

# Transcript: Queer Out Here Issue 05 Side B

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# 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 05 Side B 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-05-side-b>

## Content notes

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

Issue 05 Side B contains several discussions of COVID-19/Coronavirus, being in lockdown and other related issues. There is also mention of colonial violence in Australia in *Bluestone* (starts at 45:40); description of feeling unable to breathe underwater in *Caught Within the Fisher's Net* (starts at 52:01); a few sudden, loud sounds; and wind distortion in some field recordings.

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 contributors - 0:00:00

[Birdsong, faint bells, outdoors atmosphere fades in]

**Nova:** You're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Sea sounds, waves and splashes also fade in]

**Emma:** I wanted to share with you one of my favourite quiet spaces.

[Sea sounds continue, children laugh, and panned to each side you can hear faint voices repeating the word 'lockdown']

**Allysse:** [echoey voice fades in and out] - acres, past the church, the closed pub, the deserted train station, Sandringham Road -

**Emily:** I feel like a ghost.

**Cecily:** [quieter] Home isolation

**Lynda:** And struggling like a first time diver...

**Nova:** [quieter, panned left then right] Urban lockdown (urban lockdown)

**Emma:** I miss being able to go on trains.

**Cecily:** [quieter, panned left then right] Coronavirus (coronavirus) pandemic (pandemic)

**Lynda:** Here we float -

[Car horn sounds, birds tweet, various people saying 'lockdown' panned left and right, gulls call, traffic and water noises increase]

**Lynda:** - unpredictable and uncertain as water.

[All the noises increase and then cut abruptly, leaving only sea sounds and birds twittering]

## Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:40

[Sound of waves on a shingle beach plays under the intro.]

**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 05, Side B.

**Jonathan:** As you'll know if you've already listened to Side A, we had so many submissions this time that we decided to split Issue 05 into two parts. Side A features pieces recorded in - or about - pre-lockdown times, while Side B, this side, features pieces that respond to or were recorded during the COVID-19 lockdown.

**Allysse:** As COVID-19 spread through the world, we retreated to our homes and the soundscapes around us changed. Unable to explore further afield, the views from our windows, balconies and hyper-local areas became our new "outdoors" regardless of where we found ourselves. The pieces in Side B reflect this change.

**Jonathan:** As always, the pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. If you have specific anxieties or triggers, you may wish to ask a trusted friend to listen through first and give you feedback. You could also check our transcript - find it linked in the show notes on our website, [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com)

**Allysse:** Before we start, thanks again to Emily, who has created our cover art for Issue 05 - you can find a full size image in the show notes, too. And now, on to Side B!

**Both:** Let's get Queer Out Here!

## Sweeper - Nova - 0:02:00

[Quiet birdsong, distant traffic and a faint car horn. There is some wind distortion in this recording.]

**Nova:** Hi. I'm Nova, a non-binary urban naturalist in New York City. I'm wandering the rolling hills of the highest point in Brooklyn, Greenwood Cemetery.

Not just a burying ground, Greenwood is a vast arboretum of diverse trees mixed with historic gravestones, obelisks, mausolea and sarcophagi, collectively making for an idyllic environment to observe lichens - my favourite pastime! - and provide a temporary escape from urban lockdown in the era of COVID-19, remaining socially distant - well, from the living, at least!

And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Birdcalls, a distant bell, and even more distant sirens]

## Link - 0:03:03

**Jonathan:** When lockdown first started in the UK, despite obviously being concerned about the situation, I also wondered what my (very privileged) daily life would be like. I had visions of going on long walks, exploring every inch of the local footpath network, picnicking on the hillsides with views of the sea or the South Downs. But in reality, I was still working from home almost full time, and we weren't meant to travel if we could avoid it, so I ended up doing a lot of short walks through the streets and countryside close to our house. At first, these outings felt like a silver lining - I'd

been given a chance to move slowly through my immediate surroundings, to watch the woods change as first wood anemones, then wild garlic and then bluebells carpeted the wood floor. But soon enough, I got bored of walking the same paths and streets over and over and over again. The neighbourhood felt claustrophobic and I felt unmotivated. I started only going outside to eat lunch or to have a cup of tea in the sun. Some days I didn't go out at all.

The three pieces in this first section map a similar story of an ever-tightening radius of movement.

We start with Emma Charleston's *A South London Stroll*. In her voice message, Emma talks about learning to use public space differently, and how this has resulted in finding new places for her and her dog to walk. I love how Emma's vivid descriptions bring the park to life in my mind - there's a real joy of discovery in her narration.

Oh, and by the way, we're still not sure what the tree she mentions is - but it's definitely not cashews!

## A South London Stroll - Emma Charleston - 0:04:31

[Birds twitter and there's a rumbling of a distant train]

**Emma:** My name's Emma, and I'm out with my border collie Charlie, and I wanted to share with you one of my favourite quiet spaces, ah, in south London. I don't know if you can hear how quiet it is? Um, I'm being slightly sarcastic because there's actually, ah, a lot of trains going past right now, but that's one of my favourite things about it - I love trains and I miss being able to go on trains. Um, and even before this current situation I used to come and stand here and watch the trains fly by high over my head. Um. It's even stranger now because they're all empty, especially at night when they're lit up and you can just see there's no one on them.

But anyway, this, this place is ah, is a small park in South London, it's actually two parks joined together, they're called Falcon Park and Shillington Park, um, and they're divided between the two of them by a raised railway line and also around three sides of Falcon Park are more raised railway lines. We're very very close to Clapham Junction here, so there's a lot of trains going by.

Previously, I only ever just walked through this park, on my way to places. I never really stopped and considered it that much. Um. But I've been avoiding Battersea Park because it's extremely busy, it's full of runners and, ah, people doing yoga and people sitting on benches, and it's - everyone is social distancing as best they can, but it's hard, ah, to find the space there. So I've been trying to explore alternative, ah, outdoor spaces with Charlie, who needs plenty of exercise every day, um. And, yeah, this has become one of my favourites. Ah, especially this particular part of it. At one end of Falcon Park there is a large outdoor sports court, like an artificial grass sports court, which is obviously closed currently, um, and down either side of it are small, narrow strips of grass, which I'd always assumed just led to like a, a dead end, but I actually took a moment to explore them and walk round and it turns out there's a large - well, largish - patch of grass behind the sports courts which barely anyone ever walks along. So I'm just walking into that now, um, and as I come through there's, there's a tree here, which I'm going to, ah, I'm going to look up later. And I know this is going to sound ridiculous, and I haven't done my research, it appears to be growing cashew nuts?! It may not be actual cashew nuts, but some kind of nuts growing on this

tree and I really wanna find out what it is, um, and whether they're edible, because it would be a lovely, a lovely find, and like I say, I don't think many people walk past here. The tree is certainly, ah, full of whatever it is that it's growing.

[In the background is the grind and quiet squeal of a London overground train slowly passing by]

But yeah, I'm, I'm coming round the corner of these courts onto this grassy area, and all along one side is a very high wall - right now there's an overground train just going past high above me on the top of this wall on the railway line, and I can see that it's completely empty, which I don't think I'll ever quite get over the strangeness of. I understand why they have to keep the trains running but it's, it's so strange to see them all so empty. Um.

[Some wind distortion]

But yeah, I'm walking around the corner now and all along that high wall there's a line of tall, thin trees. Um, I - It would be nicer if I knew trees so that I could describe them to you. I think maybe they might be cypress trees? But whatever they are, they're, they're really beautiful and they cast these long shadows across this kind of grassy, grassy square. And there's birds, there's a couple of magpies over there, um, and there's smaller birds in the trees, and it's just really peaceful. I've never found anyone else here even when the park's been busy. Um, it feels like a kind of secret quiet space. And even at the best of times, I'm not one for stopping when I'm out walking, I don't necessarily stop and sit, I walk briskly, but it's been nice to find a space in the heart of the city that feels like it's just my own. Um. And again, that's not something that I ever sought out before, I live in the city for a reason, I love the hustle and bustle, I was miserable in the countryside. Um, but here, ah, and now, it seems to be what I need. So I'm, I'm enjoying it and I wanted to share it with you I guess. Um. If you're ever looking for something similar and you're in the kind of Clapham Junction/Battersea area, um, I hope that once this is all over I might be able to come here and have some nice picnics.

[Birds chatter. A train squeals as it pulls past with clear, rhythmic rattle-thump of wheels on rails.]

## Link - 0:09:54

**Allysse:** Emma's enthusiasm for discovering new places close to home is something I can relate to - but this is not what I have expressed in my piece. Every weekday since lockdown began I have gone out to walk the streets and parks around my home. Quickly, I built a routine of paths with my partner, leaving our beloved nature reserve in favour of streets and parks where maintaining a two metre distance from other people is a lot easier. But some days this repetition grinds me down. It becomes a stark reminder that we cannot go anywhere else, that we are trapped in the same loop over and over again. This is what I have recorded for my piece *Lockdown Walks*.

Following from my piece is *Wish It Were Safe Out There* by Emily Miles. Of an evening she pressed record to capture the sounds outside of her window. The streets are quiet compared to usual, people having retreated to their houses to stay safe from Covid-19. People left behind are essential workers, people without houses, and as Emily puts it, "lonely ones who might just drive to feel safe seeing fellow faces".

# Lockdown Walks - Allysse Riordan - 0:10:57

[This piece is divided in repeated segments.]

*[Section1: The field recordings in this segment last for 30 seconds.]*

**Allysse:** I start in Mead Street.

[Feet pounding as someone runs past. The wind in the tree leaves. Faint voices as a couple of people have a chat. A police siren as a car drives fast on a nearby road.]

And then into North Road.

[People chatting and passing by. Footsteps of people walking. There are less trees so less wind in leaves noise. A car passes by slowly.]

Past the church, the closed pub, the deserted train station.

[Beeping of train doors opening and then closing. A small lorry goes through a pothole, its loads bump at the back. Multiple cars pass by. A car honks.]

And then through Sandringham Road, Windsor Close, and Britannia Crescent.

[Voices of two people chatting. Birds chirping loudly. The wind in the tree leaves. An ambulance siren can be heard from a road nearby.]

Into Royal Park and Forty Acres.

[Voices of adults and children talking to each other, calling one another. Birds chirping. The wind in the tree leaves.]

And then Mead Park.

[Brief music coming from a radio. The wind has picked up and can be heard loudly in the tree leaves. Birds chirping. Distant voices can also be heard.]

Through residential streets.

[The wind has lessened. It is fairly quiet. A wheelie bin is being put away and makes noises as it is being dragged from the pavement to a garage. Birds chirping. Very faint voices.]

And back home.

[Silence]

*[Section 2: The field recordings in this segment last for 20 seconds.]*

**Allysse:** I start in Mead Street

[Feet pounding as someone runs past. The wind in the tree leaves. Faint voices as a couple of people have a chat. A police siren as a car drives fast on a nearby road.]

And then into North Road.

[People chatting and passing by. Footsteps of people walking. There are less trees so less wind in leaves noise. A car passes by slowly.]

Past the church, the closed pub, the deserted train station.

[Beeping of train doors opening and then closing. A small lorry goes through a pothole, its loads bump at the back. Multiple cars pass by. A car honks.]

To Mead Park.

[Brief music coming from a radio. The wind has picked up and can be heard loudly in the tree leaves. Birds chirping. Distant voices can also be heard.]

Through residential streets.

[The wind has lessened. It is fairly quiet. A wheelie bin is being put away and makes noises as it is being dragged from the pavement to a garage. Birds chirping. Very faint voices.]

And back home.

[Silence]

*[Section 3: The field recordings in this segment last for 10 seconds, noticeably quicker than last time.]*

**Allysse:** I start through residential streets.

[The wind has lessened. It is fairly quiet. A wheelie bin is being put away and makes noises as it is being dragged from the pavement to a garage. Birds chirping. Very faint voices.]

Into Mead Park.

[Brief music coming from a radio. The wind has picked up and can be heard loudly in the tree leaves. Birds chirping. Distant voices can also be heard.]

Sometimes to Forty Acres and Royal Park.

[Voices of adults and children talking to each other, calling one another. Birds chirping. The wind in the tree leaves.]

Back to residential streets.

[The wind has lessened. It is fairly quiet. A wheelie bin is being put away and makes noises as it is being dragged from the pavement to a garage. Birds chirping. Very faint voices.]

And back home.

[Silence]

*[Section 4: The field recordings in this segment last for 5 seconds. The spoken voice begins to distort with echo.]*

**Allysse:** I start through Sandringham Road, Windsor Close, and Britannia Crescent.

[Voices of two people chatting. Birds chirping loudly. The wind in the tree leaves. An ambulance siren can be heard from a road nearby.]

Through residential streets.

[The wind has lessened. It is fairly quiet. A wheelie bin is being put away and makes noises as it is being dragged from the pavement to a garage. Birds chirping. Very faint voices.]

Into Royal Park and Forty Acres.

[Voices of adults and children talking to each other, calling one another. Birds chirping. The wind in the tree leaves.]

And then into North Road.

[People chatting and passing by. Footsteps of people walking. There are less trees so less wind in leaves noise. A car passes by slowly.]

Into Mead Park.

[Brief music coming from a radio. The wind has picked up and can be heard loudly in the tree leaves. Birds chirping. Distant voices can also be heard.]

Past the church, the closed pub, the deserted train station.

[Beeping of train doors opening and then closing. A small lorry goes through a pothole, its loads bump at the back. Multiple cars pass by. A car honks.]

In Mead Street.

[Feet pounding as someone runs past. The wind in the tree leaves. Faint voices as a couple of people have a chat. A police siren as a car drives fast on a nearby road.]

*[Section 5: The field recordings of the various places merge into one another. The voice list places one after another in a random order, the locations merging into one another in words as well as sounds. The spoken voice is increasingly distorted. It reaches a crescendo.]*

**Allysse:** And back home.

[Silence.]

## Wish It Were Safe Out There - Emily Miles - 0:17:27

[Distant airy traffic sounds, the squeaking of a wheel perhaps, faint voices, a car honks. A vehicle passes on the street below the window, and another and another, increasing the volume of traffic noise. As they continue further up the street the voices come back to the fore, accompanied by some faint bluesy or folky music. A car idles, and more traffic passes by. A car starts and pulls away. The music continues very quietly in the background. A noisier vehicle, maybe a truck, seems to stop nearby, the sound of its engine drowning out everything else. After some time it revs loudly and pulls away. More traffic whizzes by. A quieter soundscape now. In the distance, the low growl of a motorbike, perhaps.]

## Sweeper - Dan - 0:22:38

[Seagulls, voices of kids playing. When Dan speaks it sounds muffled and slightly echoey.]

**Dan:** This is Dan. I'm in a playground on the top of Galley Hill in Bexhill, talking to you through one of those weird tube communication things they have in playgrounds these days.

And you are listening to Queer Out Here.

[The mic is withdrawn into the open air, gulls and other bird and child noises become sharper, clearer. Background traffic, slight wind. When Dan speaks again, he is close to the mic.]

Hello.

## Link - 0:23:21

**Allysse:** As the COVID-19 lockdown drew on, I found myself paying more attention than I normally would have to details and sounds around my home. My garden became a campsite for a night, my local footpaths more thoroughly explored than before. With a lot less motorised traffic on the road, I heard more birds and subtlety of the wind in tree leaves, as well as lawnmowers and endless DIY projects, my local area sounding like a never-ending Sunday.

**Jonathan:** We asked you, too, to pay attention to the change of sounds around you, to send us field recordings of your local areas. We've already heard one of these recordings, from Emily Miles, and in this section you will hear many more. We'll start with my piece, where I reflect on the craft of field recording, discussing how I set up my microphone to capture the sounds of the incoming tide. This will then move into *Sounds of Confinement*, Sylvie Beaumont's garden

recording from the south of France. Following that, you'll hear *Ambient Sound* by Jenny List, capturing the atmosphere of spring in rural England, then *Havannah During Lockdown* from regular contributor Mags, taken in her local nature reserve.

**Allysse:** What is noticeable in these pieces is their relative quietness with birds singing, the occasional breeze, and DIY noises. Without any context, they are just the sound of the countryside, but what Sylvie and Mags have highlighted in their statements is the lack of cars and planes that normally accompany such sounds. There is a loss there as well as a familiarity to any of us who spend time outdoors.

As we move from England to France and back to England, keep your ears open to catch the different soundscapes weaving in and out of each other. Can you hear the difference in the environments? What time of day is it? What is the weather like? Where do these field recordings take you?

## Recording the Tide - Jonathan - 0:25:00

[Waves gently lap and break on a pebble beach, creating whooshing white noise sounds under Jonathan's monologue.]

**Jonathan:** One thing I've noticed with this lot of submissions for Queer Out Here is that we've got a lot more field recordings than usual. And I wonder if that's because people are paying more attention to the sounds that are closer to home, or because people have got more time to think about those sounds and go and record them. Or perhaps it's because people don't have enough energy or brainspace to articulate exactly what's going on in their lives, but a field recording can capture a bit of a snapshot of what life is like at the moment.

And I thought this might be a good opportunity to talk a little bit about the craft of field recordings - with an example, as well.

I've just taken a few field recordings of rockpools and the rocks and the tide and the beach at Glyne Gap in East Sussex near Bexhill. I took three or four of them. The first one, the first few minutes was just me fiddling around with levels because there were quite a lot of different volumes of waves crashing in the distance and then also slapping against the rocks near my feet, um, and they were sometimes quite loud and created a few peaks in the recording. So I spent a little bit of time fiddling around with the volume and kind of seeing if I wanted any - to cut out any of the lower frequencies, of any hums in the background. But there is a lot less of that at the moment because there are fewer cars and trains and boats operating in the area.

And I also had to think about how I was going to sit or stand while I was taking the recording, because I started off in a crouched position which after a minute or two was quite difficult to maintain, so I had to move around and decide that I, I needed to have somewhere that I could either sit or at least kind of lean against one of the rocks to take the pressure off. Or to be able to put the recorder, place the recorder on a rock and step away from it.

I also noticed, after the first field recording of about five minutes, that the tide was coming in. It was something that I didn't know, or hadn't observed. I'd almost assumed at the time the tide was

going out actually, so it was surprising that it was coming in. And I noticed that, you know [laugh] as the tide came in my, um, position became a little bit more precarious because, um, I was about to get wet feet and the recorder was gonna get wet if I left it where I'd left it.

And there was some wind, as well. Um, and I thought about how I could best place the recorder to keep it a little bit out of the wind. So, either with my body shielding it from the prevailing wind or putting it lower down in one of the rock pools or crevices to shield it a bit from the wind - although that meant that some of the slapping water sounds were quite loud.

So it took maybe about five minutes to, to find all of those things out during that first field recording. And then I kind of knew what I wanted to get for, for a field recording for Queer Out Here. I wanted something that had a little bit of a narrative in it, so the tide coming in provides a narrative of itself, and I thought perhaps if I could find a rockpool that was not full, ah, and record it filling then that could be quite a nice little recording.

And in the end I did take that recording. And it's not very long, it's only a few minutes long, and, you know, it might not be the best field recording ever, but, um. I managed to shield it from the wind, I managed to find a position that I could sit in that wasn't going to, ah, cause me too much discomfort, and I was going to be able to hold it for five minutes or so! I found a position for the microphone that wasn't, where it wasn't gonna get wet until, til right towards the end when the rockpool was completely full. And I hit record again and you're just about to hear the field recording that I made at that point in time.

So, these are all things that you can think about when you're taking field recordings: your position, the position of the microphone, the sounds that you hear around you, the kind of narrative you might want a field recording to have - even if it's fairly abstract, or cyclical, maybe you've got trains going past or something like that. You know, you can think about the wind and how best to protect the microphone from it - it's quite windy now, so I'm kind of hunched over the microphone [laugh] and I've got my hand up protecting it from some of the oncoming wind. But that's just a few things to think about if you are going to make a field recording for Queer Out Here, or for another place that you might want to submit it, or just for your own records - it's lovely to have these recordings of times and places. Kind of like photographs, but in audio form.

So, here is my field recording of the tide filling a rockpool at Glyne Gap in East Sussex. I hope you enjoy it.

[The sounds of waves changes slightly, to a more distant rushing. A child squeals with happiness. Closer to the microphone is the sound of trickling water. As sounds continue, the water that is closer to the microphone starts to trickle and slosh more obviously against the rocks. After a few minutes, the splashes, hisses and watery gurgles become more frequent and begin to sound very close indeed.]

## Sounds of Confinement - Sylvie Beaumont - 0:34:01

[The field recording begins with the noisy chatter of groups of birds. This sound is present throughout the recording. Alongside the birds, there is the occasional banging of what sounds like a home renovation or DIY project nearby. It soon disappears. An insect arrives and buzzes around

the microphone. There is some wind distortion. A person takes a few steps on gravel followed by the sound of wind. A dog barks a few times in the distance. The buzzing insect is still present. The person stops walking, takes a few steps on gravel, then stops. We can hear some wind. When the wind dies down, the person walks again.]

## Ambient Sound, 2020-04-10 - Jenny List - 0:35:30

[A range of small birds sing and call, an insect buzzes past, we can hear robins and a blackbird calls. The insect (a bumblebee, perhaps) returns and hums around the microphone. In the background, we hear a pheasant's *chock-chock* call. A small amount of wind distortion. All the small birds continue to chirp and trill, as the blackbird sings constantly nearby. Occasionally there seems to be extremely faint vehicle noise.]

## Havannah During Lockdown - Mags - 0:39:20

[Birds sing and chirp, the sound of distant traffic, some louder and closer birds.]

**Mags:** So I've just finished my day working from home. I usually work from home so having to work in that situation during a lockdown isn't something unusual for me. But, um, having your movements - where you can go and how much time you can spend outdoors - restricted, um, can be a bit frustrating. So, I'm making the most of coming out into the local nature reserve. Um, it's called Havannah Three Hills and it's actually built, um, where the old mine used to be in the area.

And - a few people out today. Cyclists, few people walking, taking their hour of exercise. And yeah, I just find being out in nature something I really enjoy but at this current time it's probably more important than ever. Um, it's just helping me to have a bit of time on my own. I'm currently sharing a home with my 88 year old mother which is, ah, can be testing at times. So having an opportunity to come out into the trees, into the woodland, um, is really helping with my, just really with my mental health, um, which is really important at this time.

So, yeah, I do feel for those people who live in the cities or live in apartments and don't have the option of getting out into the open air. So. Yeah I'm just going to finish off my walk, now. It's probably another 20 minutes to get back home. Um, listening to the birds. There's supposed to be red squirrels here, in all the times I've been here I have never spotted a red squirrel! Although, I recently did spot some deer which, ah, is great.

So yeah, this is Mags, from the northeast of England, during the lockdown for Queer Out Here.

[Birds sing in a constant stream of twittering and cheeping. The traffic sounds are quiet and distant, probably from a motorway or other major road.]

## Sweeper - Dru Marland - 0:42:36

[Morning birdsong of twitterings and a corvid, followed by quiet shuffling sounds.]

**Dru:** Dru Marland here on my narrowboat on the Kennet and Avon canal, deep in a wooded valley to the south of Bath, where the morning tranquility is -

[A loud warning buzzer/horn squeals, and an engine chugs to life - Dru continues shouting over the noise.]

- shattered by my Beta Marine diesel engine! Onwards and upwards, and full speed ahead for Queer Out Here!

## Link - 0:43:03

**Jonathan:** Thanks Dru - love your style!

As we heard earlier, having our movements restricted to our local area can make us feel trapped - but it can also make us curious and help us deepen our connection to a place and its history. In her personal essay *Bluestone*, our cover artist Emily walks the cobbled alleyways of suburban Melbourne. She traces the history of the stones beneath her feet, from their creation story, through colonial and carceral violence to the present day.

Emily's piece was recorded primarily on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and we acknowledge all First Nations people listening.

## Bluestone - Emily Doyle - 0:45:40

[Birds singing quietly in cheeps and whip-like whistles, wind in leaves. The sounds fade down but continue as Emily speaks.]

**Emily:** "Long ago, four giant beings arrived in southeast Australia. Three strode out to other parts of the continent, but one crouched in place. His body transformed into a volcano called Budj Bim, and his teeth became the lava the volcano spat out."

As with a lot of Australian First Nations knowledge, it took an archaeological find to prove this oral history of the Gunditjmara people correct. An axe head has been found underneath some of this lava flow, which is dated to have formed about 37,000 years ago. The story of Budj Bim has been told for those 37,000 years, continuously.

[Wind gradually fades out]

Last year, I decided to leave office work for good, to go back to study and get a qualification in conservation and land management. One of the reasons I chose the university I did was the connection the course had to First Nations community groups, educators and elders. For tens of thousands of years, First Nations people had been custodians of the land, of "country", and had cultivated and cared for it with a spiritual belief system I connected to and respected deeply.

The first class we had with a guest First Nations lecturer, he walked us around about 200 metres of the Yarra River in the centre of Melbourne and challenged us.

[Sounds of peaceful background urban noises fade in]

What year did Melbourne become known as Melbourne? When did Europeans first arrive here? None of the class knew.

And we had known that Melbourne as we knew it hadn't been there. But we hadn't known that the eastern side of the river had been fertile wetlands.

[Small splashes of water]

And that the west side was grasslands and murnong terraces. And that we were standing at a point where the fresh water had rushed down a small waterfall into the tidal, brackish water of the southern part of the river. It had been a place of great social, cultural and practical importance, a meeting place, the only place for some distance that the river could actually be crossed - by the rocks of the gentle waterfall, long since destroyed with dynamite by European invaders.

[Splashing sounds intensify, then continues quietly under narration]

The lecturer told us that the descendents of the people who met there, crossed there, fished there, lived there - they didn't know the name of the place. Knowledge that had been passed down for tens of thousands of years was lost in the mass death due to violence, disease and dispossession of the last two hundred years.

And here were me and my classmates, living charmed lives, not even knowing when and how "Melbourne", the city we lived in, was formed only two hundred years ago. We had a responsibility, as Australians, to know about the land we lived on. And for a change, for me this didn't just mean to "understand and respect nature".

[Background sounds fade out]

Something flipped for me. I was reminded that humanity is part of nature. That I do actually believe that as human animals, our culture and spirituality seeps into the landscape.

[Field recording fades up: footsteps, birds, distant traffic, drilling sounds - this continues quietly under the narration]

Instead of the bush hikes I love, I've been walking close to home lately, like most other human animals around the world.

I live in Brunswick, a Melbourne suburb within the Victorian Volcanic Plains bioregion - the same region as the giant Budj Bim. Stretching out from close to the western border of the state to nearly the Melbourne CBD, the Victorian Volcanic Plains is dominated by Cenozoic volcanic deposits, resulting in an undulating basaltic plain with volcanic cones, stony rises, old lava flows and shallow lakes.

[Birds, possibly some kind of rosella or cockatoo, squabble. Footsteps and quiet suburban sounds continue under the rest of the piece.]

Basalt - known also as bluestone - is the literal foundation on the land of which I live. The Wurundjeri-willam people of the Kulin Nation lived on the fertile land between the Merri and Moonee Creeks that since European invasion has been called "Brunswick".

One of the first things Europeans did when they got to my neighbourhood - before they divided up the land and sold it - is build a prison. The artery of the neighbourhood, built early, is Sydney Road, running straight up the middle between the Merri and the Moonee. One of the earliest public parades on this road was of convicts being escorted to the prison, known as Pentridge Stockade. Their punishment there was hard labour: quarrying massive amounts of bluestone. Bluestone that prisoner road gangs paved the Sydney Road with. Bluestone that they used to build the walls of Pentridge (that, as an aside, have been ghoulishly preserved in interior and exterior walls of today's luxury housing development). And bluestone that can be found ubiquitously throughout Melbourne today, in huge, polished-flat pavers on the city's poshest streets, and most of all in the alleyways that bisect suburban blocks throughout this urban sprawl.

Melbourne's streets are built on a classic grid system. I'm used to admiring our picturesque alleyways with a sideways glance when I'm on the most direct route somewhere. Now, I'm seeking out new, less populated roads [routes?]. I'm finding another grid of pathways, like shadow versions of the main streets. The alleyways, each constructed the same - cobbled, round-edged bluestones gently angling downward to drain to a line of bluestone blocks that parade up the centre of the road.

Walking a bluestone alleyway is tactile like a concrete pavement is not. The ground is uneven, the surface of the stones themselves cobbled enough to give my partner a backache when she walks on them with me. After rain, the alleyway cups in its rocky hands mirrored puddles that reflect grey skies. Soil, leaves, and other debris wash under fences and create drifts of organic matter with nothing to fertilise, muddy on my shoes when it's rained.

Like the rivers running under London, accessible through hidden cellars in unassuming shops, the bluestone alleyways flow silently behind each house in Brunswick. Walking them, I'm bordered on either side by looming and slouching fences; rusted, Frankensteined garage doors, and luscious froths of climbing vines overflowing their gardens - jasmine, happy wanderer, morning glory, passionfruit. Fruit trees hang over fences, with footballs and tennis balls littering the cobblestones amongst dropped lemons and stonefruit.

I feel like a ghost flitting through other people's intimate lives. Rarely, I get a visual glimpse into a backyard, more frequently it's the sounds that come through, ones you rarely hear when you're walking past a front yard. Dogs running and snuffling at the fence. The twitters of an aviary. Music playing - either someone practicing an instrument, or playing their favourite tunes. And conversation, just murmurs, with frank, open tones reserved for private spaces.

I miss the bush, but I'm learning that this ecosystem and its history is something I can also understand, and connect to.

[Footsteps, birds, and distant cityscape gradually fade out]

## Link - 0:51:27

**Allysse:** We close Issue 05 with two pieces about the sea and its healing power. In *Caught Within the Fisher's Net*, Lynda Berry is captivated by the sea. She finds herself returning to the beach and the ocean, finding solace by its side.

On the other side of the world in Australia, Cecily escapes to the beach during lockdown, where she can find some peace and a refuge in the early morning before returning to her house. Cecily recorded her thoughts on video, so you can also experience the visual beauty of her corner of the world. We'll pop this up on our [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#) channels - check the show notes for a link!

## Caught Within the Fisher's Net - Lynda Berry - 0:52:01

[Strange laughter, gulls squawking, background traffic, faint white noise of the sea]

**Lynda:** The gulls are just chilling out, doing their thing. Being like gulls. They usually wake me up in the morning, really irritating - *kwork kwork kwork kwork kwork kwork* [imitating gulls]. [Laughs] Those seagulls, they really know how to sing, right? [Laughs] Really know how to sing.

[Background voices - one exclaims, "Oi, what are you doing?! Don't do that!"]

I really should say something quickly for a few minutes about my life here in lockdown, and my time spent on the beach - which is a lot of time spent on the beach to be honest! [Laughs] More than one reasonable human being should.

[Sound of waves crashing.]

I've been listening to a man named Wallace Nicholas talk about the calming effect of the ocean upon our minds and I wonder if, or why, why everyone who's kind of born beside the sea kind of dragged back to the sea. [Laugh]

I like my time spent running beside the sea. I sometimes think I should pick a new route, but - but I never do.

[Background voices.]

I get pulled back, and I don't ever really pick a different route.

[Background traffic.]

I mean, I grew up by the sea, and it's a recurring theme of my life to want to get back to it. Maybe there's a baseline and this is my baseline and it's, it's a better baseline than if I wasn't by the sea.

[Waves crash. There's a reverb effect on Lynda's voice as she reads part of a poem - this is the case for all italicised sections.]

*I am poised here  
Its gushing breath, its unknowable surface  
And I am surrounded here  
held, encased in a bubble  
Is there an end to it?*

[Background beach noises.]

And the best times I think for the seafront are low tide, when you can see all the sands and all the little rivers of water flowing back that have been left behind, or puddles that have been left behind in the rocks, and, just... You can also be further away from people. Everyone, all my friends in, in Worthing said come walking at low tide, and like - because there are fewer people and it's easier to keep away from them, whereas on the promenade it's very hard to keep away from people and do the social distancing.

It's not low tide now. [Gulls call] But it's still quite quiet. And people just sitting on the beach chilling out. Probably from the same households. Bit strange that we have to think that way and judge in that way, now. As though it's ever really ever been anything to do with me, but suddenly it is something to do with me and it's something to do with everyone, and it's just so strange. We're so used to just being free, and now, just gotta think about everything.

[Waves.]

*We are all caught within the fisher's net  
Gazing out at our loss*

[Background noises, including a faint siren that continues under the narration.]

And I, um [laughs]. A lot of people said how great it is to have a garden, and - during lockdown - and I don't have a garden, I obviously live in a flat, um, but they don't realise that I live about a five, less than five minutes away from the seafront. So I have all this.

All this sort of mystery of what, what, what is in there.

*It breathes  
and I feel its breath*

It's just... what it is.

*Forever mixing and melting  
into itself*

Vast and expansive. It moves. It has a world within itself that you can't see. Sometimes you see the evidence of it washed up on the beach, like a dead fish or a dead jellyfish. And the rocks and stones. Maybe some rubbish. Not much else. Sometimes. Maybe some driftwood.

*I came once just to see its crystal clearness  
To see it lose its stormy grey reserve*

*And shimmer open end*

It just is. It's ah, and a horizon, which you can imagine. And I've probably spent many times as a youth or as a young woman looking at the sea and wondering where else to go or what else is there and feeling that sense of passion when it's moody, or peace when it's calm. It seems quite obvious to say that, but it's real. When you grow up beside the sea it, it really does stir things in you. And the smell of the salt and the cleanness of the air. It's, it's a very, um... It clears your head a lot

[Waves crash.]

Sometimes it feels a bit like the heart of passion itself.

[Waves crash, gulls call.]

Say if something terrible happens to me, will I just go and sit and watch for a long, long time... Until in some ways that strange expanse kind of heals you and allows you to come to terms with what's inside of you.

[Waves.]

When I wrote a poem about my impressions of the sea and, whilst being in lockdown, ah, it doesn't always seem to be always this soothing, or a calming influence. It sometimes seems to be the theatre of anxiety or imagining. Maybe I, I imagine at one point in the poem a diver who can't breathe - or who can breathe but doesn't believe they can breathe underwater. And I wonder if this is a beginning of a series of poems that might be quite healing to kind of keep writing about. Maybe right now we're in the middle of a crisis and, yeah, the sea is still there, the sea is still kind of inviting us into a, a larger, ah, realisation of who we are, and, and nature and connecting us to who we truly are and, and reminding us there's something vastly expansive out there.

[Waves.]

*We are poised here, and struggling  
like a first time diver  
unable to trust the regulator  
As our body starts to panic and we long  
to be drawn back upwards*

*Here we float, unpredictable and  
uncertain as water*

[Faint conversation, beach and street sounds.]

There are these moments where I feel a lot of peace. Maybe I'm upset about something - I, I tend to over analyse, I think that's, like, life, you know [laughs]. We all have flaws in our minds and that's one of my flaws, that I tend to overthink. And sometimes when I go for a run it's a way of running away from thinking. And it does work - I mean, at least Nietzsche said it worked - and

sometimes just changing your hormones helps, and I'm out there... Sometimes I resolve it; sometimes I just change where I am at.

Yesterday I was in a particularly bad place. Not emotionally too bad, but just ruminating and, and I can see that in myself, it just needs, it just needs time away, to stare at something that... has its own life, beyond our laws.

[Waves on the shingle beach.]

## My Favourite Place - Cecily - 1:00:02

[The white noise and thumping sound of waves on a long, sandy beach plays throughout the recording.]

**Cecily:** This is the beach that I walk on and swim on now that the sun has risen a bit higher, although it's still behind the heavy clouds.

It's beautiful for swimming. And it's, when I come down here, it's really hard to imagine the chaos that is existing in the rest, rest of the world. And for us. We're in, home, home isolation me and my partner Margaret, who is 90. Margaret has Alzheimers, so what I do is I come down here in the morning and have my walk and my swim.

The water's 24 degrees at the moment. And it's a good time because you can see there's lots of surfboards out, but apart from that there's hardly anyone down at this hour, so I don't have any problem with social distancing.

But also, um, a major thing is that I love the s- the beach and the sea. But I also love it at, when it's dawn and the, the light is coming over the sea, and... It just feels so healthy and healing, as if the sea is one of the elements on this earth that is quite untouched by this Coronavirus pandemic.

## Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:01:25

[The sound of waves on a shingle beach plays under the conclusion]

**Jonathan:** And that brings us to the conclusion of Issue 05, Side B. We hope you've enjoyed hearing from other queer folks in lockdown around the world. Perhaps you've been inspired to do your own exploring or to make your own lockdown recordings - or maybe you just feel a little less isolated with these voices and sounds to keep you company. At any rate, we hope you are keeping safe and well.

**Allysse:** Thanks to everyone who sent us the pieces featured in Issue 05, Side B: Cecily, Emma, Allysse, Jenny, Jonathan, Lynda, Mags, Sylvie and both Emilys. Thanks to Dan, Dru and Nova for the sweepers. If you'd like to find out more about any of our contributors or their pieces, please check out the show notes on our website, [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com). You'll also find Emily's excellent cover art and a full transcript there.

**Jonathan:** We always love to know what you think of Queer Out Here, so please get in touch when you've finished listening. You can find us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) (just search for Queer Out Here) or you can email queerouther at gmail dot com. We'll open for submissions for Issue 06 later in 2020 - we really hope to hear from some of you then. And that's it for now! So from me, Jonathan -

**Allysse:** - and me, Allysse -

**Both:** Goodbye!

[The sound of the waves on a shingle beach slowly fades out.]