep out in subtle (and not so subtle) ways that can be difficult to spot. So many people who identify as women carry around debilitating messages about their worth and their capabilities. Not to mention the ongoing external signals given by other people (like the mechanic talking to the man, even when it's not his car and he doesn't know anything about mechanics anyway). Many of us who internalized sexism and misogyny, and now identify as trans-boys or trans-masculine, carry around some of these same obstacles too.

However, many of us also now have a set of internal and external signals (by virtue of presenting as more masculine or adopting some boy/male things such as "he" as a pronoun, or mannerisms which provide social indicators of being a "boy" like clothing, hairstyles, body posture etc) that tell us that we are capable, that we can work on cars and take up space. Still not convinced? Well, I see it all around me in radical queer (mostly white) subcultures! There are many examples below of how I see these dynamics play out.

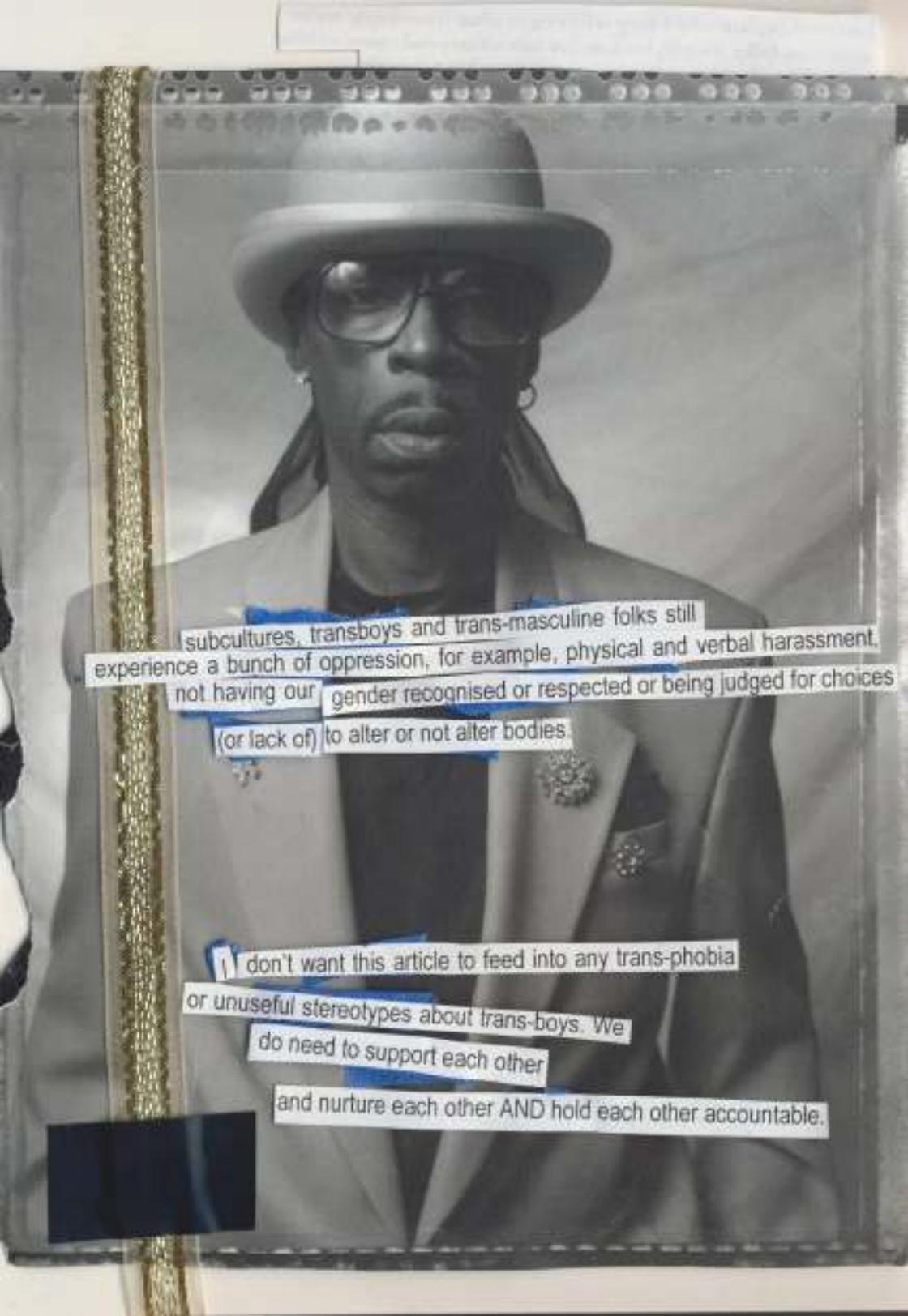


Privilege is a sticky beast. I hear a lot of people say "I'm just choosing to not take my privileges. I live outside the system". The thing is: privilege is not something that you take, it is something that is given to you. So even if you don't want it, you will experience it to whatever degree your particular combination of identities and socio-political context give it to you. So, those of us who have or gain privilege, need to pull our socks up and get on with the business of dismantling that privilege.

I want to explain why I keep referring to white trans-boys/ trans-masculine folks. Firstly, because my subcultures and communities are mostly white, so I am commenting on what I directly experience. Secondly, because of the different set of privileges afforded to white trans-boys, ie. gaining some form of access to the privileges given the white man, whereas trans-boys of color don't get access to a lot of those same privileges, but instead get the oppressive effects of the stereotype of men of color ("criminals", "violent" etc). I also think that white privilege is very relevant to a lot of the examples that follow, and it's difficult to separate out whether white trans-boys are behaving that way because we are white or because we are trans-boys. Indeed or because of class, ability or other factors too.



Before I launch into ample examples of ways we trans-masculine folks need to get it together, I want to explicitly acknowledge that it's a bloody hard road being trans, and this rant is in no way intended to publicly humiliate or isolate trans-masculine folks. Full credit to all those who have had such courage to assert their (our) identities (even if it's just to yourself) - this is a really unfriendly world to be trans in. Even in radical queer



subcultures, transboys and trans-masculine folks still  
experience a bunch of oppression, for example, physical and verbal harassment,  
not having our gender recognised or respected or being judged for choices  
(or lack of) to alter or not alter bodies.

I don't want this article to feed into any trans-phobia  
or unuseful stereotypes about trans-boys. We  
do need to support each other  
and nurture each other AND hold each other accountable.

One more clarification before the rest of the rant begins: I keep flipping backwards and forwards between trans-boys and trans-masculine. I want to remind us all that not all boys are femme, not all femmes are girls etc. So if you're a femme trans-boy, then maybe some of this applies to you and some doesn't. Ok?

## Ample Examples.



So, into the examples of what I've been noticing and talking about with friends in terms of how misogyny plays out in the actions of many trans-boys and trans-masculine

peoples.

Much of this also applies to non-trans-boys/ men (cisgendered men) as well.

- How white trans-boys are often celebrated and fetishized within radical (majority white) queer subcultures, whereas trans-women are often isolated and excluded. I've been wondering lately whether this is mostly misogyny or trans-phobia? Probably a combination of both. Misogyny because: anybody femme and/or woman identifying is seen as lesser, anybody masculine and/or man/boy identifying is celebrated. Trans-phobia because maybe some queer feminist communities don't count trans-women as "real women" and therefore exclude them because they are still the "enemy" (ie, "men"). Similarly this attitude doesn't count trans-boys/men as "real men" and therefore accepts them as still part of the women's community, whilst ironically elevating their status due to internalised misogyny.



- How so many trans-boys I know get away with being sexually and emotionally irresponsible and unaccountable in similar ways to non-trans-boys. I have directly noticed this in my own attitudes in certain situations, with a tendency to write-off the behaviour of trans-boys ("I didn't expect any better of him"), whereas being hurt in the same situation by the behaviour of women

or femme folks (e.g. "She should have known better")

- If one more person says to me that trans-women take up too much space because they were socialised male, I think I may vomit all over them. But I'll be a little more diplomatic and suggest a game of Pin The Tale on the Stereotype instead. i. If you're going to call out how gender socialises someone, then it's a good idea to also unpack race, class, body size, dis/ability, abuse history etc. And don't get me wrong - I don't want to shut down

conversation about gender - just think we need to discuss all of these identities rather than picking out one identity in isolation and creating unuseful stereotypes. 3. I believe both misogyny and trans-phobia are more often the root of this sort of comment. Stereotypes are often created to justify unjust behaviour and attitudes and cover over fear - like if someone is threatened by trans-women because they are trans-phobic or have internalised misogyny, it is much easier to come up with excuses like "they take up too much space" than acknowledge those fears or -isms. In the event that she is taking up a lot of space at your meeting, chances are it's because you won't open your group to her, or are subtly ostracising her or because she can tell that you don't really consider her a woman, or because she's uncomfortable with how you're glaring at her pants to assess what hits she has.



- How I still see mostly women and femmes doing the dishes (I mean, really? This is so basic I'm almost embarrassed to point it out!). Even if I have been messy around the house for my entire life (including when I identified as/was socialised as female), increasingly claiming a masculine and/or boy identity brings certain privileges (like fitting into deeply infused socialisations around gender roles like "boys don't clean") and therefore brings an increased responsibility to address those privileges. Any roles that perpetuate privileges, power dynamics and stereotypes need to be carefully negotiated with all who are directly or indirectly participating (e.g. this doesn't mean if you're a transboy you absolutely have to do the dishes - but if you want to contribute in other ways instead, then negotiate it!)



I also want to point out that some femmes may love doing the dishes and shouldn't be judged as unradical for wanting to perform

"traditionally feminine" roles. In fact, often those roles typically associated with women are seen as lesser or degrading work,

get out

of the cage?

effortless, natural or invisible - this needs to change.

- How care/ support roles in the communities I live in are mostly done by women and femmes. I think trans-boys who request and utilise the support of femmes and women have a particular responsibility to be intentional with that support and ensure that dynamic is not only named, but negotiated as well. Once again, the problem is not when femmes choose to do care work –

the problem is the assumption/ abuse of this relationship and the lack of trans-masculine folks valuing and/or prepared to do this work.

- How trans-boys get to fix things. I've noticed a sharing of power and skills from non-trans men to trans-men that often doesn't happen between those two groups and women/ femmes. I challenge all trans-boys to not forget how hard it may have been to carve out a space in the woodwork lab at school, or under the bonnet of a car with the dudes or building something for the local activist fundraiser.

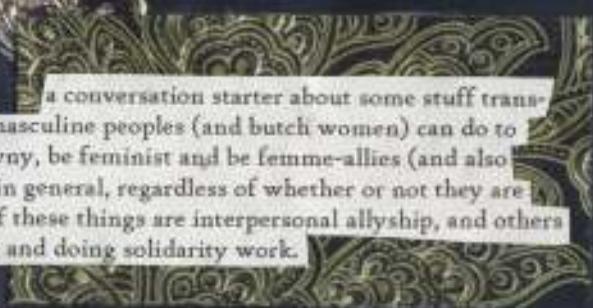
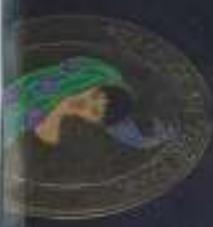
But at the same time – don't over-insist that femmes should know how to fix things – some may not want to (just like some trans-masculine folks don't want to – frankly I'd prefer someone else to fix my bicycle!).



- How femme trans-boys or trans-boys who choose to not conform to expected models of masculinity or who don't medically transition are sometimes subtly seen as "fakes" or "not really boys" or "gutless", or at least as lesser in some way.



## Being a femme-ally:



a conversation starter about some stuff trans-boys and trans-masculine peoples (and butch women) can do to challenge misogyny, be feminist and be femme-allies (and also allies to women in general, regardless of whether or not they are femme). Some of these things are interpersonal allyship, and others about organizing and doing solidarity work.

- Learn about feminist and femme and women's (trans and non-trans) struggles and histories. ESPECIALLY women of color feminist writers. Set up a reading/ discussion group. Read the words of femme/women activists. There are so many amazing femmes and women who have been doing a lot of work for so many years now - pay attention and learn! It is not the responsibility of femmes and women to educate other folks, however, many will be happy to be on an informal or formal advisory group - to provide suggestions, be a guest speaker and make sure that

the group doesn't sail off into irrelevance. Consider first volunteering and supporting femme/ women's collectives, individuals and organizations before asking them to support your learning group.



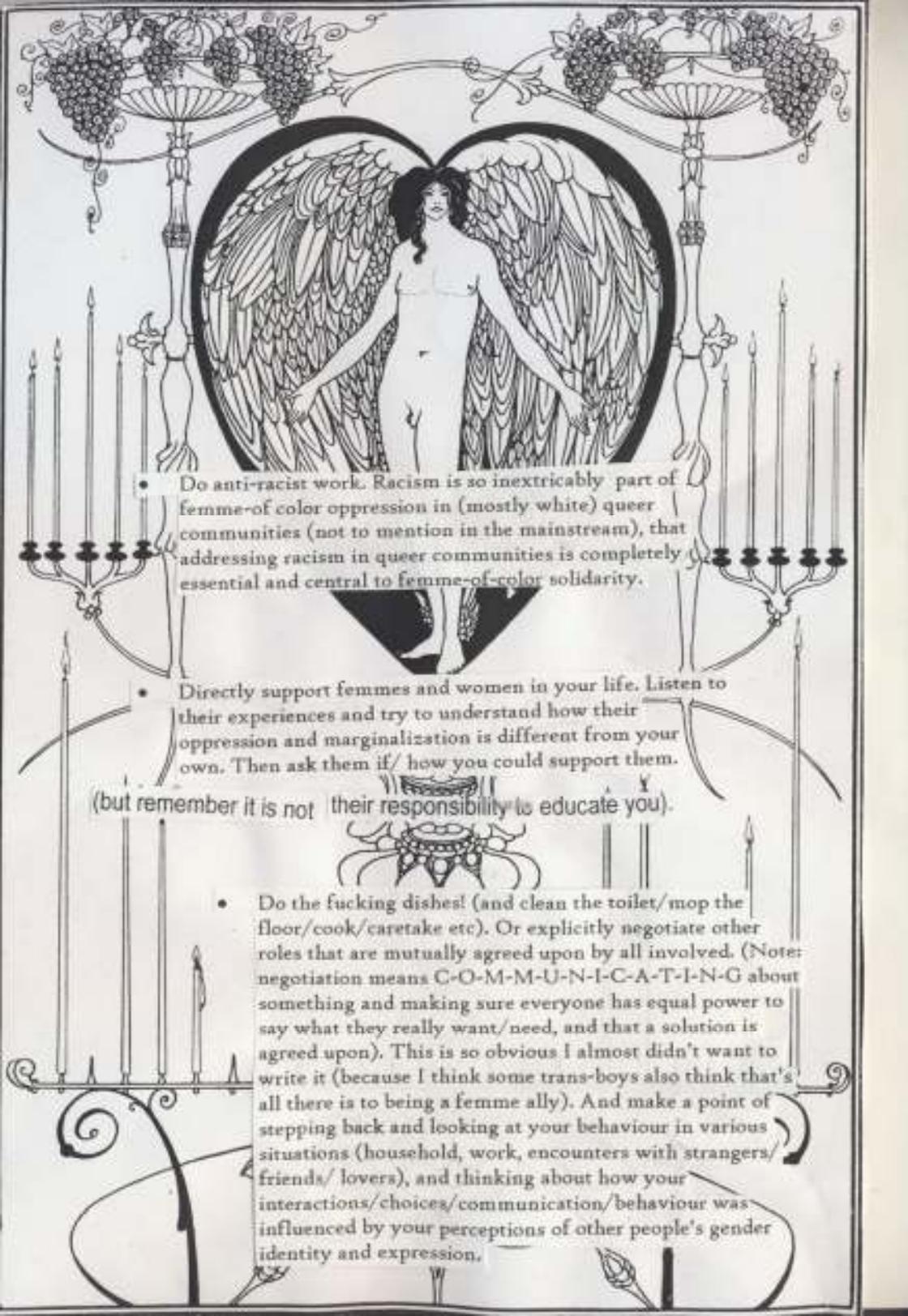


- Develop your misogyny radar (both for your own behaviour as well as the behaviour of others) and be prepared to give constructive feedback to people in loving, supportive ways. In my experience, this often works best when done within friendships, or from people who have similar identities/ privileges (plus, it shouldn't be the responsibility of femmes/ women to call this sort of behaviour out!). This may involve:

- one on one conversations ("hey, are you open to hearing some feedback on something I noticed? Well, I'm telling you this because I respect/love/like you. When you said/ did \_\_\_\_\_, I wonder if you considered how your gender/ racial/ class identity played into that...")
- writing a letter to the person
- researching and sending people articles written by others
- approaching someone else (another ally, a person's trusted friend/ workmate etc) to support in addressing the person
- bringing in a guest speaker/ articles/ processes/ workshops to address the general issue (without addressing the specific incident)

- Receive criticism with full attention and without defensiveness. Even if you initially feel like the criticism is not true - resist the urge to write it off or be defensive. How about trying: "thanks for the feedback, I'm going to take some time to think about that and then respond to you". Never ever ever dismiss someone who experiences oppression (or even vaguely may be experiencing

oppression) as overly sensitive. Ever. No matter how much you disagree with what they are saying, just don't ever ever say it because chances are there is at least some truth in what they are saying and "You're being overly sensitive" has been used to silence oppressed people for so long. People with privilege are trained to not see it. That's part of how it gets perpetuated. Just because you can't see how what the person is saying is true, doesn't mean it's not happening.



• Do anti-racist work. Racism is so inextricably part of femme-of-color oppression in (mostly white) queer communities (not to mention in the mainstream), that addressing racism in queer communities is completely essential and central to femme-of-color solidarity.

• Directly support femmes and women in your life. Listen to their experiences and try to understand how their oppression and marginalization is different from your own. Then ask them if/ how you could support them.

(but remember it is not their responsibility to educate you).

• Do the fucking dishes! (and clean the toilet/mop the floor/cook/caretake etc). Or explicitly negotiate other roles that are mutually agreed upon by all involved. (Note: negotiation means C-O-M-M-U-N-I-C-A-T-I-N-G about something and making sure everyone has equal power to say what they really want/need, and that a solution is agreed upon). This is so obvious I almost didn't want to write it (because I think some trans-boys also think that's all there is to being a femme ally). And make a point of stepping back and looking at your behaviour in various situations (household, work, encounters with strangers/friends/ lovers), and thinking about how your interactions/choices/communication/behaviour was influenced by your perceptions of other people's gender identity and expression.

• Don't assume all femmes identify as women. Don't assume all women identify as femmes (even if they wear makeup or skirts). And don't assume you are the only one with a radical gender identity. Learn about how femme can be a radical politic. Be aware that femme can mean different things to different folks who identify as femme, and make space for various kinds of femme identities.

- Don't assume a femme person presents themselves for your visual pleasure. Femmes may not want you to comment on how gorgeous they are. Ask them if that's ok.
- Don't fetishize femininity or femmes in nonconsensual ways.
- Proactively build alliances that both explore and support the similarities in struggles between the trans and femme/women's movements AND acknowledge the differences and seek to figure out what being a good ally means.



- Seek to understand how all the different systems of oppression are linked - find the intersections with other struggles - don't just think about gender - think about class, race, age, sexuality, body size, ability, history of abuse etc. There are some good resources out there - find them! [www.collectiveliberation.org](http://www.collectiveliberation.org) is a great start. Then spend a certain proportion of your time making linkages between different struggles and supporting other causes.

- Centre the people most affected by oppressions - femmes, women (trans-women and non-trans-women), Indigenous people, people of color, queers, people with disabilities, fat folks, refugees, working class peoples etc. "Centring" means those people are key decision makers and have a

crucial role in shaping the movements. Don't assume you know what is best for people other than yourself.



- Work with people within your own layers of privilege (e.g. if you are a white middle-class trans-boy who was socialized female, work with other middle class folks/ white folks/ trans-boys/ people socialized female to challenge misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, racism etc) AND support the movements of people with less privilege (e.g. volunteer to do the boring office work 3 hours a week with a local femme or women's collective or organisation).



**Conversation Starter:** chat about some of these things with your friends (even if it's to disagree). Go on, I dare you. In fact, double dare.

## The Flip Side:

I also want to point out how awesome it is when I see femmes and others being kick-arse allies to trans-masculine folks. **THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT AN EXCUSE** (warning: kids, do not try this at home - ok?): I have lately wondered if the actions of some trans-boys/ trans-masculine folks is a reaction to not being validated as a real "boy", or really "masculine" (often even with radical queer subcultures). I walk about with 99.9% of people looking at me as a woman. This is extremely invalidating, painful and invisiblising (is that even a word?). Sometimes I wonder if I and others are tempted to replicate patriarchal versions of boy-ness and masculinity in an attempt to get some validation. So, even though ultimately it is totally up to us trans-boys and trans-masculine folks to wean ourselves off these misogynist behaviours, also it is greatly appreciated when anyone (femme or non-femme) goes out of their way to change their conceptions of what a "boy" or "masculine" means, and creates a little more space for all of us.

And Guess What? in my opinion, this work is not tedious or boring or arduous - it's exciting! I mean, I get to be a part of directly challenging patriarchy. Hell yer. Sign me up! I get to participate in

carving out a new boy, a new masculine. In fact, a myriad of new ways to be boy or masculine. And this time not through calling out those "men", this time through visioning and living and growing the new feminist genderqueer boy I am. Hooray! Who else is in? And how?

Sunny Drake

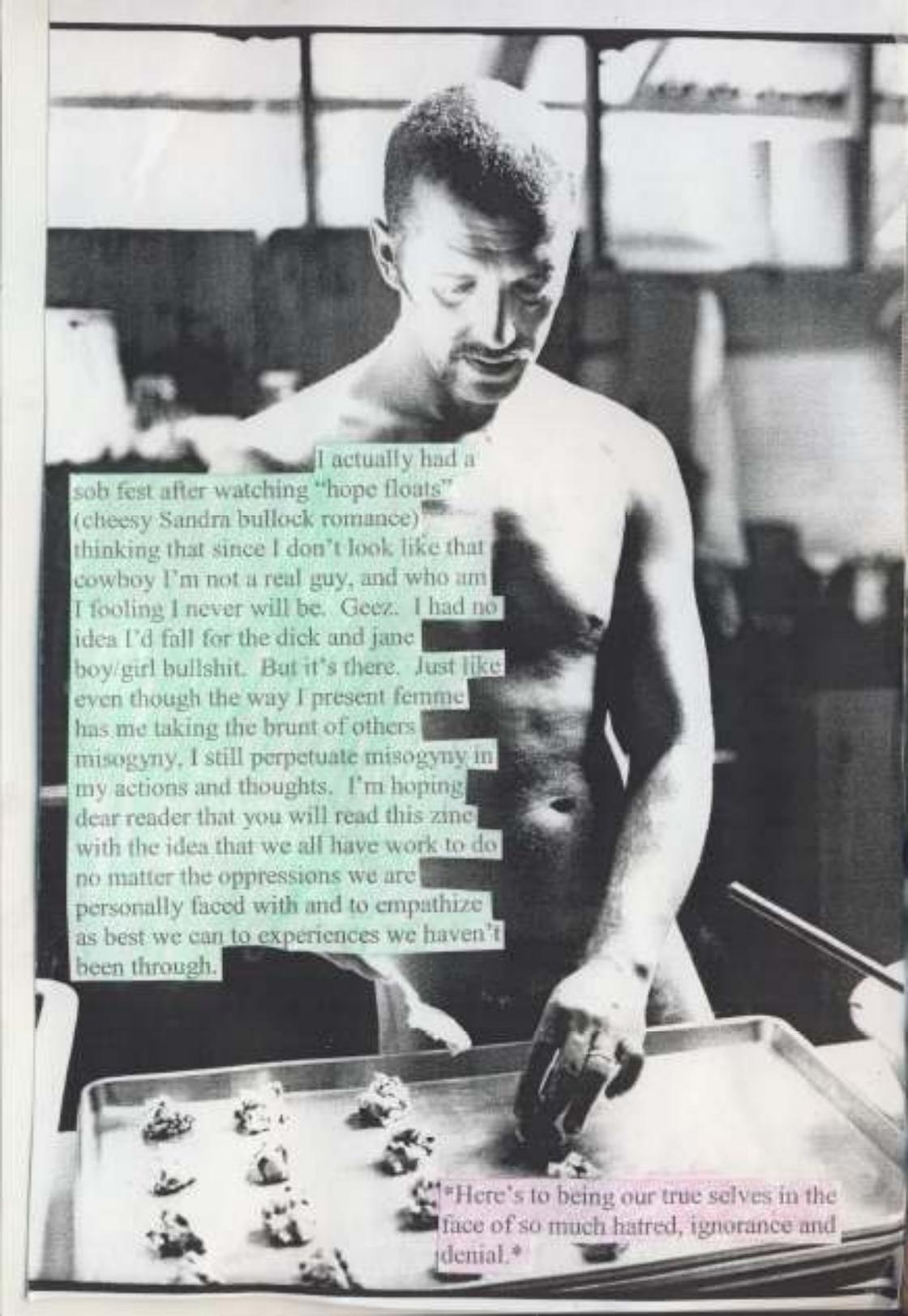
[sunnydrake8@gmail.com](mailto:sunnydrake8@gmail.com)

A little about myself \* about ten years ago I came out as bisexual, a year later, a lesbian, than learned the term queer and kept with that to the present day. About four years ago I came out as femme and my presentation changed somewhat—

more make up, more heels and I pretty much stopped wearing pants altogether—skirts and dresses only. Two years later I came out as genderqueer, a year and a half later as a

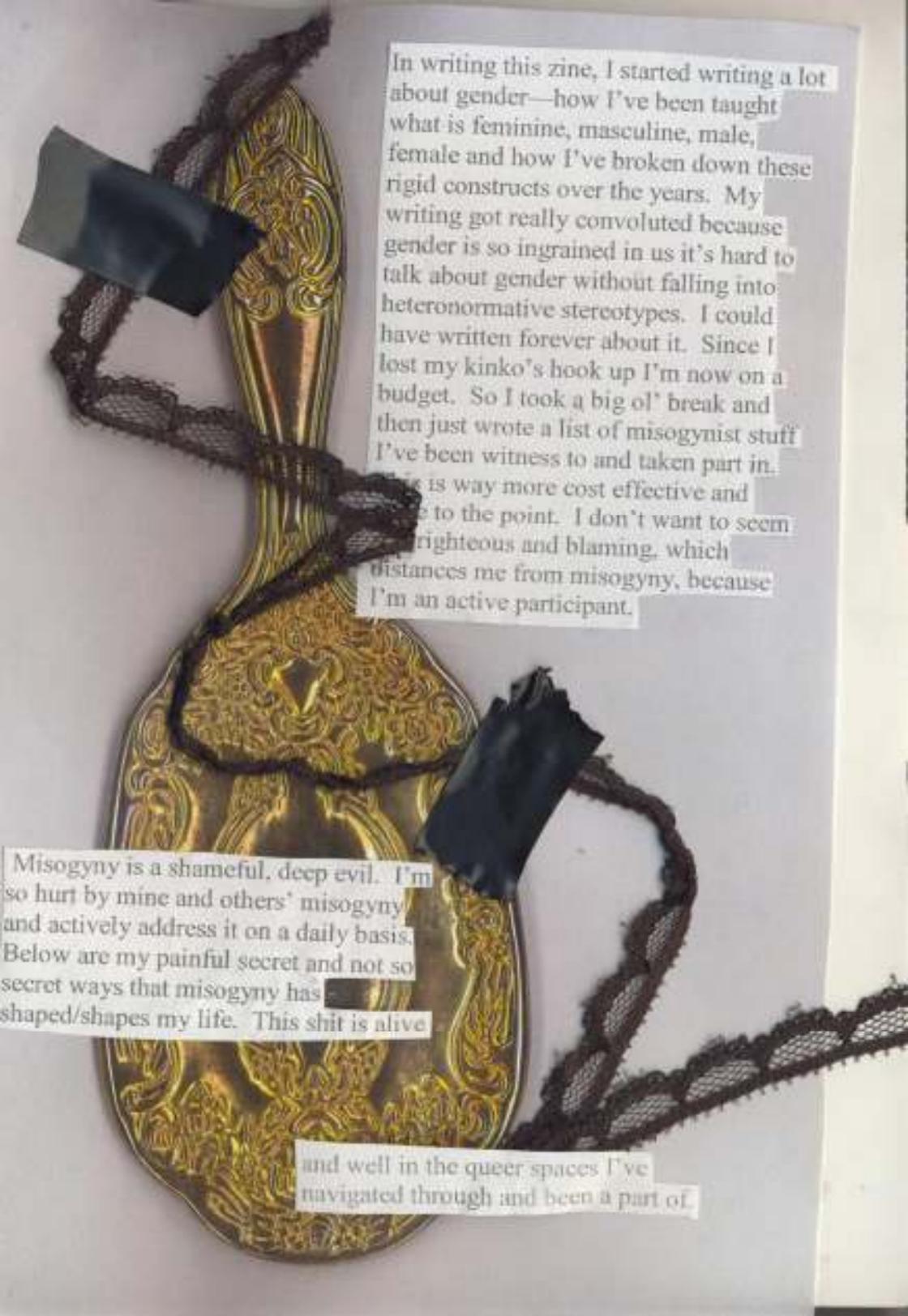
trans boy/boy/ladyboy/femme/boy in a dress. I'm at the point now where I'm out as a guy at work, to my friends and family and have a letter from my counselor to start hormones. I've consistently identified as femme through it all. I've been growing my hair out, still wear lacy bras (looking for a corset for days when I feel like binding) and occasionally wear dresses, though less and less.

As I've come out more as a guy, rigid gender stereotypes I never thought I'd ascribe to keep shouting at me from my brain saying things like, "you're not a real guy! You still dress like a "girl"! You have to bind your chest and wear pants and plaid shirts if you want to be a guy!"



I actually had a sob fest after watching "hope floats" (cheesy Sandra bullock romance) thinking that since I don't look like that cowboy I'm not a real guy, and who am I fooling I never will be. Geez. I had no idea I'd fall for the dick and jane boy/girl bullshit. But it's there. Just like even though the way I present femme has me taking the brunt of others misogyny, I still perpetuate misogyny in my actions and thoughts. I'm hoping dear reader that you will read this zine with the idea that we all have work to do no matter the oppressions we are personally faced with and to empathize as best we can to experiences we haven't been through.

\*Here's to being our true selves in the face of so much hatred, ignorance and denial.\*

A photograph of a zine page. The page is white with several paragraphs of text. A gold, ornate metal piece, possibly a decorative handle or part of a tool, is placed vertically on the left side of the page. A black lace ribbon is draped across the page, partially covering the text. Three pieces of black tape are used to secure the ribbon and the metal piece to the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, with some lines appearing to be cut out or obscured by the ribbon and tape.

In writing this zine, I started writing a lot about gender—how I've been taught what is feminine, masculine, male, female and how I've broken down these rigid constructs over the years. My writing got really convoluted because gender is so ingrained in us it's hard to talk about gender without falling into heteronormative stereotypes. I could have written forever about it. Since I lost my kinko's hook up I'm now on a budget. So I took a big ol' break and then just wrote a list of misogynist stuff I've been witness to and taken part in. This is way more cost effective and to the point. I don't want to seem righteous and blaming, which distances me from misogyny, because I'm an active participant.

Misogyny is a shameful, deep evil. I'm so hurt by mine and others' misogyny and actively address it on a daily basis. Below are my painful secret and not so secret ways that misogyny has shaped/shapes my life. This shit is alive

and well in the queer spaces I've navigated through and been a part of.

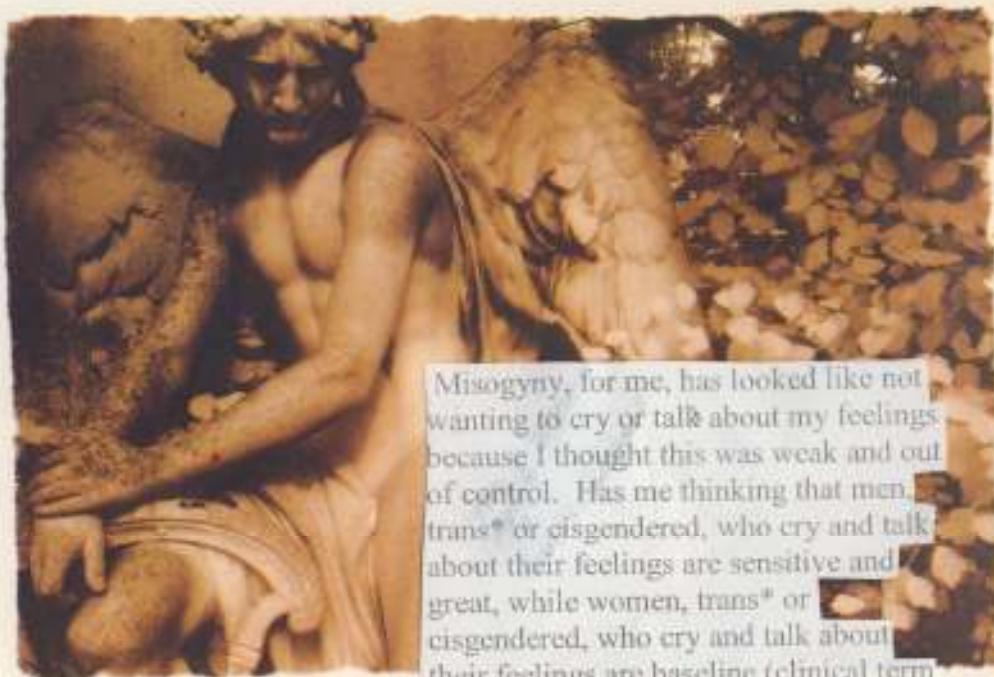
## Glossary

**Queer.** Anti-capitalist, anti-gender binary, anti-racist, anti-heteronormativity, against the status quo, into community building, into constantly working on bettering ourselves and our communities by addressing oppressions on systemic and personal levels.

**Female/Male assigned.** This means the gender that the doctor and/or whoever was at your birth assigned you when you were born. The assignment that puts a letter F or M on your birth certificate if you have one.

**Trans\*.** Encompassing the trans spectrum, including transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, drag queen, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, girl-boy, and any terms people identify as that goes against their assigned gender at birth.

**Cisgendered.** A person who was assigned male or female at birth and continues to identify with that term and who doesn't identify as trans\*. This is a way to distinguish nontrans\* people without centering nontrans people (for example instead of saying woman and trans woman you say cis woman and trans woman)



Misogyny, for me, has looked like not wanting to cry or talk about my feelings, because I thought this was weak and out of control. Has me thinking that men, trans\* or cisgendered, who cry and talk about their feelings are sensitive and great, while women, trans\* or cisgendered, who cry and talk about their feelings are baseline (clinical term for normal, everyday behavior) or irrational. I've done a lot of work in counseling feeling and naming my feelings, talking about them, learning to cry and recognizing the misogyny embedded in discounting feelings and naming them "dramatic". Fuck that shit.

Femmophobic misogyny (and misguided fashion sense) had me cut my hair and stop wearing heels and dresses when I first came out to prove my lesbianism and fit in.

Misogyny had me ashamed to openly love lace and pink, heels and styled hair, fake eyelashes, uptalks.



Trans misogyny had me critiquing my trans women friends' behaviors of for example, being emotionally distant, being argumentative, being anti-pregnancy (not anti child rearing to clarify) as being "male socialized behavior". This is *misogyny* because I am determining what an acceptable essentialist view of a woman is. *Trans misogyny* because I am disregarding and diminishing someone's gender by saying it's less than a ciswoman's. As if there's one way to be a woman, as if I get to decide what that is, as if I get to define someone else's experience.

One thing I've learned from queer and straight circles is, it's too easy to label something as male or female socialized. In reality, life is way more complicated than that—like how about, no one's got completely healthy boundaries and plenty of my nontrans female friends are emotionally distant and argumentative and don't think pregnancy's a good idea for the planet (which really is anti-parent, most commonly anti-mom).

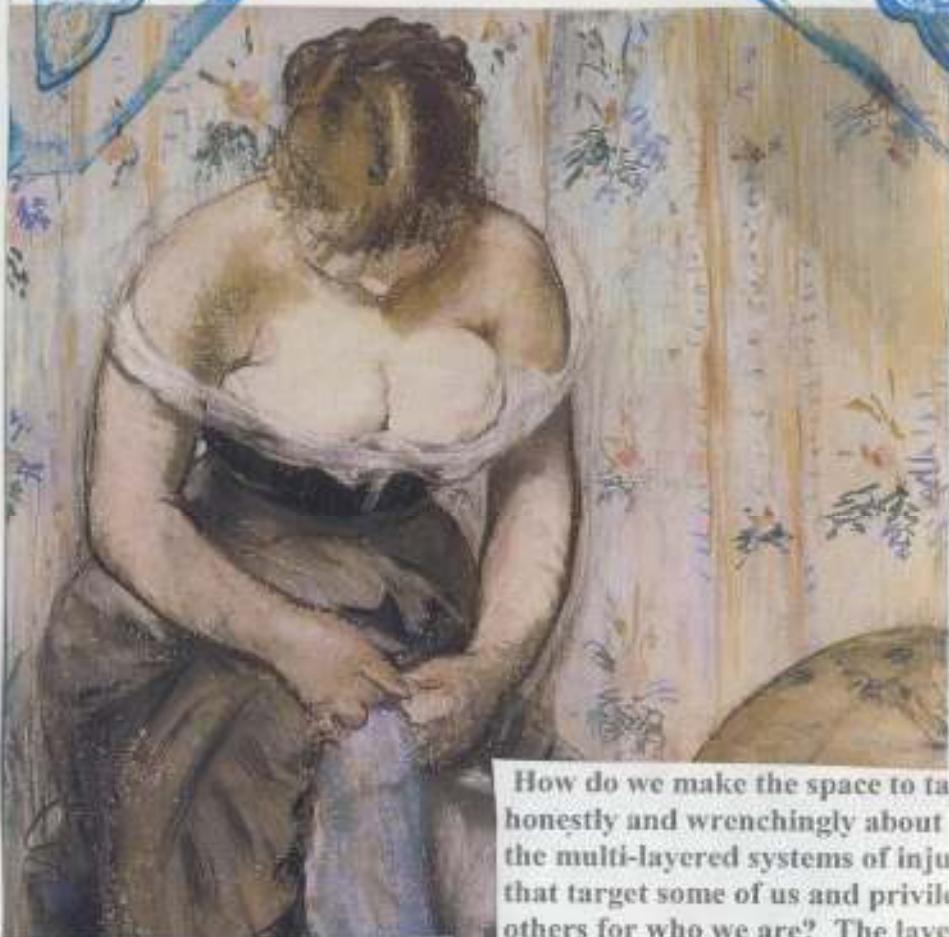
We all have our baggage and behaviors from growing up, not from one identifiable action alone. And male and female socialized behavior looks different for each person. I have really really learned this from my trans lady friends.

Misogyny and femmephobia means that I get the comment, "how do you hike in heels? How do people wear them I don't get it" on a fairly regular basis. Which, I reply "because they're beautiful and you figure it out." When I hear comments like these, I feel judged, like "how silly and impractical you wearing heels!" (silly being a sexist term that I internalized when I identified as a woman and now that I'm out as a guy this has turned into invalidation; I'm not really a guy because I'm wearing this silly female footwear) I feel like an anomaly, like "how does anyone do it?"

which also, to me, implies, I wouldn't be caught dead wearing those.

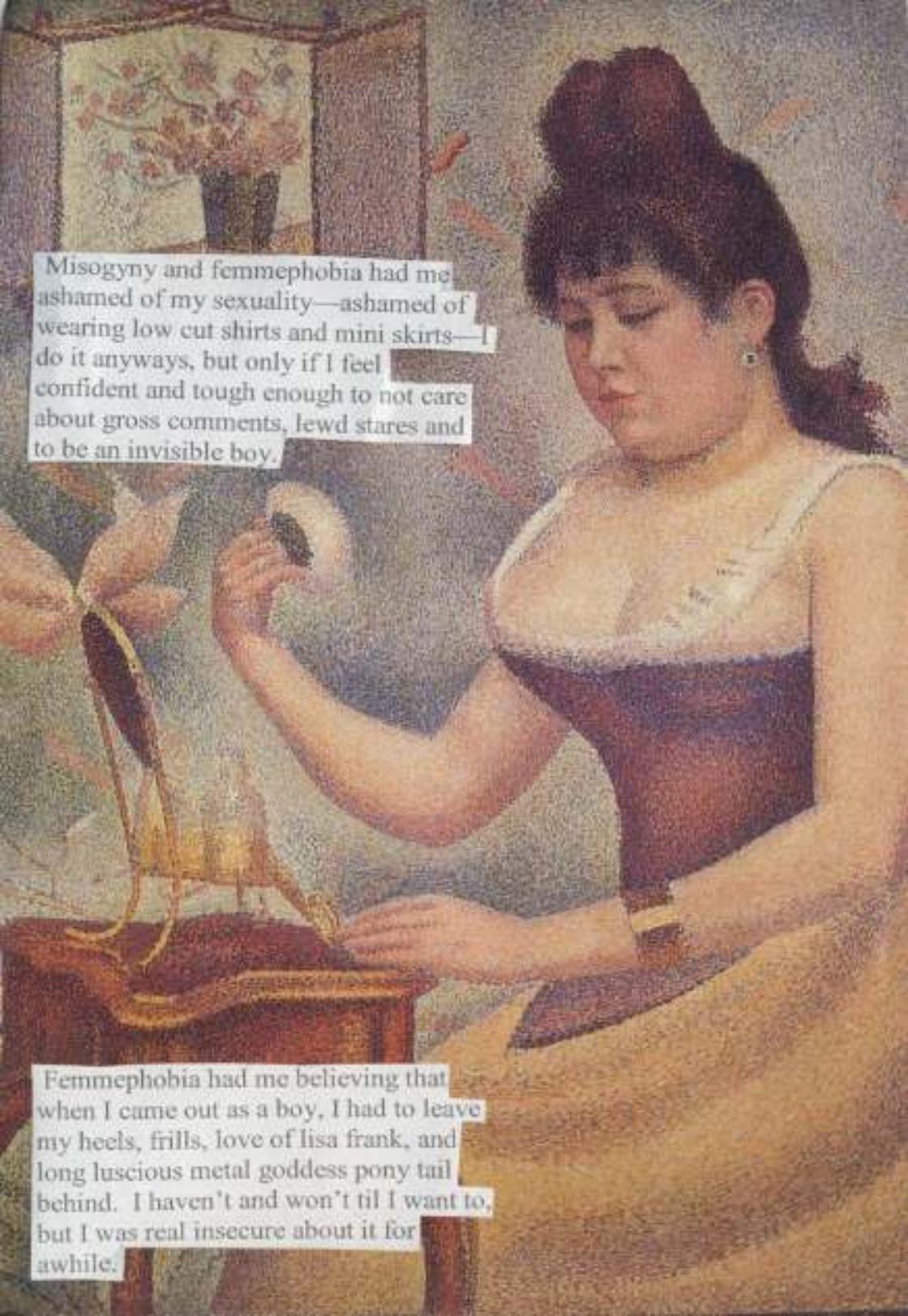
I find that when I'm in circles of femmes I feel powerful and cute, yet when I'm the only femme or one of few I feel self-conscious and like folks are judging me thinking I'm silly or frivolous.





How do we make the space to talk honestly and wrenchingly about all the multi-layered systems of injustice that target some of us and privilege others for who we are? The layers are so tangled: gender folds into disability, disability wraps around class, class strains against race, race snarls into sexuality, sexuality hangs onto gender, all of it finally piling into our bodies. I dare say everyone in this room has stories of both oppression and privilege. How do we dig down to find, not uncrackable, unmovable rhetoric, but the concrete daily material, emotional, and spiritual realities of privilege and oppression on this planet rife with injustice?"—Eli Clare





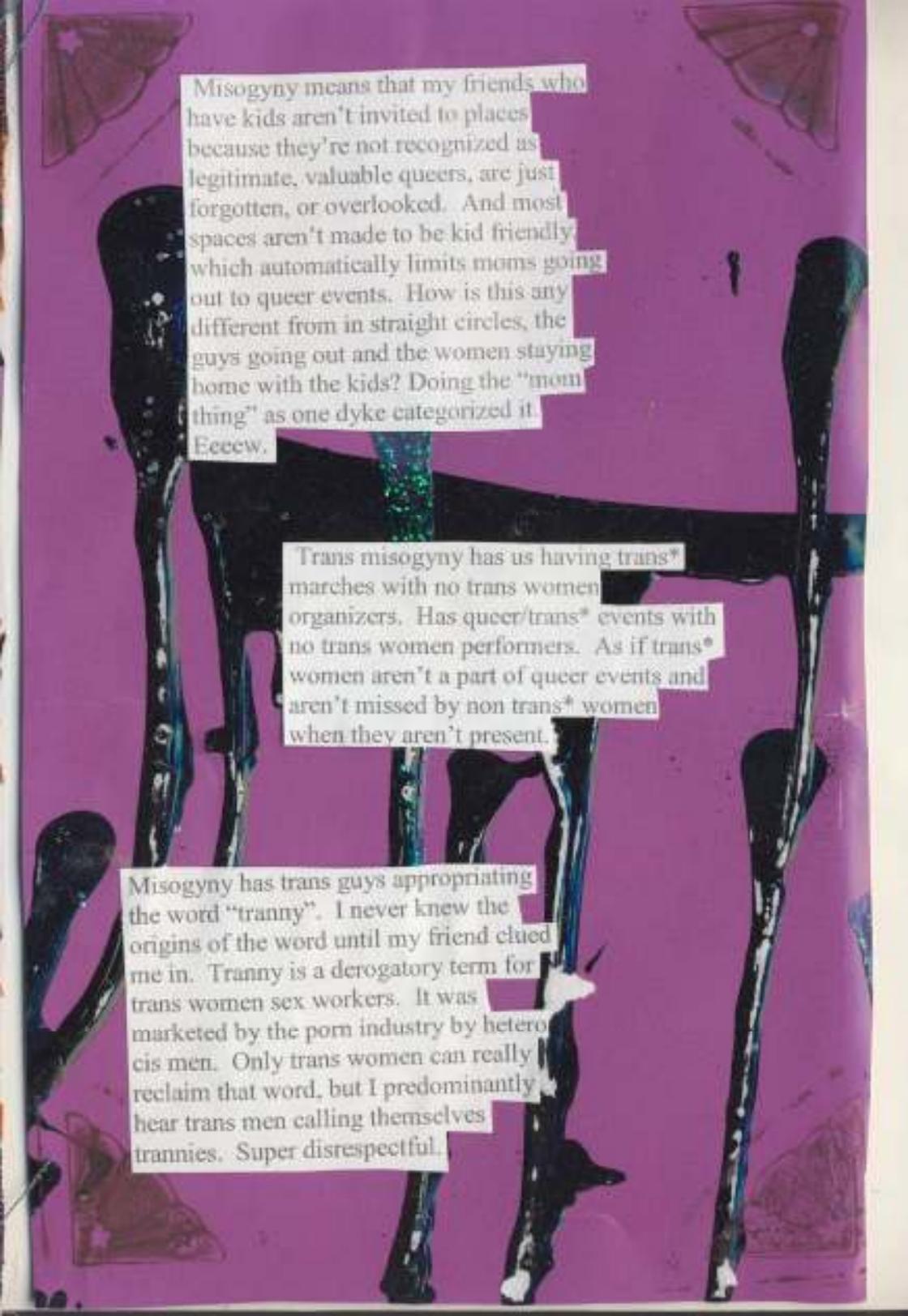
Misogyny and femmephobia had me ashamed of my sexuality—ashamed of wearing low cut shirts and mini skirts—I do it anyways, but only if I feel confident and tough enough to not care about gross comments, lewd stares and to be an invisible boy.

Femmephobia had me believing that when I came out as a boy, I had to leave my heels, frills, love of Lisa Frank, and long luscious metal goddess pony tail behind. I haven't and won't til I want to, but I was real insecure about it for awhile.

I am trying to figure out how to present femme and be recognized as a guy, really hard since our society is so gender-rigid including the queer communities I find myself in. I think, maybe I'm not really a guy...And because of misogyny I don't think I'll ever be taken seriously. Because if I ever pass as a guy, I'll still be wearing pink and frills and glitter and other



things our gender-fascist society attributes to being exclusively feminine—and so be discounted as a real guy. I don't think feminine is a bad thing; I do think we need to be critical of what we consider exclusively masculine and exclusively feminine because we often perpetuate gender-fascism with our rigid definitions.



Misogyny means that my friends who have kids aren't invited to places because they're not recognized as legitimate, valuable queers, are just forgotten, or overlooked. And most spaces aren't made to be kid friendly which automatically limits moms going out to queer events. How is this any different from in straight circles, the guys going out and the women staying home with the kids? Doing the "mom thing" as one dyke categorized it. Eeew.

Trans misogyny has us having trans\* marches with no trans women organizers. Has queer/trans\* events with no trans women performers. As if trans\* women aren't a part of queer events and aren't missed by non trans\* women when they aren't present.

Misogyny has trans guys appropriating the word "tranny". I never knew the origins of the word until my friend clued me in. Tranny is a derogatory term for trans women sex workers. It was marketed by the porn industry by hetero cis men. Only trans women can really reclaim that word, but I predominantly hear trans men calling themselves trannies. Super disrespectful.



Misogyny has queers exotifying femme identified folks, specifically female identified femmes and all women on the transfemale spectrum, so regardless of whether they are femme identified or not.

Trans misogyny has nontrans female queers and trans guy queers policing trans women's actions and not including trans women in the words lesbian, dyke, woman, female, queer, trans and genderqueer, but not having a problem including trans guys in these circles and under this terminology.

Misogyny has us competing over dates, competing over who's the most femme, who's more femme, who's the prettiest, who shouldn't get welcomed to a space because they aren't femme enough or out of jealousy and competition. I think the terms low and high femme were born out of this femme competition.

Misogyny has us throwing all kinds of fundraising events for trans guys' surgeries—straight or queer identified—and not even saying hi to trans women at events. (I totally support having trans guy fundraising events. I'd like to point out the discrepancies around support and inclusion in the queer/trans circles I've been a part of between trans guys and trans women). This is not to discount the transphobia that exists in a lot of lesbian feminists' minds towards trans guys specifically for us being trans. Like "how could you sell out/betray us (meaning ciswomen) by coming out as a guy?" Or, we support you trans guys because you're not really guys, you don't really have sexist and/or misogynistic viewpoints because you were "raised/socialized" a girl.

Misogyny has queers writing off outspoken loud women as bitchy, crazy, irrational and high maintenance.

Misogyny has us tacking on trans to "women and trans" spaces but really meaning "ciswomen, trans women and trans men." Saying "women and trans" is usually doing a couple things. First, it's centering cisgendered women and tacking on trans so trans women know that the ciswomen who made the flyer are thinking about them and want them to feel welcomed.



LOVE  
YOUR  
FAT  
BELLY

Secondly, it's discounting/invalidating trans men as men and saying we're letting you in this exclusively women space because you were "raised/socialized" female so you're ok. When you say women and trans do you mean trans guys? Trans women? Oftentimes these spaces really mean female assigned people, excluding trans women, discounting them as women and discounting trans men as men. I say this because some fucked up shit gets said in these "women and trans" spaces about trans women such as, survivors of sexual assault might feel unsafe if a "male socialized person" were present.

An illustration of two white unicorns rearing up in water. The unicorn on the left is in a more upright position, while the one on the right is rearing up on its hind legs. Both have long, flowing manes and single horns. The background is dark, and the water is splashing around their legs. The overall style is somewhat ethereal and artistic.

Only our connection with our own inner guidance and our emotions is reliable in the end. That is because we each comprise a multitude of processes that have never existed before and never will again.

This negates that trans women can be survivors and that trans women are women not men and that trans men are men not women. That sadly, many trans guys and cisgendered women are and have been abusive. "Male socialized" and "female socialized" are also person by person specific and should not be identified by someone other than the person in question.

In summation, just cause we're queer, just cause we're trans, just cause you're female doesn't mean we're not misogynist or have fucked up rigid ideas

of gender and what it looks like. I think if we broke down gender stereotypes we could break down misogyny and vice versa. I wish all genders and all types of queers were considered legitimate and beautiful and friend worthy and worth supporting and including. I wish misogyny didn't get so supported and repeated in queer circles. I wish misogyny weren't so damn easy to internalize as with other oppressions. I really want people to get how contextual everything is, how everyone's got a different experience that's valid that they bring to the queer table. I wish we didn't so easily assume we knew someone based on our own stereotypes, biases, perspective and experience. Thanks for reading; I would love to hear feedback.

XoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoX.

Kernan Willis

[kernanwillis@hotmail.com](mailto:kernanwillis@hotmail.com)

Thanx to everyone who has contributed to this zine— thanx to those who are reading it, distro-ing it, and fighting like hell to end femmephobia and misogyny in your own communities!

Feel free to re-print this at will, and add more info to the resource list every time you do!

## Resource List

### Books

*Visible: A Femmethology* (available through Homofactus Press)  
*The Femme Coloring Book* (available through [www.femmesguide.com](http://www.femmesguide.com))  
*My Dangerous Desires* by Amber Hollibaugh  
*The Femme Shark Manifesto* by Zuleikha Mahmood & Leah Lakshmi  
(available through Queer Zine Archive Project)

*Femme Shark Communiqué #1* by Zuleikha Mahmood & Leah Lakshmi  
(available through QZAP)

*Brazen Femme: Queering Femininity* by Chloë Brushwood Rose  
*Two or Three Things I Know for Sure* by Dorothy Allison  
*Nobody Passes* (available through Sycamore Books)

*Leather Daddy and the Femme* by Pat Califia  
*Femme Mystique* by Lesla Newman  
*Our Dirty Little Secret* zine by Silke  
*Night Cookies* zine by Katie Kaput  
*10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert  
*The Sissy Duckling* by Harvey Fierstein

*Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the scapegoating of Femininity* by Julia Serano

*Figure 8* zine by Krissy Durden

*Our Dirty Little Secret: misogyny and sexism in queer communities*  
by Silke Akerson

*Femmes Unite!* zine by pdx femme affinity group (no longer in existence)

## Performance Art

Mangos with Chili Performances ([www.mangoswithchili.wordpress.com](http://www.mangoswithchili.wordpress.com))

Body Heat: A Femme Porn Tour ([www.writingourselveswhole.org](http://www.writingourselveswhole.org))

The Femme Show ([www.femmeshow.com](http://www.femmeshow.com))

Sister Spit ([www.sisterspit.com](http://www.sisterspit.com))

Otherwise (Sunny Drake)

White Knuckle Sonnets (Annah Anti-Palindrome)

*Glasserella con Carnie* <http://circuscandy.blogspot.com/>

COG collective of geniuses: <http://thecog.vox.com/>

## Online Resources

[www.femmecollective.com](http://www.femmecollective.com)

[www.femmefagette.com](http://www.femmefagette.com)

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