



Love and Money, Sex and Death

McKenzie Wark

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A memoir about transgender womanhood and the messy art of self-construction, McKenzie Wark's *Love and Money, Sex and Death* models how identity muddies the waters of who you are, what you want to be like, and who you want to be with.

Made up of epistolary essays that work to trace the morphology of Wark's own gender discovery, the memoir is divided into three sections (dedicated to mothers, lovers, and others). Each letter centers on one relationship in Wark's life that contributed in a significant way to her understanding of womanhood, transgender identity, and sexuality; the recipients range from Wark herself to relationship partners, friends, and family members, both living and dead.

The memoir plumbs erasures in Wark's personal experiences in order to understand her personal formation outside of the "born this way" narrative. And there's something refreshing, even relieving, about the book's lack of a neat, packaged gender narrative. But at times that same narrative space balloons into personal and theoretical explorations and loses meaning beyond the confines of the individual life recorded here.

In addition to essays, the memoir is studded with black-and-white photographs from Wark's life. Much like the essays themselves, the photographs play with the dissonance between absolutes and spectra. Whether it's the tension between the erasures in the photographs' color spectra or the inability to categorize the images as candid snapshots or art projects, the images issue a persistent echo of the memoir's exploration of perception and presentation as leaky categories with unclear boundaries.

Love and Money, Sex and Death is a memoir that seeks understanding around a personal formation; it extends that spacious anarchy for others to play in too.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (September / October 2023)

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