

Triple Sonnet for Butches, Queer Crushes, and Women With Swords

After we watch *Death Becomes Her*, my dad says
it was torture, but I'm still thinking about the
line of Goldie Hawn's back in that sexy red
dress, the swoosh of Meryl Streep's hair falling over
her long eyelashes, and of course the scene
with Isabella Rossellini walking out of the water
wearing nothing but beads, offering Bruce
Willis eternal life in a fancy bottle. It reminds me
of my earliest queer crush: Catherine Zeta Jones in
Zorro, and there's just something so tempting about a
sexy brunette with a sharp implement in her hands, the
give-and-take of a sword fight, the slice of a Z on a heaving
dress, and I think about the overworked sapphic
woe of *do I want to be her or be with her*, because

my early movie-watching days never had much of
what I *really* desired: butch, masculine, left-of-center
dykes with grease on their hands and knuckles, hair
cropped close to scalp, a swagger in their step that was
more surety than real cockiness, and that's an essential
difference that can be hard to untangle, so when I first
saw Clea Duvall in *But I'm a Cheerleader*, witnessed
the soft-lit scene of her fingers in Natasha Lyonne's
mouth, my breath caught to the soundtrack, "Glass Vase
Cello Case" stuck with me for years, forever asking me *are you
still, still breathing?* It reminded me of all the masculinity
I'd admired in little-known women characters over the
years, Claudia Donovan in *Warehouse 13* with her smirk
and her tomboy attitude, Jo Lupo in *Eureka* with her

hair pulled back tight and her gun in hand, I love a niche
reference, and maybe it's the individuality complex talking
but I love a girl who isn't afraid to be different, love
the declarative distinction that masculinity brings
to the table, and yes, butchness is about more than
looks, it's about knowledge and pride and an admission
of something inside you, but it's all of that and *hot*, too.

My love for butches is something I'll never give up,
my friends know my type, follow my eye when the hot

dyke in the leather jacket walks into the bar, Jigeesha
leaned in and said *you like the more... masculine type,*
right? and years ago I might've lied, might've wavered but
now I know what I fall for is not something to bottle up,
because for butches, I might give in, but do I surrender? *Never.*