

# Transcript: Queer Out Here Issue 09

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# Pre-transcript introduction

## Queer Out Here

[Queer Out Here](https://www.queerouthere.com) is an audio zine that explores the outdoors from queer perspectives. We bring together stories and soundscapes from around the world to hear how queerness intersects with and influences people's experiences of outdoor spaces and activities. You can read more about the zine on the Queer Out Here website: <https://www.queerouthere.com>

## Issue 09 link

If you've somehow stumbled across this transcript and want to find the audio file, it's available here: <https://www.queerouthere.com/listen/issue-09>

## Content notes

The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains:

- Discussions of the climate crisis and its impact on humans, animals, plants, landscapes, weather and natural disasters
- Mentions of mental illness, mental health, suicide ideation
- References to queerphobia, racism, ableism
- Non-graphic mentions of death, child death
- References to living with disability, physical illness, Covid
- A piece about about public sex
- A piece about animal harm (killing and eating animals)
- Allusions to drug use
- Some swearing
- Some wind distortion and other harsh sounds

If you have specific anxieties or triggers, check this transcript or ask a trusted friend to listen and give you feedback. Please let us know if there is something we've missed and we will add it to the show notes on our website.

# Transcript

## Opener - Various - 0:00:00

**Patrick:** This looks like a good place to start.

[Drum beats kick in, echoed by frog croaks, and bird calls increase in the background]

**Oliver:** Let me take you there.

**Liz:** Outside... outside...

**Sally:** It's just really beautiful out here.

[Electric drone music joins the background sounds]

**Oliver:** Human diversity...

**Person:** It's the queerest thing!

**Oliver:** ...It's just part of biodiversity!

[Corellas screech, sheep bleat, frogs croak, birds call]

**Xochitl:** How we relate and which flowers we choose to nurture is how we will adapt to climate change.

**M.A. Dubbs:** Pushing out and through every piece of native -

[Sheep bleat, the drone music swells and shifts]

**Sixto-Juan:** Human or not human...

**Liz:** Spewing climate disaster...

[Chirpy, midi-sounding tune fades in]

**Sixto-Juan:** Natural or unnatural...

**M.A. Dubbs:** - leaving nothing but a thick wall of twisted twigs.

**Xochitl:** The solutions for survival in climate chaos is queerness.

[The chirpy tune ends, the drone fades very gradually, birds sing, sheep bleat]

# Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:37

[The sounds of the Welsh countryside - bleating lambs and birdsong]

**Jonathan:** Hello! This is Queer Out Here, an audio zine that explores the outdoors from queer perspectives. I'm Jonathan -

**Allysse:** And I'm Allysse. Welcome to Issue 09!

Our optional theme this time was Climate. Our world is changing and we wanted to hear about the different ways in which folks respond and engage with those changes: climate collapse, weird weather patterns, and more. Contributors sent us pieces about ecological changes from one generation to the next, gardening and farming as a way to rethink our place in the world, and even living in the aftermath of a hurricane. In this issue you will hear a range of sounds and ideas that got us thinking more about climate and what it means to us. Hopefully you will get something out of it, too.

**Jonathan:** Thanks to everyone who took the time to share and engage with our call for submissions - on social media and beyond. As always, none of this would be possible if folks didn't send us any pieces! If you know someone who might be interested in submitting some audio next time, please share this issue with them, and send them a link to our website: [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com)

Thanks also to Stephanie Lai who created the cover art for this issue. Stephanie is a queer Chinese-Australian painter, writer, and professional bin chicken (that's an affectionate name for the white ibis, in case you don't know!). Stephanie uses traditional Chinese water-colour painting techniques to represent images of so-called Australia. She started doing this as a way to reconcile loving a space as a settler-colonial immigrant from a refugee background. Stephanie writes that the image we've used on our cover, which features a *Splendid Fairy Wren* (<https://birdlife.org.au/bird-profiles/splendid-fairy-wren/>) is about "getting down on the ground and sitting with one's situation". Stephanie also has a sweeper in this issue!

**Allysse:** The pieces in Queer Out Here cover many topics related to being queer and the outdoors. In this issue you'll hear about death and dying; mental health struggles and suicide ideation; a piece about public sex; some swearing; allusions to drug use; animal harm and eating animals; queerphobia and racism; and of course, discussions of climate collapse.

If you have specific anxieties or triggers, you may wish to ask a trusted friend to listen to this issue first and give you feedback. You can also check the transcript for particular words or phrases - you can find a link to that in the show notes on our website at [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com)

**Jonathan:** The background sounds in my links were recorded in various parks and public spaces on Gunaikurnai Country. This issue was also produced in part on the stolen lands of the Gunaikurnai, specifically the Brayakaulung people. We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and extend an acknowledgement to all Indigenous and First Nations listeners.

**Allysse:** And the background sounds in my links were recorded in the foothills of Bannau Brycheiniog in Wales.

**Jonathan:** We start this issue with a very sad piece of news, which is that our friend and contributor Helen died earlier this year. Helen had pieces in Issue 03 (as Stone Strike) and Issue

07 (as Helen). I knew Helen for almost 20 years, first through blogging, then emails and social media - and we managed to meet in person once, too. She was generous with her politics, time and resources, and we shared a love of music, sound art and Wales (the country) - and also deep feelings about climate collapse and its impact on the world around us. In fact, Helen's piece "every beach", from Issue 07, was one of the things that got us thinking about creating an issue on the theme of climate. We're going to play that piece again now, to remember Helen and to introduce this issue. So here is Helen, with her piece "every beach". May her memory be a blessing.

## every beach - Helen - 0:04:24

Waves rolling onto a beach can be heard for a couple of seconds before an energetic music comes in. You can briefly hear a beat over a high pitch tone, almost like an accelerated heartbeat before it fades. The high pitched tone fluctuates like the rhythm of waves. The sound is drawn out, creating a sense of unease.

The music lowers in volume and stops so we hear only the waves for a few seconds. A voice is layered over the sound of the waves. It says solemnly, "By 2100 every beach you've ever walked will be under the waves."

A sweeping sound can be heard over the waves. Is it sand being blown by the wind? The water taking over the previously above water ground? Nature being swept away by human actions? The waves played backwards in an attempt to turn back time, to stop the encroaching water coming in?

The voice returns but the words are mangled, almost mumbled and incomprehensible. The voice remains for most of the track, occasionally words are heard distinctly.

The sweeping sound intensifies, the high pitch tone returns. We hear a sound akin to a tape machine being rewound.

The tone goes higher, almost painful to hear. The sweeping, voice, tone, and occasional tape rewind mingle into a chaotic cacophony. It is overwhelming, like being drowned by the sound as the beach is covered by water.

Eventually the sweeping like sound disappears, leaving the tones. They gradually slow and become more melodic. The voice is still mangled. The beat heard at the beginning returns for a few seconds.

We can hear part of the sentence spoken early clearly: "Every beach you've ever walked will be under the waves" is heard one last time as the sound rises and then falls into silence.

## Link - Allysse - 0:07:00

[sheep bleating. Birds tweeting, a breeze]

**Allysse:** We start this issue with a piece by Liz Sutherland, who brings the lived-experience narratives of neurodivergent, queer, polyamorous, and trans joy into their writing. In their recording, Liz shares the duality a lot of us experience in our lives. Many of us have a home in a

city of fast-paced noise and business. But when we choose to leave, to spend time outside, we might shed the layers of stress and fall back on slower rhythms of connections and breathing. This is something I can relate to, always attempting to strike the right rhythm between the demands of modern Western society and something older that pulls at a gentler way of being.

Liz's piece is called "How do you find yourself if you're never by yourself?" It was written on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kullin nation, as well as edited and recorded on Whadjuk boodja country.

## How do you find yourself if you're never by yourself? - Liz Sutherland - 0:07:56

[Kookaburras chuckle, insects scritch, the sounds of the bush plays under the whole of Liz's piece]

**Liz:** One of 4.9 million people and the debris of the living. This apartment was a find; a catch. I sat across from a couple, head-to-toe in beige and fawn with decades of life savings on me, and beat them to a six-figure life-sentence. Even before I'd emptied the last coin in my piggy-bank, the last suitcase, recycled the last box, I noticed it.

[Soft footsteps crunch on the ground]

Engines growling, reverberation of buses and trucks idling, spewing climate disaster. Horns held down in frustration, impatience, hurry-up-would-you? Invariably, I snap, drag the glass doors shut. Then ahh, saccharine silence.

[Footsteps fade, but the birds and insects continue, and a little wind distortion]

But it's the ticking, then. The face on the wall that haunts me. Reminding me in every moment I'm running out of time. Taunting me, hurry-up-would-you? I remove the battery with a click. Now all that's left are the sounds inside.

I have a sticker on my Nalgene from one of my favourite drag queens, Pattie Gonia. It says, "If you feel dead inside, get the fuck outside."

[Footsteps begin again]

So: outside, outside, outside. Anywhere away, far from here while it lasts. Give me the wide open red of Nullarbor Plains; billions of rocks along Larapinta miles; the shaking knees and swallowing seas of the furthest southwest I can be. I want to stand at the edge of this land on a storm-soaked night screaming so loud it drowns the wind in the ocean outside.

[Footsteps pause]

I want to smell the petrichor of earth not long for dryness, feel the rain on my upturned face. I want to watch exploding supernovas colliding in a vast sea of night sky.

Out here I devolve into a new kind of focused singularity. With no one to perceive me, tell me to hurry up as I caress each leaf as they unfurl.

[Footsteps start up again]

I get lost more when I'm alone. Swerve off trail to follow a butterfly, or down a spooky side path framed by tunnelling trees. Follow my feet, lose my way, but find myself. The little things take more time when I'm a solo dirtbag. Making a camp cuppa, unzipping the tent for a middle of the night pee, finding fresh water. When I've got no one to share my pack with, this uphill surge is difficult, difficult, lemon difficult, I repeat the mantra with every step. Climbing up tests my fitness, but climbing down tests my fear. No one's here to hold my hand, but no one's judging me either. The solitude, quiet, idling time melts my bones, makes them malleable, gifts me the quality of reshaping. I slow and soak in the warming sun that scorches this land more each turn, and take solace that this, the living, will carry on.

[Kookaburras call, insects scritch, the wind blows]

## Link - Allysse - 0:11:35

[The sounds of the Welsh countryside, lambs and birds, fade in]

**Allysse:** In contrast to Liz, who chose to leave modern conveniences behind, rYan has all those conveniences stripped from them. rYan is an audio lover and forest dweller who lives near the muddy banks of the Bay of Fundy on the land of the Mi'kmaq people.

The day after a hurricane, rYan found themselves with a roof over their head but nothing working in their home. The climate collapse we are living in creates more and more so-called freak weather patterns - and rYan's poem "Wireless" asks, what happens when everything we depend on to live gets stripped from us so quickly? Can we make it through just one night?

## Wireless (a poem written during a power outage) - rYAn - 0:12:15

**rYan:** This poem was written eight days into a power outage, after Hurricane Fiona - one of the largest hurricanes that has come through Nova Scotia, my home, in a long time - had decimated the forest behind my home. And you'll hear in my voice, ah, tiredness after trying to do simple things without power for eight days. Um, I was very glad when it finally came back on.

Wireless (a poem recorded during a power outage)

Instant coffee  
Cat on lap  
Generator on next door  
Sitting in a yellow chair  
And wanting power more

Waiting to use the washroom  
Using water from the pit  
Thinking of how nice it would be

to take a simple shit

To shower  
Heat up water  
Have the food  
not go to spoil  
Waiting for the power is  
waiting for the end of oil

Vulnerable  
but warm and safe  
With disconnection true  
More and more I'm seeing  
Exactly what I'd like to do

Return now to the digital layer  
Hold my breath  
And make my choice  
Shut up  
Shut down  
Detached and cleaner  
Connected with no voice

Reconnected to the grid  
How easy life would be  
Leave the present  
For the present  
Lose my Self  
And I'll be free

## Sweeper - Mags - 0:13:26

[Footsteps fade up]

**Mags:** It's a bit of a dull, wet day in Arnos Grove Cemetery in Bristol *[NB: Mags has let us know she means Arnos Vale Cemetery]*. Never been here before, passing through the city. Um, walking between some very old gravestones, some lovely old trees. [Some wind sounds.] Can feel the showers approaching overhead. Very peaceful. And a little muddy!

[Faint background sounds.] And this is Mags [loud birdsong interrupts for a moment] in Bristol for Queer Out Here.

## Link - Jonathan - 0:14:10

[Footsteps, the faint sound of traffic in the background. Occasionally during the link there are birds tweeting and calling, too.]

**Jonathan:** Thanks Mags - as always, it's really nice to hear from you.



Our next piece is from Oliver Cassidy in lutruita/Tasmania, and it's a reflection on and a revisit of their time making a film on the Franklin River. I saw the film, "Franklin", at a screening in a small, rural community hall just down the road from here. I'd heard only that it was "about the Franklin River campaign" - which was the fight to save the river from damming in the early 1980s. So it was wonderful to end up watching a film that contained that and more: beautiful cinematography, gorgeous landscapes and excerpts from Oliver's father's diary as he paddled down the river to join the campaign. It also felt good that Oliver's transition was included without side-tracking the film too much - [wattlebird call] so the audience at our viewing, who might not otherwise realise they know any trans people, got to see Oliver as part of a wider network of narratives, of places and of relationships.

At the end of Oliver's piece, you'll hear the audio from the trailer for "Franklin". You can watch the trailer or buy the film online at [franklinrivermovie.com](http://franklinrivermovie.com)

Thanks so much to Oliver for agreeing to make a piece for us, to Andrea Foxworthy for putting us in touch and to Chris Kamen for additional location audio.

## A Queer Revisit of the Franklin River - Oliver Cassidy - 0:15:31

[Faint background sounds of bushland, ravens, wind in trees]

Hello from lutruita/Tasmania. I want to acknowledge the palawa pakana people who's country this is. Pay respect to their elders throughout time and acknowledge the people who have shared their wisdom and helped shape my appreciation for this island where I am lucky to live and work.

My name is Oliver Cassidy, I made a feature documentary called Franklin, about a river and the campaign to save it. Let me take you to the there, sonically.

[As Oliver describes the following, the background sounds mirror his descriptions]

You can hear the flowing water, birds singing. It's a place of serenity, thick ancient forests. No cell phone coverage, a satellite phone if you're lucky. Two days hiking out over a mountain if you change your mind about being here. You are disconnected. Or... you are connected.

You hear the term "wilderness" get used a lot, and I think the meaning of it has been changing a bit over the years, but it doesn't have a great history, it's very colonial. I went searching for synonyms and found the following suggestions: uncultivated lands, badlands, wastelands. It's going in the complete wrong direction.

I want to go to the lands that own themselves. To the places that are so full of life that our place in this system of biodiversity is shown to us in no uncertain terms. It tells us, we humans, we don't matter that much.

What a hit to the ego, to see a world that doesn't need you any more than it needs the myrtles, the bracken, the lampreys, the leeches, the black cockatoo! [Black cockatoos call, a high, harsh but almost gentle cry]

I can think of no better word than 'country' in the Aboriginal sense.

A hit to the ego it may be for some, but how wonderful it is - how generous - to be shown your place. To feel your place. To not think all this belonging to you - how desperate that emotion, how easy it leads to violence. Instead, to think of belonging to it. Belonging to country. And then, through that understanding, you know yourself.

Some of the words I've described myself with include trans masc, non binary, gender queer, fluid, gay in all directions. For all the words I have used to describe myself, though, there is so much more out here. Coz human diversity, it's just part of biodiversity. I am so glad I didn't fight it.

By the time Franklin was looking for production money I was faced with a big challenge. I'd only just come out to myself and was terrified the film wouldn't be makeable if my gender shenanigans further complicated the story. And then one of the hardest things about making it was this: most people who come out in a workplace just need the people around them to be polite, not necessarily to understand. But it was literally the job of my team to tell my story. From the start, I knew that it was just as important to them as it was going to be to me, so we worked hard to get it right.

But it was hard. Early versions of the edit had my older incarnation dominating the first 20 minutes of a linear plot. I'd come out to enough people in my life, and didn't want to have to go through that with every cinema audience as well. By the time the third member of our filmmaking team had written their idea of my transition, I realised transition wasn't about me. It was that everyone else needed to go through a mini version of it.

In the end the film actually makes as much of my gender as I'd hoped - which I could translate into basically a shrug and a keenness to get on to the story. It is the thing I wish I could have seen when I was learning to be myself.

[The sound of water, disturbed by a paddle]

I would like to raft this river, the Franklin, again one day. We worked hard when we were here. If there was light enough to see your hands, Ben and Kas were up with the cameras. And this was all happening at the end of 2020. Yep. I was exhausted before we even began. So much so, I did myself a permanent injury to my knee on the first day that requires me to use a mobility aid forever after.

And I also spent an enormous amount of time holding my pee! [Quiet chuckle] You see, thinking mostly about how I would be read on camera, I chose a man's dry suit. Dry suits are excellent. When being able to get warm and dry is a matter of survival, you can have all of your clothes on at once, a dry suit over the top, and you are set. [Zipper sound] If you overheat, dunk yourself in the river for 30 seconds and you'll be sorted out. What I hadn't considered was that the design difference between a mens and womens dry suit, wasn't just the colour and shape, but access. And I've never got the hang of STPs. Setting out on a 12 day adventure where I'd be wearing the same clothes in a water proof dry suit didn't strike me as the right time to practice not wetting myself.

Fun fact: it turns out holding your pee makes you grumpy and difficult to work with. I'm sorry team.

Reasons I want to raft the river again though... It's amazing! Breathing in this air. Drinking that water. [Close up water sounds] I want to feel my whole brain opening up and being used all at once again. [Distant rushing water or wind] I want to tackle some of the rapids I know I could have made under different circumstances. I want to be more a part of it, and a little less the centre of attention. I want to demonstrate to the guides that I am not always that grumpy or difficult to deal with, promise. [Birds chiming] I want the vegetation to reveal to me like it did the full palette of colour available once my brain had made sense of what I'm seeing - even if at the outset it just all looks green. I want to be doing something that feels so real, that the usual sense of realness doesn't compare. To have the full body satisfaction at the end of the day of managing risk and strength and energy, of taking in beauty, of being in awe. I want to be reset.

I want to connect to the parts of me that feel like Dad. He came alive in the mountains, his friends have said. [The rushing sound fades down] Of course he did. There is so much life out here.

And people gave everything to save it.

[Trailer for Franklin begins, with some music playing beneath it]

**Oliver:** In the summer of 1983, my dad embarked on a 14 day journey to keep the wild Franklin River flowing free to the sea. [Water rushes]

**Voice** [archive/newsreader]: The plan to dam the Franklin has caused bitter and divisive protests.

[Chanting and cheering]

**Voice** [interview]: It was the biggest environmental rally in the country's history.

**Voice** [interview]: We knew we had Aboriginal heritage down there.

**Voice** [interview]: There's evidence of our people for millennia.

**Voice** [archive/speaker at rally]: We've made up our mind and we're gonna get on with the job!

[Explosion. Music and other sounds stop. Water sounds fade in]

**Oliver:** I guess I'm trying to follow dad's ghost a little bit, keep a bit of him alive. [Paddling sounds] I'm not sure if I'm ready. [Music begins] People have died on this trip.

**Voice** [interview, **Bob Brown**]: There was a lot of tension.

**Voice** [interview]: Part of the population wanted to build the dam, which was employment.

**Voice** [archive/vox pop]: It's the survival of the fittest so far as I'm concerned.

**Voice X** [interview]: Car went by with guns out and they shot at us. [gunfire]

**Voice** [interview, **Bob Brown**]: I knew quite likely I could be killed.

**Voice** [archive/vox pop]: Well, I think there'll be murder in the town tonight.

[Music intensifies]

**Voice** [interview]: When that first bulldozer arrived, things suddenly got very, very serious.

**Voice** [interview]: We went to fight against enormous resources.

**Voice** [archive]: We'll probably all be putting ourselves in fairly high risk situations.

**Voice** [interview]: Suddenly this monstrous machine came and just started murdering the forest.

**Voice X [interview]**: Hey, wait! We're about to destroy something sacred, something important for all of humanity.

**Voice [interview, Bob Brown[?]]**: It was desperate days.

[Music comes to a stop. Rain, water rushing.]

**Oliver**: The drizzle has set in. Every step, a little more dangerous. Am I here just to prove I don't need you?

[New melody begins]

**Oliver**: I have to remind myself to take in the beauty of the place which moved so many to action.

**Voice** [archive]: If we destroy it now for the sake of 15 years of power, well, we've destroyed it for thousands of years.

**Voice [archive, Bob Hawke]**: And if you look at the dam, it shouldn't proceed on either the grounds of environment or of economics. [People cheer and clap]

**Oliver**: There's a part of me that's afraid, that wants to stay up here where it's safe and dry.

**Oliver's father, voiced by Hugo Weaving**: Come on my boy, one foot in front of the other.

**Oliver**: But as you always said, there's no turning back on the Franklin. [Music cascades from a climax to silence] Only one way home.

[The trailer ends]

**Oliver**: Thanks for listening. To find out how to see Franklin go to the website [franklinrivermovie.com](http://franklinrivermovie.com)

## Sweeper - Emma - 0:25:28

[A scraping, slightly metallic sound of a manual lawn clipper being pushed back and forth. After a few passes, it stops.]

**Emma:** Hi, I'm Emma. I'm cutting the grass in the garden. [Breeze blows] And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Emma pushes the lawnmower a few more times]

## Link - Allysse - 0:25:54

[Birds twitter in the background of Allysse's link]

**Allysse:** Thank you for the sweeper.

In this next section, we join M.A. Dubbs, Fish and Sally Goldner as they notice the world around them and explore the connections we make with the more-than-human world - from the loss we feel as spaces and creatures disappear to the comfort that we can find when we make and re-make connections.

First up, M.A. Dubbs, an award-winning Mexican-American poet from Indiana. The land of Indiana (so-called "land of the Indians") was originally home to the Miami, Potawatomi, Piankeshaw, Wea, Kickapoo and Shawnee tribes among others.

We will hear three poems from M.A. Dubbs throughout this issue. They all touch on changes the poet notices in the world, and she calls us to take action in any way that we can. In this first poem, "A Lonely Firefly", M.A. Dubbs shares the story of the insects' decline, how familiar they once were to her, how surprising they seem to her children.

We follow the poem with a piece from Fish, a nonbinary, disabled person living in Poland, and a previous contributor to Queer Out Here. In their piece "Last Butterfly" Fish takes us along with them on a late summer/early autumn walk through city streets. Their walk is filled with the rough edges of city life, a place that can be aggressive to many folks, human and otherwise. Yet, in the midst of it Fish observes the presence of butterflies - still here in spite of the building sites and large billboards swallowing the green spaces. There is a duality in this, of isolation and connection.

And finally we will hear from Sally Goldner, a pro wrestling ring announcer, MC, speaker, educator, life coach, occasional performer, and more! Like Fish, we follow Sally outside, this time to the river in the outer suburbs of Naarm/Melbourne on Wurundjeri country. Through a stream of consciousness, Sally reflects on how nature can benefit queer people who can be especially prone to mental health issues in an often disrespectfully ableist and neurotypical world.

But first, M.A. Dubbs.

[Background sounds fade down]

## A Lonely Firefly - M. A. Dubbs - 0:28:11

**M.A. Dubbs:** A Lonely Firefly.

On summer nights in Indiana,  
the point when the cool of night  
shades the heat but a humidity always stands,  
would be the firefly catch.  
Dad would rest on the deck  
as I race barefoot onto fresh cut grass,  
soles green and yellow though it felt they barely hit the ground.  
I would grab fistfuls, let the lighting bugs coat my hands  
as they curiously crawled on knuckles and nails,  
human mountains and valleys.

I'd watch them bob up and down  
to the beat of cicada hum and soft treble of mourning dove.  
I'd place them in a two litre bottle like a makeshift lamp,  
climb up a crooked tree to light dark branches  
and bunches of leaves, release them in a cloud of gentle,  
pulsating glow: terrestrial stars

Now I rest on my own deck,  
my girls' naked feet sprinting across the lawn.  
They gasp at the unexpected yellow blip so familiar to me,  
new to them.  
They bring over one small bug: black wings, red head,  
a single dot like a bindi,  
opening to the third eye.

Why do they blink? They want to know  
I tell them it's to find another,  
maybe a mate or just a friend  
or simply to see another of their kind.  
They want to know if they are rare.  
Do they glow because it's so hard to find one another  
across all this space?

I tell them, it didn't used to be.

## Last Butterfly - Fish - 0:29:47

[Piano and wailing improvised vocals]

I was afraid I would never see a butterfly again. And yet, i saw a couple of them today. It was a relief.

Last night, when falling asleep, I had this random thought that was repeating itself over and over: what if I die tomorrow? Will I be able to stay alive until next summer? Will my chronic illness worsen and kill me, or make me kill myself? Or if it won't, will Covid finish me off? Or if it won't, do I even have anything to look forward to in this life, other than the collapse of everything and everyone? I should be finishing stuff, getting ready for death - that is what my brain told me, while I was trying to fall asleep.

[A train rattles in the background, the deep rhythm sounding as if heard under a bridge. The vocal music continues]

And yet, I saw some butterflies today. Summer is coming to a close, but I was still able to see them, get a couple of photos. One of the butterflies was kind enough to pose for me for a while, and let me come closer and look at it in the warm light of the sunset.

I hope the insects survive the changing climate. I hope this won't be our last sunset. [Another train]

The light was reflecting off of the skyscrapers, the trains, the power lines in ways that seemed poetic to me. This fragment of open space in the middle of the city, was flooded by orange, red, yellow. This transitory moment in time felt significant to me.

While walking around, I frequently stopped for a while to look at birds, flowers, fruit, or at the ways the light bounced off of objects. I found myself alone against a slow, but steady current of passersby. I stopped; others walked on. I listened; others made the noise.

[Traffic sounds. A higher vocal wails like a siren.]

The noise in this district can be a bit unbearable at times. This place is constantly under construction, constantly changing. [The vocals sing short descending trills] During a 15 minute walk, I can go to at least 4 different construction sites. The machinery there can sound musical sometimes, sometimes it is a cacophony of overwhelming noise.

I was testing out my new ear plugs today. I can hear everything in them, they just take the edge off the more unpleasant, loud sounds. Thanks to them, today I did not have to cover my ears in pain because of all those motorbikes going 100 kilometres per hour over the speed limit near the city centre. As an added bonus, in those earplugs, it is more difficult for me to hear the fake coughs or annoying comments I get from people when they look at my mask.

[The industrial and traffic background sounds continue]

I was walking around as I was reflecting upon the fact that the earplugs are going to become an important accessibility aid to me, lessening the overstimulation that sound can sometimes cause in me. Then, by chance, I walked next to a billboard - an ad for an autism foundation. The billboard claimed: [Fish puts on a deep, important-sounding voice] "There is no cure for autism. But there is effective therapy. Help out now, donate!" In the background there was an angelic looking small child.

I looked at this billboard, a little surprised, a bit disgusted, but then I got distracted by the way my shadow looked like. It was long and tall, it made me look like a giant. Now I think that it would be nice if that billboard became consumed by my giant shadow self. The shadow would cover it, swallow it, and then disintegrate it, and make it so as if it never existed.

And after that happened, It would be nice if all the money that the foundation made because of that billboard would instead go to buying good earplugs for all of the neurodivergent children and adults. Or maybe towards teaching society how not to traumatise neurodivergent people, so that they do not have to heal from it in therapy.

There was a very small crow nearby, illuminated by the low sun. It looked like it had an orange outline. It was smaller than other crows nearby. A small crow, with a big, big shadow. It was nice to be next to other beings, who have a different way of living and thinking. It was nice to be alive, together.

[Piano and industrial whooshing sounds slowly, slowly fade out]

## Peaceful queer out here - Sally Goldner - 0:35:35

Hi there. Sally Goldner, pronouns she/her, out here on Wiradjuri country *[NB: Sally notes this should be Wurundjeri country]*. I'm a queer out here! I'm at one of my favourite places that I love to get to every year, particularly in the summer. It's around 25 minutes away from my place in Melbourne's what I call "middle of the eastern suburbs" - it's not inner and it's not outer - so I end up heading to the outer suburbs. And it is like those meditations where you go down a country lane or go into a cave - perhaps the country lane one's better - and it's nice and quiet and it's just so pleasant here. Even though there are, as is their right, other people here enjoying the beautiful Wiradjuri [Wurundjeri] country on the banks of the Yarra Yarra River because it's peaceful and it's quiet and even with the other people talking you could be in the middle of regional or rural so-called Australia - and it's peaceful and quiet.

And I came here today to be honest, not with my primary purpose of being to say hello Queer Out Here, but - as can happen with LGBTIQA+ people we can face mental health issues - and I've just been feeling a little bit flat for the last week, like I just get stuck in second or third gear. It's not horrible. I've been exercising which is great; more exercise in the last nine months or so has turned my life around. But... I just hadn't been quite able to get moving this week. And there's just something grounding about this place with its peace and quiet, its calm river. I've just been in for a swim and I'm just sitting here drying off and just being here - the peace and quiet, the nature, the feeling it, the observing it, the swimming in nature. I'm beginning to feel my spirit settle, sort of lift again, but also feel simultaneously grounded which I haven't felt for a few days.

And I think this is something that's so important is why - sure everyone will have their own particular things - for me as a queer person, nature and getting out of the noise and hubbub of the city - it's also being queer and neurodivergent - is very, very grounding. I've, you know, missed doing that - I particularly missed it during 2020 and 21, those two years we don't want to talk about regardless of who we are, when we all couldn't travel nearly as much. And just sitting here feeling peaceful again at last, feeling a bit more grounded, feel the smile come back on my face. It's a beautiful day. It's around 28 celsius, I think, and not too hot, not too cold. The river was cold was beautiful once we got in - not that I'm here with anyone else, but other people were in as well. And I just feel like I've got my sense of inner peace back to, to a fair extent already.

And you know, I don't mind camping and bushwalking. I'm not you know sort of a big camping person but I suppose an issue that stops me camping more is how to people afford all the equipment? Despite the myths of double income no kids -which we know is a myth in itself - as we



go through the scale of queer, bi and trans people [computer alert sound] do have lesser income compared to, say, gay men than compared to lesbians.

You know, some people here earlier were saying “Oh the river’s higher than it was.” Well, we’ve just had some recent rain, I don’t really think it’s changed a lot in the two or three years since I started coming here. And the climate, you know, it’s been the same, and there’s, the river seems no, no different.

But it’s really, really just so enjoyable here. And I’m doing this stream of consciousness - I’m not editing, I haven’t prepared anything - just so you can tap into that enjoyable feeling of being a queer out here and what it can do. Nature is so grounding, and as an air sign if you’re an astrological type, probably I get stuck in my head too much and so to come down and get some earthing and watering - the grounding bits that I need - it’s really, really helpful. I’m saying “really really” a lot - I’m really, really saying really, really a lot! But it’s just really beautiful out here. I’m enjoying looking around at the various trees and tapping into the nature and the soothing energies that it brings.

And I sometimes wish I could live in the country or by the beach. Um, I think I’d be better off one day. Maybe. Have that house by the sea, cottage by the sea, or something. Coz I just know when I come here, I feel so peaceful - and it doesn’t really work, let’s say I go to somewhere by the Yarra, the Yarra Yarra in the inner city of Melbourne. It doesn’t really work, either. And yet where there’s just natural sounds, I suppose it’s soothing. That is nature.

And so, I hope that wherever you are on this planet - if you are another planet, I’d love to know what internet service provider you’re using - that this sends some peace to you, and some calm and some uplift. I’ll take a few pics as well to go with the, the story for when it goes up. Thanks to Jonathan and Queer Out Here for this opportunity to have a chat to you. And may your life be filled with a mix of peace and power that gives you joy and brings joy to those who are important to you. Perhaps every time you feel a bit stressed, you may want to come back, tap into the peace that I’m feeling. Wishing you much love and joy, wherever you are listening on planet Earth at this time in early 2024.

## Link - Allysse - 0:42:35

[Soft countryside sounds]

**Allysse:** That was “A Lonely Firefly” from M.A. Dubbs, “Last Butterfly” from Fish, and “Peaceful Queer Out Here” from Sally Goldner. We hoped you enjoyed those submissions and that they made you consider your own relationship to the changes occurring around you, the lost connections, the ones still there, the peace still to be found. If you feel inspired, we’d love to hear your thoughts. You can find all of our contact details on the website, [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com).

Side note from the pieces, Sally recently interviewed Jonathan on her 3CR show “Out of the Pan”! You can listen to the interview online - we’ll put a link in the show notes.

## Sweeper - Stephanie - 0:43:16

[Sound of flowing water, wind in leaves, and some wind distortion]

**Stephanie:** Hi, I'm Stephanie, and I've just been swimming in the River Avon on Gunaikurnai Country. And this is... [long pause, wind distortion] Queer Out Here!

[Stephanie laughs, we hear splashing - probably Stephanie walking in the water - then the water and wind sounds fade out.]

## Link - Jonathan - 0:43:40

[Faint background sounds of a park, distant cars, people and water birds]

**Jonathan:** Thanks Stephanie for that sweeper. And just a reminder that if you'd like to make a sweeper for a future edition, we would love to have one. You can find out all the information about how to make one on our website, [queerouthere.com/sweepers](http://queerouthere.com/sweepers)

And now for something completely different! Patrick Marano is a YouTuber who we discovered while searching for content about cruising - which is something we've always invited submissions about, since it is a very obvious, ah, queer, outdoors activity, but which nobody's ever really addressed in their pieces. Patrick has [a currawong calls nearby]. Thanks for that, Currawong! Patrick has loads of videos [currawong calls again] about cruising, bathhouses, sauna reviews, product reviews and so on, but the audio we're featuring here is from the video "Cruising the Woods (for Beginners)". As Patrick says, lots of people do it, but not many people talk about it. He writes, "It's time to be honest about our behaviours and share what we've learned. Although much of it is instinctual, there are nuances to cruising that will make or break an experience. Let's have fun with it!"

If you'd like to check out the full video, it's in the show notes. And you can also find Patrick on YouTube or on his website, [patrickmarano.com](http://patrickmarano.com)

In keeping with this piece, I found a local spot on a cruising website and I'm recording this link in the park nearby. I actually have used the old toilet block here many times and although the new block might not be such a hotspot, I'm now maybe slightly miffed that I've never been propositioned! Anyway, without further ado, let's join Patrick in Canada and head into the woods.

## Cruising the Woods (for Beginners) - Patrick Marano - 0:45:17

[Bluegrass/country intro music plays]

**Patrick:** Hey folks, welcome back to the channel. In this video we are going on a field trip to uncover the best ways to cruise the woods. We'll look at how to find the perfect location, how to lure a guy in, and best practices for different scenarios. I am not sure what we're gonna find in there so stay tuned.

[Whoosh sound to transition]

Cruising outdoors means always being on the lookout. [A little wind distortion in the background] You're not in the privacy of a bathhouse, you're not in your bedroom, you're in a public place and you can easily be seen, obviously, if you're not careful. Your number one priority should always be to be completely inconspicuous, invisible to any innocent passer-by. It's always good to scope out the location and see what the local foot traffic looks like before you set up your sling between two trees.

Okay. Let's start with finding a cruising spot. They are all around us. We just need to know how to look for the signs. Take this trail behind me, obviously it's well worn and it leads directly into the heart of the woods. This looks like a good place to start. Follow me.

[The atmos and recording sounds a little different as Patrick is now further into the trees]

Now the trick in the woods is, you follow the large paths in, but don't stay on the large paths - because obviously nothing's happening on the large paths. Everything is gonna be happening off the beaten trail. So as we go up now we're looking for little offshoots from the main trail because obviously people are gonna wanna try to keep it a little more private than this. So as we're reaching the top here, I can see there's a little shoot here. You know, at least it's smaller. It's still well worn but it's a little bit smaller, so let's just follow this one for a little bit. You're gonna want to look around at the surroundings. Is there anything, anywhere, you know, that somebody could see you? You always wanna do a 360, you always want to look around you, because it's really important, because remember the number one rule is not being seen.

[Whoosh sound to transition]

OK guys, and here's a hot tip for you. Bug spray. It probably doesn't smell nice, it makes your skin stinky and it's really disgusting to apply and put on and it's gross to the touch. But guess what, you'll be thanking me. Probably you're outside, it's nice out, it's either summer... I don't know where you live but here there's a lot of mosquitoes in the summer. So, put on some of this, you won't regret it. Otherwise you're going to be, like, itching for days and it's going to be uncomfortable. You're gonna have, like, mosquito bites on your ass.

OK, the trick here much like a bathhouse is to be patient and have very low expectations. If you can master these two attributes then you will succeed in cruising in the woods. First off you need patience cause you don't have an appointment here, OK? This isn't a dentist appointment scheduled months in advance for Tuesday at 2.15. It's really really really hit or miss. You never know what you're gonna get - but that is the fun! Will today be the day you run into a sexy stranger running his dog and have an encounter so hot it will fuel all of your trips here for the next six months, hoping to see him again? Or, will you walk away with nothing? Also it will depend on the time of day and the day of the week. Of course weekends typically are gonna be busier. But busier does not equal better because busier also means busy with regular folk. Nothing ruins the mood more than a group of middle aged ladies on a power walk heading straight for you!

OK, hot tip, wear camo or something sort of that blends into the forest - like browns and dark greens, just nature colours, something that will help you blend into the background. Then of course if you go after dark when there is pretty much zero chance of running into regular folk, you do run the risk of running into, like, wild animals and more shady characters that prefer to operate under the cover of darkness. So beware and be careful.

[Whoosh sound to transition]

This is still a really well worn trail - I mean it has potential, because there's a lot of offshoots to this trail. You see it going down here, it goes left, it goes right, it goes this way. We can keep walking. As you're walking, if you start to feel kind of scared or that somebody could jump out of the bushes and murder you, you're probably on the right track because you just need to keep going deeper and deeper into this place. So, as an internal barometer, the more scared you get, the closer you're getting to the spot. Another good indication of if you're getting close to something is litter. So you'll see things like condoms and lube packets. Oh, and there's a little... you can see here. Looks like there's been a lot of action going on here. Oh, but look, like I said, see the little orange caps? That's very dangerous. Those are syringes and that's not something we want to be dealing with. Ah, there's a tourniquet over there. OK, this is pretty messy over here. Oh my god, what's that, blood? Oh dear God.

OK, so we're obviously in the right general area. We've seen tons of evidence like condoms and lube and syringes, blergh! There's obviously been action here - and safe sex, which is nice, too. Now we need to find the men. But what do we look for? So, obviously if you're walking around the woods and you're looking kind of directionless or shiftless or something, that's a pretty good indication that somebody is doing laps and seeing what's out there. Of course, eye contact is really important. That's the number one thing that you're gonna get from somebody where it's really gonna jump out at you. So, if somebody is making direct eye contact with you in the middle of the woods? That's a really good sign that they're up for it. Because honestly, who else would make eye contact with you in the woods? That's really creepy. And then of course there's loitering. If somebody's just like sitting on a log, just, like, pretending to scroll through their phone. Who just stops in the middle of the woods, by themselves, to go on their phone? Nobody. And then the most obvious of all of them is lewd behaviour. So if you're passing somebody and they're kind of pretending to, like, itch their crotch or they grab their family jewels or, you know, they kind of motion with their head for you to follow them. Of course once you've laser beamed your eyes to them and they're kind of following you, while you're walking, you're looking back, you're checking, you're making sure that, "Oh yeah, they're following me," and you're walking, "Yeah, oh, still there? OK come on, keep coming, come on, let's go." And then you're gonna go to your little spot.

If he's following you, then obviously he's interested. If he's not, then he's not going to be following you. It's a fishing expedition and some of the fish are gonna get away and that's OK. Do not lose faith.

[Ding] Let's do a little pop quiz! Let's say you're walking by the trails and you come across some action in play. You creep closer, they notice you and recognise that you're not "regular folk", so they continue on in their business. But let's say you like what you see. You should: (a) run up naked and join in, (b) inch closer, keeping your eyes locked on them waiting for a signal from them that you should join in, or (c) Google how to make a pineapple upside down cake because you just remembered to bring dessert to pot luck tonight. If you said (c) then that's super specific and I have a feeling that you are pulling my leg here. The correct answer obviously is (b). You inch closer, maybe grabbing yourself, show them that you're into it, lick your lips, raise an eyebrow, whatever - all those cutesy things that you can do. Although of course, you're outside and it's a public place, it's still nice to respect everybody. So watch for their body language to see if *you're* invited to *their* party. It's all about body language. If they turn towards you, motion with their head, or generally seem unfazed by anybody joining, then that's a good sign. But if they pull away, they zip up, they walk away, or whatever, just tell yourself, "Their loss" and move on. Point is, it's not easy to join something that's already in motion since, like you, they probably invested time and strategy in finding the right person and the right place. So don't take it personally.

Now when you're going on your little expedition there's a lot of things that you can bring in, like, a tiny knapsack or something just so that you're well prepared. One of those things that you might not think about are wipes because these come in really handy. You never know what's gonna happen. Again, you're not in the privacy or the comfort of your own place with a bathroom. These are really handy.

OK, let's go back to our situations. Now let's say the shoe is on the other foot, so you're playing around with somebody and someone new emerges from the bushes, looking to join. But you're not really into it at all. So should you: (a) slap them across the face with a used condom, (b) say something like, "Hey guy, we're not interested, piss off!" or (c) monitor the situation carefully by continuing to play but remaining closed off to the newcomer. If you said (c) then you are right. Look guys, we are outside, it's a public place, so we can't really get upset when somebody stumbles across us and either wants to join in on the action or whatever. We're gonna have to just get comfortable with people watching, or get comfortable with zipping up and changing location.

[Whoosh sound to transition]

Well, this has been a crash course on cruising the woods. I hope it helps you out the next time you find yourself exploring your local natural landscape. And if you've made it this far, thank you so much for watching, don't forget to subscribe, hit that bell for notifications, and I will see you in the next video. Mwah!

## Link - Jonathan - 0:55:12

[Soft bird tweets and a general outdoorsy, nature sounding atmosphere]

Well, we hope you had fun with Patrick's piece and maybe learnt a few things! Again, you can find Patrick on YouTube - just search Patrick Marano, that's M-A-R-A-N-O.

And now it's time for a bit of music from The Mollusc Dimension. The Mollusc Dimension is a queer, trans, neurodivergent British-born Chinese composer who creates works around mental health, community and nature. We have two pieces from The Mollusc Dimension in this issue - this one is called "Take Me Back to the Ocean", and at the end we'll play "Place Like Now".

This is a sweet and slightly melancholy song that speaks to me about a longing for elsewhere, the feeling of being caught in everyday life, and a pull towards a different kind of home. It features backing vocals from WildSings, a disabled, non-binary artist. You can find The Mollusc Dimension on his website, which is [themolluscdimension.com](http://themolluscdimension.com) - ah, not just his music, but comics, zines and performance art, as well. There's a cute home-made music video for this song in the show notes, made during lockdown with only a garden, crafting skills, holiday clips and an iPhone. So, check that out, too!

After the song, we'll hear a second poem from M.A. Dubbs, "The Seagull's Swan Song". This poem builds on the idea of changes in climate and landscape we heard in her first poem, and we're playing it in conversation with "Take Me Back to the Ocean" to highlight the idea of being "out of place" and what that might mean. It's almost as if M.A. Dubbs is speaking to The Mollusc Dimension when she says to the seagull, "[y]ou are something rare, representing a coastal breeze bringing in salty surf. You must be a long way from home..."

# Take Me Back to the Ocean - The Mollusc Dimension -

## 0:56:56

[Gentle midi-sounding keyboard, tinkling high notes introduce the the song, gradually deepening]

**The Mollusc Dimension [singing]:** I was looking by the water for something I had lost  
In shimmering waves of blue and green  
In the distance, friends' voices were calling out my name  
I could hear them but I just slipped into a dream

[Percussion kicks in, along with a fat bass]

(Let's go!)

Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean)  
Take me back to the sea (**Wild Sings:** to the sea)  
Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean)  
Take me back  
**Together:** to the sea  
We'll be free...  
**The Mollusc Dimension:** by the sea

[Water cascades, music returns to a gentle keyboard and cruisy electric guitar lead]

**The Mollusc Dimension:** Down among the fish and octopuses I did make a home  
In continents of seaweed for several decades I did roam  
Then something bright and shiny floated right before my eyes  
Suddenly, I was back in the city staring up at gloomy skies

[The full band sound kicks in again]

(Let's go!)

Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean) [wave sound]  
Take me back to the sea (**Wild Sings:** to the sea)  
Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean)  
Take me back  
**Together:** to the sea  
We'll be free...  
**The Mollusc Dimension:** by the sea

[Water running, music retreats to the cruisy, sparse keyboard/guitar sound]

**The Mollusc Dimension:** Well, I was looking by the water for something I had lost  
Shimmering waves of blue and green  
In the distance, friends' voices were calling out my name  
I could hear them  
But I just  
Slipped into a dream

[Percussion, etc]

(Let's go!)

Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean) [water sound]

Take me back to the sea (**Wild Sings:** to the sea)

Take me back to the ocean (**Wild Sings:** to the ocean)

Take me back

**Together:** to the sea

We'll be free...

**The Mollusc Dimension:** by the sea

[Keyboard, electric guitar and water, ending with a sweet, high keyboard tune]

## The Seagull's Swansong - M. A. Dubbs - 1:01:32

**M.A. Dubbs:** The Seagull's Swansong

To the seagull on my gutter,  
may I pick your brain as you wait?  
I assume you must be in some sort of holding pattern  
because I don't see many of your kind in these parts.

To me, you are something rare,  
representing a coastal breeze bringing in salty surf.  
You must be a long way from home  
because you don't belong in landlocked Indiana.  
Surely you must be on some migration pattern,  
crossroads to a final destination?

Where can your port be if not back home,  
a home that is balmy and tropical?  
Thirty years ago you never would have stopped at this retention pond  
though thirty years ago I never did recall  
a February so balmy and tropical myself.  
Not a sign of downy flake  
nor an ice slick on the big sledding hill.  
It just melts, dissolves into a stain of mud.

You caw on my gutter while I warm my legs on my deck,  
sunning in a chair as I watch my garden  
form buds from a false spring,  
a false spring that grows longer every year  
and increasingly never ends.

Is the song you sing, a swan song for my home?  
Tell me, should I migrate to some destination  
to find the last place it is cool

or should I nest within the sins of humanity?  
So many hands on the albatross neck  
by the time I found my own  
there could only be tragedy.

You seem so high on my gutter,  
so please toss some breadcrumbs from your perch,  
retribution from all that's been done.

## Sweeper - Dan - 1:03:11

[Footsteps crunching on gravel, some wind distortion, background squawking of corellas - a type of parrot, similar to a cockatoo. A dog barks.]

**Dan:** Hi. [Dog barks again.] I'm Dan. I am walking home after work across Mafeking Hill Reserve on Gunaikurnai country. And you are listening to Queer Out Here... [A huge group of corellas goes off, screeching en masse] ... and lots of noisy corellas!

[Dan stops walking, and we hear the corellas screeching and calling to each other, some closer and some further away as they wheel overhead.]

## Link - Allysse - 1:03:57

[Faint rural sounds]

**Allysse:** Next up, another poem. This time from Kate Hall, creative Director of Q-Lit, a festival that celebrates the work of LGBTQIA+ writers and artists across regional Victoria, Australia. The dates of the festival will have come and gone by the time you hear this issue, but do check out their website to keep up to date with them and buy the book "Out-Side: Queer Words and Art from Regional Victoria" - you can find the link in the show notes. We suspect that if you enjoy Queer Out Here, you'll enjoy the work of Q-Lit. After all, they too celebrate queer stories with language and storytelling from the community.

In her poem, "A Field Guide to Edible Birds" [hens call loudly] - and those ones have a few words to say about it! [laughs] - anyway, I was saying... In her poem, "A Field Guide to Edible Birds", Kate explores her relationship with the intensive animal farming of her local area. She writes, "As a queer person living in a small coastal town I often feel out of place," adding that, "As a queer vegan I am a disturbance, as out of place in this world as a chicken farm on the way to the ocean." Through her words, she asks: what would happen if humans started to catch and eat wild birds?

This poem was recorded on the sovereign, unceded lands of the Wadawurrung peoples.

## A Field Guide to Edible Birds - Kate Hall - 1:05:26

[In the background of this piece, birds chatter peacefully, warbling, twittering, chiming and calling]

**Kate:** A Field Guide to Edible Birds



Edible Birds and Where to Find Them

Edible Birds of Southwest Victoria

Safe Netting and Capture of Edible Birds

The Gourmet Guide to Edible Birds

Beyond Chicken: Varying the Menu with Edible Birds

Wild-Caught and Free-Range: How Edible Birds Reinvented the Poultry Industry

Edible Birds: Five Easy Recipes

FDA Guidelines for Safe Disposal of Edible Bird Carcasses and Waste Products

Avian Flu Cases Rise in Edible Bird Farms

Edible Bird and his Friends go to the Seaside

'That's Not the Baby Jesus!' Edible Bird Surprise for Christmas Churchgoers

Adorable Edible Bird Crochet Egg-Cups

Child Dies after Choking on Edible Bird Wishbone

Violence Erupts at Edible Bird Farm, Activists Face Fines, Prison

## Sweeper - Esther - 1:06:51

[Frogs chirping and croaking, a bird tweeting]

**Esther:** I was walking on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung land and heard these beautiful little frogs, which were so special. [Frogs croaking] My name's Esther, and you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Frogs fade out]

## Link - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:07:18

**Jonathan:** Thanks Esther, for that sweeper.

We're now heading into the final section of the issue, with a few excellent pieces orbiting around the theme of queer ecology. We'll be hearing from Sixto-Juan Zavala about the Queer Botany project at Walthamstow Marshes, M.A. Dubbs' final poem "Honeysuckle Cognizance", and an

interview with Xochitl from Ella von der Haide's film "Queer Gardening". We close with another piece of music from The Mollusc Dimension called "Place Like Now".

But we wanted to reflect a bit on the theme before we went ahead, so Allysse, can you talk a bit about why we're playing these pieces together at the end of the issue?

**Allysse:** Sure. We chose to present these pieces together as they all relate to our theme of climate and open conversations about how we can approach our world in different ways.

Climate discussions can often be defeatist: this is what's happening and there's nothing we can do about it. It's an easy route to take and one that leaves many folks feeling disempowered. These pieces take a different approach. Each of the submissions is the start of a conversation, an offering of hope and a way to alter our conceptions of the more-than-human world - and by extension the human world, too - in a time of climate collapse.

All those topics are not new to Queer Out Here. If you're a long-time listener, you know we've had fantastic pieces about those themes, but these upcoming ones tie in ideas of queer ecology and ask how this approach can influence and change our relationship to food growing, to plants and the more-than-human world.

**Jonathan:** Queer ecology is partly about understanding the world around us without falling back on heteronormative, cisnormative binaries - for example, you'll hear people in these pieces call flowers "fruit producing" or "pollen producing" (rather than "female" and "male"). But it also embraces a more ambiguous and expansive understanding of "nature" itself, a queer understanding that questions ideas of naturalness and purity. We've heard over the years how contributors have wrestled with the questions of "What is nature?" and "Where is nature?" You know, yes, it's a forest, but is it also a garden or a park, or a carpark? Yes, it's a bird migrating around the world, but is it also a bird eating from the bins? Is it a wild animal, a feral animal, a domesticated animal? Is it a human animal?

The following pieces understand humans as part of nature. And I don't mean that they're looking for some kind of return to a more pure way of living - an ideal that often unfortunately appears alongside quite biologically essentialist, racist and eugenicist philosophies. I mean that they understand nature, including humans, as always being in conversation. We are all interacting with, affecting and being affected by, other entities - whether that's other humans, other animals, plants, fungi, landscapes, soil, oceans, weather patterns, climate, global movements, political agendas, capitalist forces. These pieces here all address that connectedness in some way.

**Allysse:** The first piece in that conversation is from Sixto-Juan Zavala, a designer and illustrator from Texas currently based in Dundee in the UK. He founded a project called Queer Botany in 2020 and his piece is based around that project in Walthamstow Marshes in London. Inspired by the theoretical lens of queer ecology, the project studies connections between queerness and plants through events, storytelling, and design - you'll hear snippets of interviews from people on the guided tours at the marshes, including Rudy Loewe. Queer Botany aims to share marginalised perspectives and support more diverse representations in the environment and outdoors. Check out the website, [queerbotany.com](http://queerbotany.com), to follow and learn more about the project. Sixto-Juan has also linked a lot of resources if you want to delve into the topic on your own - they're linked in the show notes.

**Jonathan:** Continuing that theme of plant/human interaction, we then hear a final poem from M.A. Dubbs. “Honeysuckle Cognizance” uses a form called Pantoum - a Malaysian form, originally. In this poem’s structure, the second and fourth lines of one stanza become the first and third of the next, and the final stanza repeats the first and third lines of the original verse, creating a full loop. The form of the poem here echoes the content, the weaving and blending of honeysuckle vines, of human and plant, of plants that might be considered desirable and those called weeds.

**Allysse:** We then hear from Xochitl. Xochitl works for PODER SF (People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights) - and ze’s the Farm Manager at Hummingbird Farm, a six acre collective farm in San Francisco. Xochitl has spent many years raising awareness about the importance of flowers and their seeds as resiliency tools in the climate crisis. You can read more about him and about Hummingbird Farm in the show notes as always.

The interview is taken from the film “Queer Gardening: A documentary about queer-feminist ecologies in North America”, directed by German artist, filmmaker and gardener Ella von der Haide. The full film is well worth a view if you’re interested: we’ve put both the trailer and the purchase and streaming links in the show notes as well.

In this excerpt you’ll hear about how Hummingbird Farm creates community and seeks to grow a different relationship with nature, one that breaks from the vocabulary of colonialism and recognises the importance of seed and so called weeds.

**Jonathan:** I love that Xochitl’s voice is the last we hear in this issue, and that the excerpt ends with zem positioning queerness, lived experience of marginalisation and weediness as being instrumental tools of survival during climate collapse. It makes me think about Anna Tsing’s concept of “Third Nature” - or nature that “manages to live despite capitalism”, and it brings queer ecology into what I think is its most interesting place, where it’s fundamentally linked with the political work of imagining and building better worlds, now and into the future.

**Allysse:** And finally, the last piece in this issue, “A Place Like Now” by The Mollusc Dimension. A dream-like instrumental track. I love how this piece starts chill and slow before uplifting notes chime in like “flurries of wind whirling autumn leaves in the air” as the artist describes it. The music takes us on a journey of seasonal change, a whirlwind of emotions, and frees us to fly away in the clouds.

## Queer Botany at Walthamstow Marshes - Sixto-Juan Zavala - 1:13:57

[Sounds of a breeze and a passing train, small birds]

**Sixto-Juan:** Hello. My name is Sixto-Juan Zavala. My pronouns are he and them. I’m a designer from Texas currently based in Dundee, UK. My background is in exhibition design, graphic design, and illustration. I’m interested in culture, marginalised groups, the environment, and using visual communication and spatial design to facilitate cultural change.

[Some wind distortion as wind blows in the background recordings]

I founded Queer Botany in 2020. It's a project Inspired by the theoretical lens of queer ecology. The project studies connections between queerness and plants through events, storytelling, and design. Queer Botany aims to share marginalised perspectives and support more diverse representations in the environment and outdoors.

[Wind hisses in leaves and long reeds, water fowl honk and call]

Along with collaborators, we have designed maps, installed interpretive displays, hosted botanical drawing sessions, and guided walks sharing stories about plants from a queer perspective.

**Interview participant 1:** Ecology is used a lot as a justification for transphobia and homophobia and stuff, and so I was excited that somebody was putting on something that actually interrogates that. And, yeah, like I always find it so interesting that people use nature as this, like, justification for homophobia and transphobia and stuff, coz I'm like... literally, it's the queerest thing!

**Interview participant 2:** But I think that maybe there's a sort of stereotype as well that, like, Black people don't wanna be in nature. And it's like, that's not the cast. It's other, it's White supremacy and other humans who have made us feel like we can't be in those spaces.

**Sixto-Juan:** In May 2021 at the Walthamstow Marshes in Northeast London we hosted guided tours with a map and series of outdoor interpretive displays. The focus was on such site-specific wild plants as the dog rose, horse chestnut, and others. The Walthamstow Marshes are a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is a part of the Lea Valley: a chain of green spaces, marshes, and wetlands that cut through north London fed by the Lea River. Participants could learn about the plants on the project website, find the displays on their own, or be part of a guided tour.

[Birds chatter]

There were accompanying audio recordings about the plants for participants who were not part of the guided tour. I'm going to share with you the stories about the dog rose and horse chestnut tree.

[Birds tweet, and in the background people chat, their voices indistinct]

The Horse Chestnut tree has both male and female reproductive organs in their flowers. Since they have both stamens (which are pollen producing) and carpels (which are seed producing) they are called "perfect" or "bisexual" flowers. These androgynous plants show us that being queer is natural. Plants have a broad diversity of reproductive methods and sexual expressions. Pollination involves both living and non-living factors such as interactions with animals and the wind. The Horse Chestnut has a sophisticated relationship with bees. The flowers start off white with a flush of yellow to attract the bees; after a flower has been visited by a pollinator, it changes colour from yellow to pink to crimson to signal to future pollinators that they will not find any nectar there and should concentrate their energy on other flowers. Colour communication is an example of mutualism between the pollinator and the tree.

While Horse Chestnuts are a common sight throughout European parks and cities, they are actually native to a small area in the Balkans and Greece. They grow up to forty metres, live up to 300 years, and are easily recognizable by their distinct bell-shaped silhouette and large palmate leaves, which unfurl each spring.

Horse Chestnuts are especially well-loved in the UK; if you grew up in the UK, you may know the hard, glossy seeds they produce from the playground game conkers.

[The background sounds have shifted a little, with more birds and less human sound]

Dog Rose, *Rosa canina*. When thinking about the Dog Rose and its cultural symbolism, it is often considered an icon of femininity in the West. This might have something to do with the pink colour, soft heart shaped petals, and sweet scent. However, in the Middle East the rose is considered a masculine scent that is used in men's fragrances such as Dhan al Ward. The rose's famous scent has played a large part in the history of perfumery going back thousands of years, and it is heavily cultivated in countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran.

[Wind blows]

This sense of duality can also be found in the conflicting associations of pleasure and pain connected to the rose's flower and thorns. People often regard nature in dualistic terms like "male or female", "human or not human", and "natural or unnatural" - when, in fact, nature exists in a continuous state. This plant helps us see how arbitrary signifiers of masculinity and femininity can be.

The Dog Rose is native to Europe, northwest Africa, and western Asia. It is a climbing rose with curved prickles that can grow up to three metres in height. Their flowers tend to bloom in the summer, with five petals and many stamens. They are commonly seen in hedgerows, thickets, and woodland edges. Dog roses support a wide variety of wildlife: the flowers attract bees, butterflies, and moths, and their dense growth provides habitat for birds and small mammals. Moreover, their fruit, known as rosehips, are a great source of food for small birds, like thrushes and robins, and loved by humans for their high levels of Vitamin C.

[A distant train passes, and the sounds of the marshes begin to fade out as M.A. Dubbs begins]

## Honeysuckle Cognizance - M. A. Dubbs - 1:20:00

**M.A. Dubbs:** Honeysuckle's Cognizance.

We are but honeysuckle,  
pushing out and through every piece of native,  
leaving nothing but a thick wall of twisted twigs,  
holding buds like hands.

Pushing out and through every piece of native,  
fast and short lived to get a shot at sun,  
holding buds like hands,  
catalyst for ephemerals.

Fast and short lived to get a shot at sun,  
leaving nothing but a thick wall of twisted twigs,  
catalyst for ephemerals,  
we are but honeysuckle

# Queer Gardening at Hummingbird Farm - Xochitl and Ella von der Haide - 1:20:40

[Transcript incomplete]

[A dog barks in the distance, the sound of a hoe or other tool scraping the soil]

**Xochtil:** My name is Edgar Xochtil and we are at Humminbird Farm. It's a collective farm in the Excelsior in San Francisco. The name of our collective is Urban Campesinx. Urban Campesinx is for everyone so the X is, is to be inclusive, so it's regardless of where we fall in the spectrum. But we are acknowledging that queer, trans, two-spirit people are also Campesinx.

This farm is on Ohlone territory. It is their stories, it is their ceremonies that, that have already blessed the land. It's their relationship that we are just, ah, tapping into.

In the collective, we're not just using the space for food, um, we're using the space for medicine, spirituality, organising... Some of the ways we're organising here on the farm is with queer ecology - coz ecology is also a social construct. It's been created by humans to try to explain the natural world but it's a perspective of this elite class that continues to maintain that power. Ecological science in an academic sense, um, has been created and structured by white hetero, cisgendered males. So there's a lot of bio-piracy from the Americas, Africa, and, and Asia. There was a need to classify everything and to put into a structure. So, Carl Linnaeus, who's credited with creating botany, did a lot of this work and so a lot of these plants, ah, specifically that came from other parts of the world are forever labelled by European names.

[Birds and the sounds of children, people calling]

Colonialism, as people of colour, has taught us to question our own environmental knowledge, our own ecological knowledge, to doubt our traditional food ways. It also influenced what we think of natural and unnatural in regards to homo and hetero sexuality. So as we educate our next generation of youth that work in this space, we're encouraging language like, ah, "pollen producer" and "fruit producing" to give both of them reproductive power without influencing this idea of gender into the flowers.

[Wind rustling leaves]

So, I've been working on this idea of flower bending. It incorporates this queer ecology and some Meshika ideologies, reconnecting with those plant friends, relatives. How we relate and which flowers we choose to nurture is how we will adapt to climate change.

Photosynthesis is such a beautiful, beautiful thing. How to use that magic of photosynthesis to capture as much of that, ah, carbon out of the atmosphere and turn it into biomass. What we call weeds, they're, they're actually doing more than most people at catching carbon, right? They're doing something about climate change. They're existing and they're resisting. That resilience of these weeds existing is similar to us as queer people of colour who get called the weeds of society.

[A fly buzzes]

So, some of the things that we're working on in this space is decolonising some of our flowers. And so that's another way that we incorporate environmental justice in our work. So these plants are

here, um, these are cempaxochitl. We use cempaxochitl to honour queer people who have died in detention centres. We're keeping the seeds and the story alive for this specific flower, um, because it is something that we're organising with but it's also just something that is super valuable. It's how we honour our dead. And especially in this world where there's so much injustice and we continuously get shot at, we continuously get murdered, um, our lives tend to be devalued because we're queer, because we're trans, because we're two-spirited, because we're people of colour.

Just last weekend, we had a queer, two-spirit ceremony here, where we acknowledged queers and transcestors who have been influential in, in our survival, but also just the queerness that exists in nature. It was a reaffirmation that the solutions for survival and climate chaos is queerness.

## Place Like Now - The Mollusc Dimension - 1:24:55

[This is an instrumental track that starts jazzy with light percussion and keyboards, a bit slow and introspective. Gradually the keyboard lifts into flurries, shifts to a more directional mood, before cycling back to a more sparse feeling. Towards the end, the music slows and drifts, then a flurry of notes takes the piece to its end. The Mollusc Dimension describes it this way: "Inspired by beat poetry and the emotions brought on by seasonal changes, this piece appears to be a chilled lo-fi number but actually has a few little uplifting surprises. After starting with slow, deep jazz piano chords, the beat changes in the chorus - like flurries of wind whirling autumn leaves into the air. After some arpeggios of snow drifting down, the tempo gradually picks up speed as if there was a kite stuck in a bush and then it gets freed and flies away into the clouds!"

## Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:29:12

[As the last notes of the music fade out, birdsong begins]

**Allysse:** Once again, in that last section we heard Sixto-Juan Zavala's "Queer Botany at Walthamstow Marshes", M.A. Dubbs' "Honeysuckle Cognizance", Xochitl's interview from Ella von der Haide's film "Queer Gardening" and "Place Like Now" from The Mollusc Dimension.

**Jonathan:** And that's it for this issue! We hope it's offered you space to reflect on climate and all that the word means, from your local environment to changes that affect everyone. We hope that it's not left you defeated but invigorated to find solutions and alternative ways to think about our planet and our relationship to everything and everyone on it.

**Allysse:** Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue: Liz Sutherland, rYAn, Oliver Cassidy, M.A. Dubbs, Fish, Sally Goldner, Patrick Marano, The Mollusc Dimension, Kate Hall, Sixto-Juan Zavala, Xochitl and Ella von der Haide. Thanks to folks who have made sweepers for us: Mags, Esther, Stephanie, Dan and Emma. And thank you to Stephanie Lai, for our cover art.

**Jonathan:** Thanks again to everyone who helped circulate our call for submissions - especially to Sally Goldner from 3CR's Out of the Pan and Kate Hall from Q-Lit, but also to everyone who shared our request with friends, followers and networks.

**Allysse:** And thanks to you, of course, for listening right the way through! If you've enjoyed the issue, or specific parts of it, please let us and our contributors know. You can email us at

queerouthere@gmail.com, contact us on social media (including Instagram, now!), and find our contributors using the links in the show notes - check [queerouthere.com/listen](https://queerouthere.com/listen)

**Jonathan:** It's wild to think this is our ninth issue - actually more if you count Issue 00 in 2017, the special edition on the ABC, and the double sided Issue 05. We're actually thinking of taking a break after Issue 10, so if you have a piece you've been meaning to get around to making or sending in, it might be your last chance for a while! Keep an eye out for our call for submissions, which will probably open towards the end of this year or the start of 2025.

Until then, goodbye from me, Jonathan.

**Allysse:** And from me, Allysse.

**Jonathan:** And remember to stay -

**Both:** Queer Out Here!

[Birdcalls slowly fade out]