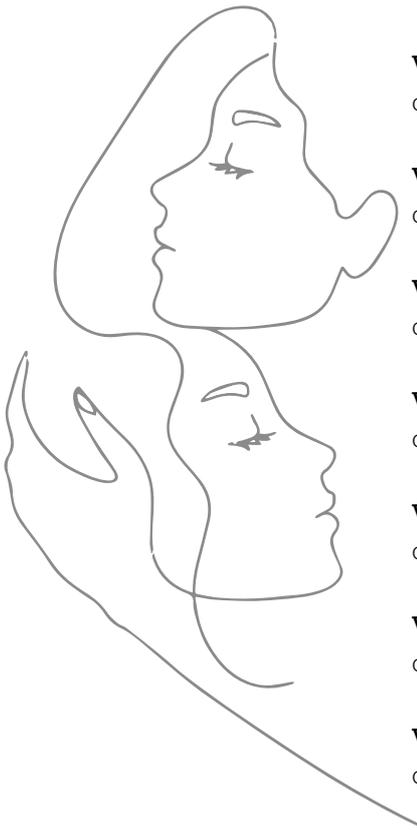


Artemisa Téllez*

Artemisa On Line*

She says that, yes, she's a writer, the architect of eccentric literary workshops, and a bargain-basement diva. But Artemisa Téllez is also a lesbian activist who uses every means at her disposal to ensure that her actions to make visible the struggle for this community's rights leave a mark, from the ongoing workshop on erotic short-story writing for women or her considerable literary output that takes the form of short stories and poems, to social media, where we tracked down the texts published here.

Just to Be Clear



We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so our **families** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so our **teachers** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships or identity so our **neighbors** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so our **ministers** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so our **colleagues** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so **health workers** can feel comfortable.

We lesbians don't have to hide our preference, affections, relationships, or identity so **government employees** can feel comfortable.

* Artemisa is a fiction writer and poet; you can contact her at artemisatellez.com; [@artemisa_tellez](https://www.instagram.com/artemisa_tellez).

Little Red Riding Hood

Little girl coming toward me
Looking for (old) advice.
Don't come to my house alone.
At night,
grandmothers can still
turn into wolves...

Being a Lesbian

It's not a stage. It's not a trauma. It's not shyness. It isn't fear of the opposite sex. It's not confusion. It's not because we were rejected. It's not because we were overprotected. We don't lack experience. We're not mistaken. We don't need help. It's not rebellion. We're not going to get over it!

Don't hate me for being a lesbian; hate me for being perfect.

Don't hate me for being a lesbian; hate me for being perfect.



Sister, if you haven't been a lesbian yet, you're still in time!

What would become of us without the love of lesbians?

I came out of the closet twenty years ago; since then, every time I have to talk about some delicate issue, it seems like everything comes out really soon and really well...

PORN: the biggest fans of heterosexual men are lesbians (and vice-versa).

REALITY: the biggest detractors of lesbians are heterosexual men (and vice-versa).

Feminism owes a great deal to lesbians, but they're not ready for that conversation.

The ultimate subversion: loving women in a world that hates them.

“I Don’t Know Any Lesbians”

(In commemoration of Lesbian Visibility Day)

The two little old ladies, sisters with different last names, who never married
Student roommates who take each other flowers almost every day
Your old-maid aunt who looks like a man and smokes like a chimney
The middle-school girls who are “going through a stage”
The schoolteacher, serious as a nun, who would give her life for her girl students
The married woman whose husband constantly screams that she prefers her girlfriend to him
The activist with close-cropped hair and a labrys on her neck
Those that “aren’t,” but fell in love
Those who wrote thousands of verses and letters, but whom the literary establishment decides
“shouldn’t be put in a box”
Those who are frank, up front, shy, in the closet, undefined, queer; the ones who are experimenting;
the ones you wouldn’t believe, but it’s rumored...



REBELS AND REVOLUTIXONARIES

We lesbians are rebels because, as women in a patriarchal world, we dare to live without men.

We lesbians are rebels because we refuse to serve men at a table, in bed, or in our discourse.

Above all, we lesbians are revolutionaries because we love, support, and care for other women.

WHAT WE’VE NEVER BEEN OBLIGED TO DO

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO HIDE FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO BE QUIET FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO BE FEMININE FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO BE MOTHERS —OR NOT— FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO WEAR OUR HAIR LONG FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO BE DISCRETE FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF OTHER PEOPLE’S CHILDREN FOR YOUR COMFORT.

WE LESBIANS DON’T HAVE TO PRETEND WE LOVE MEN FOR YOUR COMFORT.

For a Non-Decaf Sor Juana

Little by little, Sor Juana's lesbian poems are compiled and commented on more. Little by little, the ardently affectionate letters she exchanged with the viceroy's wife are coming out. Little by little, it's believed and it's brought out into the light in plays, theses, and novels. But it wasn't Sor Juana who was in the closet. She wasn't the one who hid her feelings or the very essence of her being. She wasn't the one that "made us believe" that she was heterosexual as many lesbian and gay, male and female writers of other eras and contexts tried to do. Nor was she the one who built the severe, fixed image of our textbooks and the two-hundred-peso bills. It wasn't Juana de Asbaje, the profound, intelligent, passionate, sarcastic author, who fooled us in any way, hiding in the darkness or showing herself to be different from what she was. It wasn't she.

The mask imposed on her is the product of censorship and that kind of misunderstood sanctity with which all authors —men and women— are treated when they come to be considered classics. The literary canon, mainly masculine, white, Eurocentric, capitalist, and heterosexual, has a great deal of difficulty, even today, to consider works produced by "minorities" —symbolic minorities, because, despite not being one, they are infra-represented in art, the media, and literature— as universal and transcendent. Sor Juana belonged for several reasons to a minority —even marginal— status: she was a woman, the daughter of an illiterate mother, born not only in a colony, but in an area labeled by the viceroy's wife herself as "a hamlet of four wretched Indian huts." And yes, she was also a lesbian.

Her era treated her as an enigmatic portent and portrayed her in the only way it could stand her: cultured in the European style, white, purebred, androgynous, and, of course, asexual. The constant with regard to her image is that: her only, unrepeatable, unexplainable condition. Who are we, simple mortals, to question the almost mythological originality of the Tenth Muse? Situated there, in that place, nobody in the world could touch her; nobody in the world could give her a human dimension, and, of course, identify with such a personage: mestiza, marginalized, lesbian women on the outskirts are diametrically opposed to that elegant, ultra-cultured lady.

The people who recovered Sor Juana for themselves were the refined intellectuals of the mid-century. Later, desk-bound feminists and academic lesbians. Today, blond faggots proclaim her as a reference point for a movement that continues segregating women like her: Sor Juana, the pawn of academic, political, proselytizing interests of decaffeinated minorities.

We need mestizo readings of Sor Juana's mestizo works; we need to analyze her Indian, black, female characters; to read and reread her popular poems, her Christmas carols scandalously written in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl; to read and study her from the margins, to recover her for the women who, from the periphery, struggle to make their voices heard and give shape to the forms of existence that the patriarchal culture, if it cannot silence, domesticates, reduces, dilutes, refines, whitens. We need a rebel, lesbian Sor Juana, because that's the only way we'll honor her as she really was. That way, and only that way, the day may come when those men and women who are waiting in the dusty bottom of the closet of history can have a turn.

Sor Juana was never a hypocrite, hidden, fearful, a closet denizen, pretentious, fake. It was her pen, transgressor of the word and time, that said of herself and for all, *"Neither being a woman, nor being absent is an impediment to loving you: as you know, the soul ignores distance and sex."*