

Transcript: Queer Out Here Issue 02

[Pre-transcript introduction](#)

[Queer Out Here](#)

[Issue 02 link](#)

[Content notes](#)

[Transcript](#)

[Opener - various contributors - 0:00:00](#)

[Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:45](#)

[Sweeper - Rainbow Ramblers - 0:02:49](#)

[Link - 0:02:54](#)

[Lady's Well, Holystone - Mags - 0:03:22](#)

[Link - 0:07:22](#)

[Ripples in a Pond at Night - Mary Ann Thomas - 0:08:06](#)

[Link - 0:16:23](#)

[Beloved \(Emily in Love and Ortanique\) - Stone Strike's Lost Weekend Remix - 0:17:30](#)

[Sweeper - Jessica - 0:20:48](#)

[Link - 0:21:14](#)

[Failure - Julia Freeman - 0:21:51](#)

[Link - 0:33:23](#)

[Snow, Tyres, Breath, Song - Nikki - 00:34:10](#)

[Link - 0:37:00](#)

[No Gender - Lise - 0:37:37](#)

[Link - 0:41:57](#)

[Solo Camping at Murray Lake - Fenrir Cerebellion - 0:42:20](#)

[Link - 0:44:56](#)

[Sweeper - Emily - 0:45:21](#)

[Link - 0:46:20](#)

[Nonbinary Nomads - Max and Jaye - 00:47:01](#)

[Link - 0:55:54](#)

[Widewater - Dru Marland - 0:56:35](#)

[Link - 0:58:52](#)

[On the Cuckoo Trail - Chrissy, June and Jonathan - 0:59:16](#)

[Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:08:05](#)

Pre-transcript introduction

Queer Out Here

[Queer Out Here](https://www.queerouther.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.queerouther.com>.

Issue 02 link

If you've somehow stumbled across this transcript and want to find the audio file, it's available here: <https://www.queerouther.com/listen/issue-02>

Content notes

The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains some swearing, mentions of physical and emotional distress, difficult family relationships and social situations, experiences of physical injury and hardship, danger from the elements and being misgendered. If you have specific anxieties or triggers, you could check the transcript for particular words or ask a trusted friend to listen and give you feedback. If we've missed something obvious, please send us an email so we can add it. Some people might wish to take note of the following:

1. Lady's Well, Holystone - wind distortion in audio
2. Failure - emotional distress, mentions difficult family relationships
3. Nonbinary Nomads - mentions minor physical injuries and physical danger from the elements, hunger and thirst, uses the word "crazy", discusses being misgendered
4. On the Cuckoo Trail - at one point a fly buzzes close in the right channel

Transcript

Opener - various contributors - 0:00:00

[Sound of waves crashing, ambient music that continues throughout, crow cawing]

Julia: I felt like I'd failed.

Max: We got lost...

Fenrir: It started raining last night.

Lise: For society you have to be boy or girl and not both.

[Twittering birds]

Mary Ann: I wish I could write about just the pleasure of sitting here -

[Splashing water fades up]

Mary Ann: - and looking at these ripples and looking at these clouds, different versions of water...

[Kookaburras laugh, crunchy footsteps]

Dru: We brushed the dew off meadowsweet and butterbur, grown shoulder high.

Mags: To a little spot called Lady's Well.

Jaye: Because, you know, we deserve to be there as much as anyone else.

Mags: A holy well.

Dru: Making a home here for a few more days.

[Crow caws, music and twittering birds slowly fade out]

Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:45

[Sound of birdsong beneath the voices]

Jonathan: 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 02. The pieces in this issue take us from ponds, lakes and wells to parks, forests and mountains; from immediate surroundings to remembered and

imagined spaces. There are some longer conversations and reflections, some quick audio postcards and a little bit of poetry, too.

Jonathan: If you haven't already listened to Issue 01, you can find it on our website - or probably wherever you found this one! Issue 02 is slightly shorter (though it's still over an hour long) and it has a more reflective feel, with a focus on being in the moment and inviting the listener into a personal relationship with place and space.

Allysse: Before we begin, we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who contributed a piece and to people who recorded a sweeper for us. Thanks also to everyone who shared Issue 01 and helped circulate our call for submissions for this one. And of course a big thank you to Eris Barnes for their beautiful cover art.

Jonathan: Full show notes for all issues of Queer Out Here are available at queerouthere.com/listen. This includes cover art, track listings with short descriptions and timings, information about contributors including links to websites, social media and other work, artist statements, content notes and full transcripts.

Allysse: The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains some swearing, mention of physical and emotional distress, difficult family relationships and social situations, experiences of physical injury and hardship, danger from the elements and being misgendered. Please check our website for full content notes and specific timings or search the issue transcript if you need to avoid particular words or phrases. If you still have concerns, you could ask a trusted friend to listen through first to check for your specific triggers - or send us an email at queerouthere@gmail.com.

Jonathan: And now it's time to take your ears adventuring.

Both: Let's get Queer Out Here!

Sweeper - Rainbow Ramblers - 0:02:49

Several voices: We're the Rainbow Ramblers, and you're listening to Queer Out Here!

Link - 0:02:54

Jonathan: Our first piece in this issue is from our first repeat contributor, Mags. "Lady's Well, Holystone" takes us to the north of England, to a holy well surrounded by a grove of trees. This is something of an audio postcard - we get an idea of what Mags has been up to, a glimpse into the different stories and meanings of the well, and a small sample of the aural environment. It's something we'd love to hear more of - postcards from places that are special or interesting or important to you.

Lady's Well, Holystone - Mags - 0:03:22

[Faint sound of breeze in leaves]

Mags: So here I am today, a lovely sunny day in May, in the middle of Northumberland. And although I've been in the south east of England for about 20 years, several times of year I make the return journey to the north east of England to see my family. So today I've come out to a place called Holystone, and to a little spot called Lady's Well.

Ah, and from the sign put up by the National Trust it is a holy well, it was once a watering place beside the Roman Road from Bremenium in Redesdale to the coast. It was walled around and given its present shape either in the Roman or Medieval times. Saint Ninian, the 5th century apostle of the border is associated with this site and with other wells beside Roman Roads in Northumberland. The name Lady's Well came into use after the first half of the 12th century, when Holystone became the home of a priory of Augustinian Canonesses dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. The wall was repaired and adorned with a cross and the statue was brought from Alnwick in the 18th and 19th centuries.

So what we really have is, um, a well in the middle of, um, farmland in the Northumberland National Park. Absolutely stunning views all the way around.

[Some wind distortion, which continues throughout]

Mags: My only company at the moment are some curious and sheep and lambs, checking out what I am doing. Um. Fantastic views right the way across the National Park. There's a very large Celtic-style cross in the middle of the well, and up the other end is the said statue, um, of the saint. Absolutely beautiful spot.

I do love Northumberland. I believe It's still the least populated county in the country. Even today driving through the countryside - it's probably only about an hour from the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. You know once you get out of that, ah, area surrounding the city, It's, ah, you know, you don't see much in the way of vehicles - quite a few cyclists. Some nice cycle paths and roadways around.

[Sound of running water]

Mags: So I'm just walking around the path around - you will possibly hear the water from the well, which still, um, provides the village with its water.

So I'm going to spend a, a little more time here. Lovely, it's May, still some bluebells out. Yeah, absolutely beautiful, secluded spot. Um, so perhaps just a little time for some contemplation before I head up on the road.

Um, prior to coming here I popped into the parish church, ah, in the little village of Elsdon, down the road, lovely little place. [Wind distortion makes some words hard to discern] So let's see if I can find anything else interesting today on my travels.

Mags, signing out for Queer Out Here!

Link - 0:07:22

Allysse: I love listening to this story with eyes closed. It's like sharing a walk with Mags and seeing times change around the well. The pool remains, interpreted differently as society changes.

The next piece, "Ripples in a Pond at Night", keeps us near water, by a backyard pond in America on [Mohawk](#) land. Mary Ann Thomas, a travel nurse, bike tourist, and a writer sits by the pond. For her, this is an occasion to let stress dissolve from her body. It's a time to reflect on nature, herself, and the idea of pleasure. There is a sense of luxury being in a wide open space. But there is also the idea that nature is not an escape from the world but an opportunity for us to process emotions and thoughts.

Ripples in a Pond at Night - Mary Ann Thomas - 0:08:06

Mary Ann: I'm sitting next to the pond out back behind the house where I live in upstate New York. And there's a lot that I could unpack in that statement, about why I'm here, or who else lives here, or why there's a pond back here. But I'm just going to let you all listen for a minute.

[Atmospheric noise]

It's post-sunset and the sky still has that nice lightness as dark thunder clouds roll in. It looks like they've been approaching for a while and I can hear thunder from afar, but it hasn't started raining yet, so I'm still sitting here. If I look up for a long time at these patterns in the sky, I forget to, to look down at the, the pond with its ripples extending from the bubbler in the centre. Ripples of a pond at night look so milky, so thick, so untouchable. And even though there's little light, I can see tree reflections on the water.

I've spent a lot of time sitting out here since I moved to this house about two months ago. I spend a lot of time in my head, I spend a lot of time doing heavy shit, like writing. Lately it's been writing about institutional change and sex and queerness and relationships.

You know, it's weird, I went on a, a bike tour across India, so you'd think that I'd be writing about that lately, but I got back and it just feels like the world is in this horrible tornado of emotions and violence and trauma and people being terrible to each other. And, for a lot of people, just realising that being terrible to each other is unacceptable, and so calling each other out on shit. And it's a beautiful process, but damn, I wish I could just write about this pond, this weird house I've been living in that makes no sense to me, still, but is so peaceful. I wish I could write about just the pleasure of sitting here and looking at these ripples and looking at these clouds, different versions of water. And how some days I just spend hours staring at the stars. It's such a little luxury.

[Atmospheric noise]

So, between writing about heavy shit I come out here. I stare. Sometimes I listen to music - and then I realise that silence can be nicer. Sometimes I call friends. It's been a really nice place to talk real loud, to laugh, to process shit with people on the phone.

You know I can't imagine living in a city any more, living on top of somebody else - literally on top of somebody else when you're on not the ground floor. Here there's so much space. You can just sit and think. And everywhere you look is just space, there's nobody.

Earlier I came outside, listening to [that new Ciara song, Level Up](#), and just danced my ass off. And then I sat on the little deck, ah, that juts out into the pond, with the two dogs that live here too. And I just stretched - I did, you know, the same stretching routine that I've been doing since high school - and the dogs just fought for my attention, and then they laid down and hung out with me. And I just felt the sun soak into my skin.

There's a lot about pleasure and the outdoors that I think about lately. About how bike touring really taught me that life is a series of moments and it's OK to acknowledge that - and that if we're miserable during these moments, we're spending our lives miserable. Um. Not everything has to be connected to something big or political or meaningful. These moments are all we have. When I'm biking and I get to eat a good dinner at the end of the day. Or, I get a shower and I watch the rivulets of black water run down my legs and down into the drain and . . . Or when I bite into a piece of chocolate. Or when I sleep, and I sleep so well. Or when I watch a fire - sit next to a fire I built and just feel the heat from it and notice the difference between the heat on my hands and the cold on my back, and know I created that thing, that heat. Well, it's just so pleasurable, it just feels so good.

And I don't think, I don't think there's anything wrong with chasing that. I don't think there's anything wrong with sitting out on a deck by a pond and feeling the sun soak into my skin, or staring out onto thunderclouds and pond ripples for hours, or watching stars appear. And remembering wonder.

It feels good.

And the air feels good. For the first time in years I haven't had to take an allergy pill every day. And I'm living with a cat which I'm allergic to. The air is just so good.

I'm leaving.

I'm going to be living out of my car for about four months. Which I'm excited for - movement feels good to me. I've been looking forward to getting back out west and getting back towards mountains. But as the date of leaving approaches, I'm just feeling the ways that this simplicity, this lack of mountains, this lack of excitement - there's nothing to achieve, there's nothing to climb, there's nowhere to go if I don't want to. Everything I want is in my backyard. You know, it just . . . I'm appreciating it.

I'm looking forward to movement, but I'm also appreciating what stillness is.

This unexpected home.

Link - 0:16:23

Jonathan: Carrying on from the sense of space and the pleasure of place in Mary Ann's contribution, the open architecture of this next piece invites a slowing down, a recalibration of breath and attention. Our first musical contribution, this is Stone Strike's Lost Weekend Remix of "Beloved", a song from Emily in Love and Ortanique. Stone Strike writes, "Getting older and being less able to 'get out and about', I've turned increasingly to music for its ability to invoke a sense of time and space."

When I listen to this piece, I sometimes imagine a long, vaulted room, open at the sides to hot sun and orange trees, a tiled pool inviting and cool at my feet. And at other times, it's the kiss of night air on my skin as I look down into a valley to a river and a highway snaking far below.

So, what does it make you think of?

Allysse: For me, when I listen to this piece, I get a sense of floating in a pool staring at the sun in a blue sky. I find in it a sense of calm and flow that can happen when I'm cycling and everything is just right - the pace, my body, the landscape, my mind, the bike...

Beloved (Emily in Love and Ortanique) - Stone Strike's Lost Weekend Remix - 0:17:30

[A gentle swelling of bright, synthetic drone notes. A breathy, electronic stuttering of consonants and half-words. The sounds slowly ebb and flow.]

Sweeper - Jessica - 0:20:48

[Sounds of waves and seabirds.]

Jessica: Hi, I'm Jessica, here on vacation from Canada at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, listening to the water at a shingle beach. And this is Queer Out Here.

Link - 0:21:14

Jonathan: Thanks Jessica. Our next piece - about failure - comes from Julia, who currently lives in Amsterdam. When Julia pitched this idea to me, I jumped at it. Failure is something we often don't discuss and don't know how to handle. What happens when we fail? Especially at something we've dreamt of for ages, something we've told people about, something we've spent energy and money and time planning and preparing for? It's something I know I've had to contend with - and even when I've been able to re-frame experiences as learning opportunities, or when I found silver linings, it's still difficult. I really appreciate Julia's openness about her struggles in this piece.

Failure - Julia Freeman - 0:21:51

Julia: So, on the second of May 2018, I sat under a tree and cried. Not gentle tears streaming down my face, but the sort of sobs that wrack your entire body and make you shake. I was crying because I'd just sent an email to race control to say that I quit.

So, I should backtrack.

I'm Julia, and I was riding the [Race Around the Netherlands](#), a 1670 kilometre [1038 mi] race, non-stop, self-supported, around the Netherlands (funnily enough). Twenty-nine people signed up. Twenty-eight people made the start. Six of those 28 were riding as three pairs. The other 22 were riding as solo riders. Twenty-one men and me.

I scratched from the race - that's the term they use in this sort of thing, scratching - I scratched at 20 percent distance, which is about 340-something kilometres [211 mi], and I'd been racing about 34 hours . . . But I was just in so much pain. When I woke up the next day, I couldn't rotate my neck. I had a number of intensive physio appointments before I regained the use of my neck. But the hardest thing was, for days, for weeks, I felt like I'd failed.

And on the face of it, I had. I'd set out to ride 1670 kilometres as fast as I could, without any support that wasn't available to everyone in the race, and after 360, I'd quit. And coming to terms with that failure has been a whole different challenge.

I told myself going into the race that I had three goals. Goal one was to make the start line. That, I achieved. Goal two was not to be the first person to scratch. Which, fortunately for me, unfortunately for the others, I achieved. And goal three was to make the finish line. And at this, I failed.

I'd told my friends that I was going to do this race, and the amount of support I got - in person and on social media - was just amazing. But it took . . . so long to come to terms with it all. On the day that I scratched, I rode in tears, arguing with myself, for tens of kilometres. I was the only girl racing. It felt like there was a pressure on my shoulders as the sole representative of 50 percent of the population. I argued with myself: am I letting people down? And am I letting myself down? Was I naive in even starting? Was it a mistake to sign up?

It's now three months later and I'm sat on top of the [Muur de \[van\] Geraardsbergen](#) in Belgium, in Flanders. Anyone who follows pro bike racing will know of it as the infamous climb in the Ronde van Vlaanderen [Tour of Flanders]. But those that follow ultra endurance racing will know it as the start of the Transcontinental Bike Race.

I've just sat here and waved off over 250 of the best riders on the planet, that have started their journey from Geraardsbergen to a town in Greece that I won't try to pronounce. Four thousand kilometres, self supported, solo. Those riders are going to go through all sorts in the next two, three weeks. The fastest are expected to get to the finish line in eight or nine days, the slowest will make it in 30. Anywhere between one third and 50 percent won't get there at all. Some of them will scratch through no fault of their own: accidents, equipment failures. Some will scratch, like I did

from the Race Around the Netherlands, because they didn't plan properly, coz they weren't fit enough, coz they were naive, all sorts of reasons. And every rider has their own reason, and for every single one, the emotional rollercoaster of failure.

And it's something we don't talk about enough, both as outdoorsy types and as normal people (in inverted commas). How many of us have set out to walk up that mountain and not made it to the top, because of the weather, coz we weren't fit enough, coz we got lost? Is it a failure? What does it mean? And it's a tough one, and I've been thinking about it for months, now.

In fact, no, I've been thinking about it for years. Because we fail at many things in life. LGBT people often either get accused of being a failure, or our parents say that they are a failure because of how we turned out. And the emotion is very similar. And it's hard. No one wants to fail. No one wants to make that choice. [Sniff]

But not every failure has to be a failure.

A few days after I finished my attempt at the Race Around the Netherlands, I got a message from a friend. It said, "What you did is amazing. It inspired me to ride. I've just done a 120 kilometres." [Sniff] I sent back a polite message, saying, "Well done. That's great." And then a couple of weeks later, I got another message. "I'm thinking of riding 500 kilometres from London to Newcastle. Could I pick your brains, please?"

So I cycled over and we sat in a cafe in Alkmaar and chatted. And my friend asked me questions about her route, the kit she was taking, and what she was doing. And I - someone who, whose idea of a good weekend tends to involve cycling to the middle of nowhere, sleeping under a tree, cycling to somewhere else in the middle of nowhere, sleeping under another tree, and continuing back home - I looked at what she was planning, and I was in awe. And the only reason she'd thought to do it was because she had been following what I had done with my race. I hadn't even done, in the race, the distance that she was planning to do on her first tour. I hadn't completed the distance I'd set out to do. But somehow it had inspired this other person to go out and have an adventure. And it amazed me.

And that success - that was completely unexpected - almost cancels out the sense of failure that I had with the race itself. OK, there are times when I think back, and think: what did I do wrong; what could I do differently? But the unexpected result is still a result, the same as in science, a null result is still a result. I didn't succeed with the race using the method that I was using, but I'll definitely be on the start line next year, with a slightly different approach. I'll train more. I'll have a better understanding of what it is I'm doing.

And so, I tell myself: I didn't fail. I just found one way that didn't work.

Next year, I try a different way.

Link - 0:33:23

Allysse: The next piece, "Snow, Tyres, Breath, Song" invites us into a physical experience as Nikki brings us along for a bike ride in the snow. But her field recording, like any, conceals more

than what it might seem. Nikki writes the area “has a reputation as a popular place for cruising and, as a woman who wanders around on her own a lot, I've been explicitly and implicitly warned to stay away from here. In the early hours of the morning, however, I have the woods to myself. Intense concentration on the subtleties of speed, traction, balance and momentum dissolves as I come to a stop: my awareness first shifting to my laboured breathing and then outwards to the songs of the birds that are around and above me.”

Snow, Tyres, Breath, Song - Nikki - 00:34:10

[Scrunching of tyres on snow, momentary pause, scrunch, swish, heavy breathing, birdsong, clunk, birdsong, birdsong, dogsong, birdsong.]

Link - 0:37:00

Jonathan: “Nature doesn’t judge” - this was a theme that came up a bit in Issue 01, and it’s carried through into this one, including in our next piece, “No Gender”. This piece is from Lise in France. Lise talks about how difficult it can be to live as someone who has no gender in a society that expects and enforces binary gender on people. For Lise, nature offers a place and time without this pressure, somewhere to de-stress and forget for a while, but also somewhere to re-charge, ready to step into the world again.

And just a reminder that if you can’t quite catch all the words in this piece, the full transcript is available on our website.

No Gender - Lise - 0:37:37

Lise: Hi. I’m, ah, Lise, a young graphic designer. I’m a no gender. When I was younger, a teenager, I looking for what I am, who I am. So, sometime I have a very boy look, and sometime a very girly look, but never be happy with it so, when I grown up, I discover that I’m no gender.

I think no gender is very difficult because you have a body. A female or male body, tell people what you are. For them, I’m a girl because my body is a female body. For society you have to be boy or girl and not both, or not neither. You need to choose. And you don’t really choose because it’s your body tell you what you are.

[Lapping water sound]

Lise: The outdoors is my escape for the society because the nature don’t judge you. It helps you to think, to find who you are, what you are, what you want be, what you want to fight for. Because I feel the energy. I’m a very energetic person. And In nature I think I can discharge my full energy and recharge with very, ah, benefic one. So the negative go outside of me in nature and positive come back. It’s not very positive, a natural one, and I make it positive after when I come back in society. So that’s why outdoor is very important for me, and why it’s very helpful. I can, yeah, I can liberate my negativity and all the stress and struggling and everything. And, and come back very, very good, very well. That’s why I go outside.

[Christmas carols sung in the street]

Lise: So, it's Christmas and I spend this time with my father and the, um, the husband family of my sister. And there are a lot of people, a lot of noise, and I don't know people, so I don't know how to interact with them. And also I'm sick. So it's not a very good feeling at first.

And at this place they have a big forest, so I decide to take a break and go to walk in the forest. I take with me a book because I, I really like to read and I don't know how I will walk and maybe stop to read a little and come back after. I take just a book in case. And so, I just go to walk, no phone, no, no clock, nothing - just me, a book, and the nature.

And so, I walk. Step by step. Take a break. Walk again. Take a break. Walk again. And I don't see time go. And I... I arrive to the big place, an open place. And I enjoy the view, sit on the floor. And read a little about art. And after, I come back at home, I feel better because, ah, I feel ready to fight the people and to, and not so sick.

And, when I come back, the fun fact was my father and my sister are very, ah, intrigued because they tell me, "Oh you come back, but it's make an hour you were in forest! We are looking for your we don't know where you are!"

And I say, "Oh, I just find, it's just an half hour, I back!"

Link - 0:41:57

Allyse: Nature doesn't have to be a place of escape. It can also be a place to just be. Fenrir Cerebellion brings us along into one of their trips. Like Mags' piece, it has the feel of a postcard. We sit with Fenrir and their dog at a campsite after a day of accidental mountain climbing. We snatch a moment of their day, invited into their thoughts as they reflect on the day and their surroundings.

Solo Camping at Murray Lake - Fenrir Cerebellion - 0:42:20

Fenrir: So, this is the second site on my two site camping trip. Murray Lake.

I got here yesterday, um, y'know, at a good time. I had lots of hours. I kinda... There were lots of dogs around, so Sisko got, got some play in. And, uh, the weather was pretty okay. Like, nice. And it started raining last night, and it's barely let up today.

It let up enough for me, um, to walk down a road and try to find a trail, which was down another road another three kilometres, and I didn't want to walk another three kilometres so. Also I heard sounds in the woods, so I stopped, because I'm solo camping.

Anyways, right now I have this little set up in the rain here - oh my gosh, I can't believe you dog. Uh-uh! Nooo.

[Break in recording]

Fenrir: My dog just stole a meat skewer from another campsite. [Sigh. Dog collar jangling.]

Anyways [laughter] I'm camped next to a site, with a fire pit and a picnic table next to a tree. And the tree is dry underneath. So, ah, I got my cassette stove and I'm making a cup of tea before the end of the night.

When it's been sunny, all the surfaces have been doing that thing where, ah, all the excess water immediately evaporates so everything steams. And right now, because of all the lake [contributor correction: rain] and the, I guess the sun earlier in the day, the lake is steaming. Yeah.

Here's a, ah, stovetop cooking me some water for tea, and rain.

[Sounds of camp stove clunking and faint sounds of rain.]

Link - 0:44:56

Jonathan: That sound sends me right back to all the times I've sat in a tent in the rain, drinking cups of tea - what a wonderful feeling! Fenrir is in Canada, and notes that Murray Lake is in [Nlaka'pamux](#) territory. And the next sweeper, from Emily, was recorded on [Wurundjeri](#) land in country Victoria, Australia. The contributors and we, the editors, pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging, and extend this respect to all Indigenous people who are listening.

Sweeper - Emily - 0:45:21

[Sounds of kookaburras laughing and crunchy footsteps]

Emily: This is Emily. I'm in Australia, I'm just outside of Melbourne, um, at a Girl Guides camp. Ah, I'm Quartermaster, so right now all the girls have gone off to their activities and I'm doing the washing up after lunch. And it's a hot day. I can hear the wind in the trees, I can hear little twitchy tweets of small birds, and I can also hear a bunch of kookaburras having a laugh-off, which seemed too perfect to not record. I hope you enjoyed it. You're listening to Queer Out Here.

Link - 0:46:20

Allysse: Thanks Emily. This last segment begins with a conversation between Max and Jaye, a nonbinary couple. In their recording they bring us to the Sierras in California to share a part of their lives and their experiences outdoors. I love that they don't present themselves as perfect hikers. They slip, get muddy, forget water, misplan, but they still have fun. I can definitely relate to all of that. It's also interesting to hear of the comments and conversation they have encountered in the countryside, and how they have noticed a difference in culture between countryside and cities. What means one thing to one person can have a different meaning to another coming from a different angle.

Nonbinary Nomads - Max and Jaye - 00:47:01

Max: My name's Max.

Jaye: My name's Jaye.

Max: And we're the Nonbinary Nomads. Ah, we live in Monterey, California, and we have a dog named Bosley and three cats, um, Voldemort, Refiki and Quincey. So, our first trip was the Skyline to Sea trip.

Jaye: Yeah, it was a trail I'd been wanting to do for a really long time, and so when Crooks [Max] said that they wanted to go backpacking, and I figured it would be a really good starter.

Max: Yeah. So, we were only supposed to do, like 30-something miles?

Jaye: Yeah, like, 32 to 35 [51-56km].

Max: And we ended up doing, like, 45 [72 km].

Jaye: Yeah, coz we got lost on the first day [Max laughs] and then we also, there was a detour, um, on the third, the third day, which extended our trip a few miles. And that was also the day that we ran out of food.

Max: Yeah, so we had packed what we thought was enough food, but we got a lot more hungry than we, than we had planned, and so we knew that there was a shop, like a little grocery store kind of thing, in Big Basin. And when we got there, we walked up to the little [WINDELS?] where all the rangers were staying and we asked them if, ah, they could open the shop for us and they said it was off season so it wasn't open on the day that we were there.

Jaye: It was open on weekends and we got there on a Monday.

Max: So we just barely missed it. And then it was cold, so we asked them for firewood and they said that we weren't allowed to have a fire in the campsite that we had reserved.

Jaye: Yeah, it dropped to, like, low 30s [about 0 degrees Celsius] that night, it snowed at higher altitudes, so at least we skipped out on that! [Laughter]

Max: So it was a pretty crazy backpacking trip, but we've also had worse.

Jaye: It was amazing and fun and beautiful.

Max: Yeah.

Jaye: But starving's never fun.

Max: No. [Laughter]

Max: Ah, what else? Let's see. We got engaged in June. So, basically, two months ago we were hiking the Tahoe Rim Trail.

Jaye: Yeah and [Max laughs] so it was a kind of a two day trail that we were doing and the first part, first day were, all the views were on the first day, so it was all the monumental moments on the first day, but -

Max: Super pretty.

Jaye: - the problem was is they were 20 mile per hour winds [a bit over 30km per hour], and so hiking wasn't terrible, I mean, for me. But, um, apparently someone here had plans to ask a certain question and you can't do that during 20 mile per hour winds. I, I couldn't even hear anything that you were talking about.

Max: And every time we got to a vista or a cool point where pictures would have been awesome, it was windy and we couldn't even hear each other speak.

Jaye: Yeah. It was, it was pretty ridiculous how windy it was.

Max: So I waited until the second day, when we had run out of water [Jaye laughs] which, there always seems to be something that goes wrong on our backpacking trips. Um, but we hiked off the trail a little bit, couldn't find any water. I wiped out.

[Laughter, talking simultaneously]

Max: I had my, my pack on - and it's probably like a 30 pound [approx 15kg] pack -

Jaye: I was really worried about you.

Max: - and we were hauling butt off trail to go find water, that we didn't know where it was, necessarily, and I slipped, my feet fell out from under me and I landed flat on my face with my pack on top of me

Jaye: You had dirt on your teeth.

Max: Dirt on my teeth [laughs], blood on my legs!

[Laughter]

Jaye: It's funny now, it wasn't funny then.

Max: It was not funny then.

[Laughter]

Max: But, ah, we decided to abort that mission and go back to the trail and hope for the best. So we did, and sure enough maybe a sixteenth of a mile back on the trail there was water.

Jaye: Yeah.

Max: So, that was a bummer, but we continued on and made our way to Lake Watson, which was still pretty, but it wasn't as pretty as the vistas that I could have asked the question on. [Sighs] Um, we were sitting on a log, um, facing the opposite way, and you were kinda joking around. How did it go?

Jaye: I don't know, I think I said something about do you want to marry me, or something, or - I probably did something gross, and you, and I was like, "Do you still want to marry me?"

Max: And I said, "Yeah. I do." [Jaye laughs] And then I said, "Do you want to marry me?" And you said, "Of course, dummy, you've already, we've already said that." And then I said, "No," and I pulled out the rings and I said, "Will you marry me?"

Jaye: And I said, "I think I'm going to throw up."

Max: But you didn't.

[Laughter]

Max: But that was also not the response I was expecting!

Jaye: I'm not very graceful.

Max: Well...

[Laughter]

Max: So I clarified and said, "Does that mean yes?"

Jaye: Yeah, it meant yes.

Max: You said yes.

[Laughter]

Max: So that was fun.

Jaye: Oh yeah.

Max: So instead of doing traditional wedding gifts and whatnot, we're gonna have a GoFundMe where, ah, we're going to put the proceeds toward our first home, which is gonna be a RV. Um. And we're, with our jobs we're so flexible we can transfer every six months. So we're planning on getting the RV and living out of it and then transferring every six months to a different place where we get to see the, the country. And then... for our honeymoon, we're gonna do portions of the Pacific Crest Trail, the PCT.

Jaye: Yeah, we can get a three month leave of absence from our job without losing our job.

Max: So we're gonna do that.

Jaye: So we're gonna hike as far as we can on the PCT starting from, um, south, going north. And we're just gonna essentially walk for three months.

Max: Yeah. We do like spending time together.

Jaye: Yeah. It's nice. We get to talk about really stupid stuff.

Max: Yeah.

Jaye: You essentially get to hear me rant [Max laughs] about feminism and, and sing random songs.

Max: I love it.

[Laughter]

Jaye: One of the things about backpacking and, and doing outdoorsy stuff as we do, is that all the place - the, the locations are normally in small towns, which tend to be mountainy and very, ah, conservative and, um, traditional. So we stick out when we go, like, into town to those places, um, we get stares, often, ah, we get gender questions on the trail, like we did this time. The guy on the horse.

Max: Yeah, we were out hiking and some guy said, um, "Ladies," and then he goes, "Well I, I assume, but you know what assuming does these days," or something along those lines.

Jaye: Yeah, he was like, "You can't really assume these days, can you?" And we were just kinda like, "Uh, OK," and we pet his horse and then he kinda went on his way, so.

Max: Yeah, he told us we looked feminine because we had earrings, which kinda shocked us because...

Jaye: Because everyone has earrings, honestly.

Max: Yeah, a lot of people have them.

Jaye: Like, we both have, like, plugs, so it's not like we had, you know-

Max: Dangly earrings or anything.

Jaye: Yeah, like hoop earrings - which is fine, too, but that's such an odd thing to say while backpacking.

Max: He probably had never seen any queers before.

[Laughter]

Jaye: Yeah. But I mean normally we just get stares.

Max: Yeah, it - you know, sometimes we can feel underhand comments, but it's never really directed exactly at us, I guess.

Jaye: Well, I don't know. People are generally nice if we talk to them.

Max: Yeah.

Jaye: But it's definitely like a point and stare kind of situation.

Max: Right. We're probably lucky it's just that, but it shouldn't -

Jaye: Yeah, I mean it wouldn't deter me from hiking. Because, you know, we deserve to be there as much as anyone else, but it's, ah, clear that a lot of the people have not seen, um, [sigh] I don't know, people like us?

Max: Yeah, people like us. [Laughs] Um, yeah, so there's that. And the last thing we wanted to talk about is our Instagram page and YouTube page. We have a lot of future plans with those where we hope to do binder giveaways and donate money to LGBTQ charities, um, and other pages kinda like ours.

Jaye: So that we can help people, you know, raise money for non-profits, binder giveaways for other peeps like us that maybe aren't quite as, um, privileged.

Max: Yeah. Absolutely. So you can definitely find us on YouTube or Instagram, we're the Nonbinary Nomads, ah, it's just, our handle's just NonbinaryNomads, all one word. Thanks.

Jaye: Thank you!

Max: Bye.

Link - 0:55:54

Jonathan: The sub-theme of cultural differences continues now, in "Widewater", a poem by Dru Marland. Dru lives and works on a canal boat in the West of England. As this poem twists along like the canal through the landscape, her keen observational eye traces the undercurrents of class, settlement, migration and belonging. The intermingling of all these elements - the council worker who talks historical battles, the bright kingfisher, the Polish farm worker, the landowners who try to block off rights of way, the badgers, and the morning dew that settles on everything alike - this richness, when you let it, almost overwhelms the slogan that creates a sharp full stop at the end of the poem.

Widewater - Dru Marland - 0:56:35

Dru: "He tried to get the moorings there removed" said Julian off Bimble.
Julian cuts the grass for Wiltshire Council, shifts the roadkill;
"mostly you can chuck it through the hedge, but cats and dogs
get taken in, whatever state they're in, and logged;
someone might be missing them."

He sails the pounds
from Hungerford to Horton, more or less, stays round
the Vale of Pewsey where he works.

We met at dawn.
A kingfisher bashed a minnow on the branch, then darted on,
a quick blue spark against Widewater's reeds.
"Spent thousands on the legal fees, for all the good it did.
Still, he keeps the gate locked at the top of the track;
can't keep folk out, there's been a path since back
before King Alfred came and met his thanes,
there on the tump. They went and beat the Danes,
way up there on the Downs. See the lane?
The winter the canal froze hard,
they had to carry coal and water down from the end."

A buzzard circled Pickle Hill; the stockman on his quad
moved the electric fence across the field a little way,
called out in Polish for the herd to graze.

We brushed the dew off meadowsweet
and butterbur, grown shoulder high,
through which the ways to moorings had been bashed
for boats at least half hidden from the track;
Eve, Netty, Bimble, Jessie, Arran; making home
here for a few more days, then moving on.

Below the big ash, where the ground is clear,
around last night's fire circle lay empty cans of beer
and smoke-blackened cooking pots on half a scaffold plank.
A small child's bicycle leaned on the bank.

Across the bridge we passed the big new house
in whose walled gravel courtyard sat a Jag.
Along the drive's wide closely-tended verge,
rebellious moles had tumped the smooth mown grass,
and grey hairs on a strand of wire showed how
the badger made its customary way

into the pasture where, above the grazing Jacob[s] flock,
the tilting billboard claimed, 'We want our country back'.

Link - 0:58:52

Allysse: Back on land Jonathan, my brilliant co-editor, records a conversation with Chrissy and June during a group walk. We dive in and out of the conversation as if we were walking along with the members of the Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance. Jonathan took an experimental approach to the edit which brings the talk close to the listener. I defy you not to want to join in the conversation as you listen. I sure did.

On the Cuckoo Trail - Chrissy, June and Jonathan - 0:59:16

[The piece begins with loops of voices and sounds, building up in layers with different effects:

Chrissy: ...it's not all of who you are...

FX: Bicycle bell and wheels

June: ...all keen walkers...

Jonathan: ...east or west or down through the fields or...

Chrissy: ...and that really got me into walking, just - it's like a drug...]

[Footsteps, bicycle bell]

Chrissy: Whatever your sexuality is, or whatever your, whatever you like doing on a Sunday afternoon, it's just a little bit of who you are - it's not all of who you are.

Jonathan: Yeah. I think that's one of the nice things about the, the usual walking group, the monthly walking group, and kind of about this as well, is that you're not only coming together because of an aspect of your, like, your sexuality or your gender identity -

Chrissy: Yeah. Mm.

Jonathan: - you're also coming together because you enjoy doing an activity.

Chrissy: Yeah, exactly, I think that's so important.

June: Shared interest.

Chrissy: Shared interest, yes.

[Quiet loop of June saying, "All keen walkers."]

June: It develops into, you know, I view it as a social network that, ah, it's just something that I like doing with a group of people.

[Footsteps. Quiet loop of Chrissy saying "It's not all of who you are."]

Chrissy: We're on a lovely walk between, um, Heathfield and I think we're going to Polegate? It's on the Cuckoo Trail, which I've never been on before - in fact, never heard of until I moved to this

area a year ago. And it's a beautiful, hot July day, but there's lots of shade and lots of lovely trees. And we're walking along a disused train track, which is quite exciting really.

[Footsteps. Quiet loop of bike bell.]

Jonathan: Are you a big walker?

Chrissy: Well, yeah, I - over the last, oh, ten years or so.

June: Oh, gosh, decades ago.

Chrissy: I never used to be, and then we had a family pet that needed walking and I got into it a bit back then.

June: I lived in short-life housing [echoes] and the, ah, people that were in the other houses were all keen walkers.

Chrissy: Oh, I used to live in Manchester and they've got, as you well may know, there's this wonderful canal network all over Manchester and the North in general.

June: And we used to go away weekends. Friday night we'd drive out of London, go and camp somewhere and, Lake District or down to Dorset, and spend the weekend walking.

Chrissy: So, I started walking with a friend, and we'd do these little canal walks. We'd go to a certain part - and it used to be the same thing back and forth. The good thing about canal walks - two good things - one is they're flat, and two is that even I can't get lost on them!

June: And, ah, when I was at college, I was a reluctant walker, really. [Echoes]

Chrissy: But then that got a bit dull, so we then, one weekend we went to a bit further on that we'd never been to, and then got really hooked. And then for, about over six months, every week, every weekend we'd go out Saturday and Sunday to a different bit of, it's called the Cheshire Ring Canal.

June: I went because it was, I liked the sort of social aspect of it. But the walking itself I found quite hard. So it was several years before I actually really enjoyed walking.

Chrissy: And it's wonderful. There's loads of countryside, nature reclaimy bits, you go through old industrial towns, it's, yeah. And that really got me into walking, I just, it's like a drug isn't it, once you start? [Echoes]

Jonathan: [Laughs]

June: But I'm more a, I more enjoyed the time in the pub afterwards -

Jonathan: [Laughs]

June: - with a drink and something to eat. That was, ah -

Chrissy: Yeah, it whet my appetite and then I started to go for walks - well, I always have done a little bit - up in the Peak District and things. But that's, that's when I realised I wasn't as fit as I thought I was. [Jonathan laughs] Coz ten miles along the canal is one thing, and then three minutes up a hill is just as bad!

June: Yes, so I'd never done it as a kid, and I, I do think sometimes you have to acquire the taste for it, haven't you? Coz I always found it really hard work.

Jonathan: Yeah.

June: Particularly this group were quite fit and they used to do a lot of hill walking.

[Echoey footsteps and sound of children talking in the background]

Chrissy: I'm a political campaigner. Um, so that takes up a lot of time, with -

Person: Excuse me.

Chrissy: - People's Assembly Against Austerity, sort of nationally and locally. I've always been involved in that - well, for the last four years or so. And that, that's very rewarding. A bit like walking in a way, you just meet with like-minded people, you're sort of just embracing certain aspects of life, and I suppose just, yeah, trying to make the world a bit better.

June: Interesting, isn't it, the history of, ah, walking networks in, um, Britain. The whole movement, the walking movement.

Jonathan: Yeah, and the rights of way, and -

June: Yes, and you know, how people have fought to keep those rights of way and . . .

Jonathan: And still do!

June: And - yes! - and how we benefit from that.

Jonathan: Yeah, and it's - I think, um, people in the UK often don't really appreciate that it's so accessible. That, you know, yes, we've got this, this rail trail that we're walking on here, which is a thing that lots of countries have, but lots of countries don't have all of these little side trails where you can get off and go east or west or down through the fields [echoes], you know, and essentially kind of walk the whole way across the country just using footpaths if you wanted to.

[Footsteps]

Chrissy: I started off decades ago with [CND](#) and that was, we set up a peace camp in London inspired by Greenham - and it was an RAF base in one of the London suburbs - that was when I was a teenager. And then, that kick-started it, and then I used to do political lobbying, going to our MP in Westminster, and then - CND and then Friends of the Earth writing newsletters. But, yeah, in recent years, particularly with the People's Assembly, it's getting out there, doing kind of political stunts as well as the protests, just trying to put something on that is a bit different, that engages

with different people who normally just walk past and don't want a leaflet, they want to be... Coz that's the thing, otherwise it's the same-old, same-old. Like... yesterday - I mean we're talking, what is it, first of July - so, yesterday there was a huge national demo, and a celebration of the NHS's 70th birthday, which was put on by the People's Assembly and health campaigns together. And that's a kind of wonderful feeling, that when you're on a demonstration or a protest with people like that you just, it is like this wave of euphoria because you, you really are, you feel you can change the world - and you are, in your own little way, bit by bit and -

Jonathan: Cyclist.

[Footsteps and sound of bike passing]

Chrissy: I live in St Leonards and it's, it's one of the reasons I moved there last year was I just love the, kind of, there's an independent spirit. And perhaps that's part of living by the sea coz up until then I've only ever lived in big cities, and, it's just . . . It's a kind of sense of freedom, really, and it's almost like people who live or run away to the sea and, and, just do their own thing.

Jonathan: Why do you think that is?

Chrissy: Perhaps there's a kind of holiday spirit. [Jackdaws in background.] Different pressure of life from some cities. The sea air - I mean, I just walk by the sea every day to go to the shops or just to go for a walk, and although I don't particularly get down, even on a fantastic day my spirits are lifted even more, just by the big skies. It's a sense of freedom, I think. A sense of doing your own thing. And even if you're in work five days a week, you can just pop out and then you've got this whole, the beach and the whole vista, it just does free your spirit.

Jonathan: It does make such a difference to have half of your horizon clear.

Chrissy: I think, yeah, I, I never really thought of that until moving here. And a few things people have said about, yeah, like, catchment area, and you've only got, it's like, the semicircle. You've not, you've just got that lovely expanse of coast out there. And perhaps that's it, perhaps it kind of leads to clear thoughts, or a different thought process even, when you just look at that big expanse.

[Echoes of Chrissy's last sentence and footsteps fade out.]

Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:08:05

[Birds tweeting and pigeons cooing, which continues under voices.]

Allysse: And that's it for Issue 02. Thanks once again to all of our contributors. If you'd like to find out more about them, and about each of the pieces, please have a look at the show notes at queerouthere.com

Jonathan: Thanks also to you, the listeners. If you're queer or LGBTQIA+ and you've heard something that inspired you or piqued your interest, we really hope you consider creating a piece for our next issue. You can get started now, if you like, and submissions will open in the new year.

We'd love to hear your music, audio postcards, poetry, conversations and interviews, experimental pieces, field recordings, mini documentaries - whatever you make on the outdoors theme, so long as it's between one minute and ten minutes long.

Allysse: As always we're really keen to gather submissions from folks who are underrepresented in mainstream and queer media. So if that's you and you want to discuss an idea with us, get in touch.

Jonathan: In the meantime, please let us know what you thought of Issue 02. You can drop us a line on Facebook or Twitter (just search Queer Out Here), you can review us on your blog, give us a rating on your podcast app or just send us an email. You can also sign up to our newsletter on our website to make sure you get all the details of our next call for submissions and any future issues.

Allysse: Until next time, from me, Allysse -

Jonathan: - and me, Jonathan -

Both: Goodbye.