Bitter feels
A non-binary femme affirmation zine
This zine is more about affirming to myself how I feel about my gender identity than anything else. It reflects my experiences only. I identify as non-binary femme and what follows are my current gender feels.
It's impossible for me to dissociate gender from trauma + painful stuff. I am a sexual violence survivor + childhood trauma survivor. I am from a low income background. I'm also white, living on colonized lands. I acknowledge that these factors influence the way I experience gender.
just act like it doesn't hurt.

Billy

Did you name yourself after your cat?!

Honestly one of my biggest triggers is to hear my birth name. I am really fortunate that people were pretty
quick to use my chosen name. However I cringe and shiver when I hear old acquaintances and friends using my dead name. It really hurts. I mean I hate to hear it from my family or from some sort of authority figure (doctors, cops, etc.).

But it's just a knife in my chest when it's from someone I'm close with. And I'll never correct them, because it hurts and I just want it to wash away.
They/Them

They/them are the pronouns I use. But it's complicated, because I am a French speaker, and at this point there is just no pronouns that feel right for me in French.
Some people use "Ile" as a gender neutral pronoun, but it doesn't work for me so I say to people to use my name. "Billy n'aime pas ça, Billy préfère ça..." I am lucky that most of my entourage are respectful. But I don't think it will get to a point where people don't misgender me. I am already drained. I have no energy to correct people or explain non-binary 101 to people, so I let it slide, and it hurts but I can't help but concentrate my energy elsewhere.
I can only talk for myself. I think I "came out" as non-binary about two years ago, to close friends (and myself mostly). In the past years I spent a lot of alone time, and did lots of introspection as part as my on-going healing process. Honestly it really felt so so so so right when
I told a close friend that I was not a girl, really, and they got it. It felt really validating when people started to ask me which pronouns I prefer. It went smoothly overall, and although I get misgendered a lot it just made so much sense to let people know how I see myself.

I think gender is not something fixed, and it's all right if it change overtime. I really live in the "now", and right now, NON-BINARY is the way I view myself.
This is getting out of hands.

Re-reading this short zine I admit all of this may seem vague. I wish I felt more comfortable about writing about personal stories; how I get anxious when people spell my name "Billie" instead of "Billy", probably because I'm AFAB*. How I generally don't answer when people from the (assigned female at birth)
past contact me on social media using my dead name, how it hurts to hear it because there is just so much pain confined in it. Really if people ask to be called a different name than the one they are born with, it's likely they want to feel safe and you should respect that. It's so valid.
I don’t know how to end this zine. It just feel silly. But these feelings are so deep in me. I guess I just wanted to put them out there. thanks for reading!

Sincerely,

Billy Bitter
xxx