



# EMBODY

By Sossity Chiricuzio

Perspectives

## **Embody - Love note to femmes, including myself**

by Sossity Chiricuzio, PQ Monthly

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I am a femme queer--part of a tradition that goes back to the origins of function made fashion, sideways looks, and transgressive sexuality.

Which is to say: not passing or passive. Like most magical creatures, we're more than you may think you see. We can run the business, or the fuck, or the meeting, or the protest. In fact, we probably already do. We home school generations of masculine creatures to feminism. We embody the divine feminine, even unto death.

To be femme is to be constantly seeking visibility and value, though they are granted to so many of our queer siblings as soon as they step from the closet. To try short hair, rainbow imagery, jewelry with our identities spelled out in cursive screams, and even knuckle tattoos. To still see those eyes pass right over all our outlaw beauty like just another girl, or no girl at all.

To be femme is to be constantly choosing our battles: queer sex 101 for the mansplainer on the bus, or spoons left over for the group sex party later? Explaining the nuances of sexual harassment to gay men who've never had to live it and don't believe they can perpetuate it, or living a life without their glorious beauty and clowning? Shaving or not shaving any of our hair, knowing we'll be asked to justify it either way?

To be femme is to determine which parts of femininity suit, and which need modifications. Like that second hand bra that doesn't quite fit until you pull out the side wires; or that bike that needed an overhaul before you could haul your tools around town; or those knee high boots passed down from one fat-calved warrior to another, new soles or laces to mark the occasion.

For myself, I choose family, but define it as community, and close friends that show up, and born family that chooses me. I choose no children, except those raised by others and befriended and perhaps taught by me. I choose radical over traditional. I choose to stand as an individual, even in partnership, and to form relationships based on organic growth rather than by a time table or rule book. Even with these choices I am not unusual in my community, or yours.

I don't presume to know everything about any femme/feminine person other than myself, but many of us have many things in common. Wanting peer dynamics over social capital. Wanting our health and well being prioritized. Wanting to be seen and respected in the communities we support in a hundred ways that are taken for granted. Wanting to never again hear "but you're so good at [fill in domestic/organizing/emotional labor task], can't you just take care of that?"

Let me be clear on visibility: what's between our legs is only your business if we offer to share it with you. What's between our legs is not our worth, not your due. What's between our ears is treasure, if you figure out how to be quiet and listen. We all need to get better at listening, as my elders told me before I learned how to pay attention. Before I remembered respect, which they most definitely had earned.

I have learned to do my best to live as long as I can, as well as I can, having the best sex and food and effect on the world as I possibly can. I keep learning to balance budget with health with desire, and to work magic no matter the math. I will continue to learn, like when I finally grew out my beard, which is as natural and feminine as it needs to be. Which is also none of your business, though you are free to admire it.

That beard has presented a challenge to me almost every day since then, but growing it felt right. Felt magic. Femme magic. Crone magic. Fuck you it's my face magic. Fuck your beauty standards magic. Being a femme means I can say fuck as much as I want, though it's really mostly a love word for me. Being a femme means I know curse words are also endearments, and ways to mourn, and sharp, glittery edges that say don't trifle with me.

Being a femme that's younger than you means I want to watch and learn. Being a femme that's older than you means I want to show and teach. Means none of these things, unless we all want it. Means paying extra attention to power dynamics and assumptions and expectations. Means so much more than cosmetics and beauty, whatever that is in any given moment. Means shining light on the myths of competition and scarcity. Means loving even in fear.

We have to be our own role models, and mirrors for each other. We have to find the joy in our bodies as they are, having no promise of anything different. We have to love each other. We have to let our tenderness be strength, not value, not weakness, not role. I continually learn this from femmes, as I have learned most things.

Femmes: I want to give you joyful service with no strings. I want to hold you tight when you want it, and give you space and time when you don't. I want to be the soft light of the moon on your upturned face; to count your silver hairs like shooting stars; to trace your scars and wrinkles like a sonnet. I want to kiss all the places gravity is in love with. I want to love myself as well as I love you.

I see you femme, and I think you're just right.

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