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# Pre-transcript introduction

## Queer Out Here

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

## Issue 08 link

If you've somehow stumbled across this transcript and want to find the audio file, it's available here: <https://www.queerouthere.com/listen/issue-08>

## Content notes

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

- Discussions of mental illness, mental health, disability, and social ostracisation
- Non-detailed mentions of queerphobia, racism and ableism
- Mentions of Covid lockdown
- Non-graphic references to animal harm (e.g. fishing)
- Sudden and loud sounds like fireworks, vehicles and wind distortion
- Harsh and unusual whispering sounds
- Some swearing and use of language that's often considered ableist (e.g. "crazy")

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

# Transcript

## Opener - Various - 0:00:00

[Faint bleeping and electronic ambience fades in. Thunder crashes, water ripples, fireworks pop and the regular “bloop” sound of a whale call begins.]

**Lauren:** This is something I've never done before...

**Dee:** ...that brings me joy...

**Alison:** ...riding bikes...

**Bart:** ...directly next to the sea.

[A drumbeat has faded in to overtake the whale sounds, and a bassoon starts playing a languid phrase. The sound of water - waves, ripples - and birdsong are in the background.]

**Bilen:** The world around us is living...

**Fish:** I wish I could be more like you.

**Raine:** You are listening to Queer Out Here!

[An a capella chord swells, a wave crashes from one side to the other, the drum fades and icy footsteps begin. As the water and chord dissolve, another piece of music takes over, celestial and expansive. A voice sings, “A-wey-ah-ney”. The music finishes and slowly fades along with the footsteps.]

## Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:42

[As the music from the opener fades out, birdsong fades in. The sound of the dawn chorus in the countryside in Wales plays under the introduction.]

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

**Allysse:** And I'm Allysse. Welcome to Issue 08!

**Jonathan:** It's really exciting to be back to our usual format, and we're really keen to share the surprises and delights of this issue's contributions. We thought it was interesting that, on the whole, the pieces this time are more intricately edited, crossing genres and including all kinds of audio. And we've wondered why that might be the case. Is it that after a long break from open submissions, you guys had a lot of creative energy to burn? Ah, is it that people are getting more familiar and comfortable with audio as a medium? Have we tapped into new networks of contributors? Or is it maybe that there's more queer outdoors audio out there, but that it's mostly conversational, so our platform for more arty audio is providing a different niche?

**Allysse:** Speaking of art, we hope you've noticed the cover of this issue, by Dee Lister.

Dee's black and white photo shows an old city building in Bolton, viewed from street level. The upper edge cuts a strong diagonal line between structure and sky. A number of pigeons huddle on

the roofline, but one has taken flight - the camera has caught it in the split second before it leaves the frame.

Dee writes, “the metaphor resonates of a bedraggled though majestic bird soaring away from the others who ... [are] nestled within the urban decay of a town centre... I believe transcending internalised shame and fear with gentleness, self-worth and acceptance of past trauma makes just stepping out the door an act of resistance.”

You can go and check out Dee’s cover art on our website, at [queerouther.com](http://queerouther.com).

**Jonathan:** Before we get stuck into things, a few notes. You’ll hear sounds in the background of my links throughout this issue, which were recorded on Gunaikurnai Country - although not these background sounds, they were recorded by Allysse on a camping trip in Wales. This issue was produced in part on the stolen land of the Gunaikurnai, specifically the Brayakaulung People. We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and extend an acknowledgement to all Indigenous and First Nations listeners.

**Allysse:** The pieces in Queer Out Here cover many topics related to being queer and the outdoors. In this issue you’ll hear:

- Discussions of mental illness, mental health, disability, and social ostracisation
- Non-detailed mentions of queerphobia, racism and ableism
- Mention of Covid lockdowns
- Non-graphic references to animal harm such as fishing
- Sudden and loud sounds like fireworks, vehicles and wind distortion
- Harsh and unusual whispering sounds
- Some swearing and use of language that’s often considered ableist

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

**Both:** - let’s get Queer Out Here!

## Link - Allysse - 0:03:51

[Rain sounds fade up]

**Allysse:** We start this issue with a piece from Jenny, a middle-aged trans woman with a lifelong love of the outdoors. If you are a repeat listener to Queer Out Here, you might remember Jenny’s New Years Day walk in Issue 01. This walk is a bit different! Here, Jenny take us through a small Dutch town’s New Years Eve celebrations. Her piece is an audio postcard, a moment in time and space captured for all of us to share.

We chose to open the issue with this piece as a way into a different world, one made of sound, travel and music. In Jenny’s piece, a little of everything that is to follow can be found. But for now, enough talk from me, open your ears and let yourself be transported to the cold streets of a small Dutch town on New Years Eve.

# A Dutch New Year - Jenny List - 0:04:40

[Footsteps and background atmosphere, a little wind distortion]

**Jenny:** We're here at the start of a walk, a walk from a slightly wooded area with some houses, through some fields and into a small town.

[In the background, fireworks start popping, the sound ricocheting around the landscape. These continue as Jenny talks]

It's not the normal walk I'd do which would be out in a wild place, or in the countryside, getting away from people. In fact this is quite a noisy walk, and it's walking into town.

I should explain where I'm at. It's the 31st of December 2022 and I'm walking into a small town in the extreme southeast corner of the Netherlands. I've just moved my car and parked it, ah, out of town - for the reasons you can hear in the background. Around New Year, the Netherlands turns from its normal, sensible country into this crazy homemade fireworks display, in which every Dutch person considers it their right - nay, their duty! - to buy as many large fireworks as they can and set them off all at once.

[Fireworks whistle and pop, some wind distortion]

So this walk, this recording, is really a journey through the soundscape of one of the most amazing experiences that the Netherlands has to offer a tourist like me.

[Popping, crackling and whistling continues]

Something I notice as a Brit immediately is the difference between the atmosphere here [words obscured by a flurry of fireworks] like this in the Netherlands and the way it would be at home.

[Loud cracks and bangs of fireworks coming from nearby, continuing intermittently as Jenny speaks]

I think at home, in the UK, we'd have... an air of menace. There would probably be drunks around, there'd be yobs, there would be - the police would probably get involved fairly quickly. Whereas here, certainly pretty much all the adults have had the, ah, the odd Hertog Jan beer. But there's no air of menace. This is a family affair. You've got slightly tanked-up dads giggling as they walk out into the street with a great big display firework. You've got the kids watching it from the side. You've got little boys with little fire- firecrackers and, ah, laughing in glee as they go "pop-pop-pop-pop" down the road. It's a much friendlier affair. And... To the extent that I can walk through it, as a very visibly trans person, I can walk through this town and not feel at all at threat. I'm just seen as another partygoer, another person watching the fun.

[Cascades of crackling fireworks continues]

Because pretty much everybody in this town seems to be out on the street watching the fireworks. Ah, it's definitely something that, as a Brit, I find it very nice. I wish we had that kind of spirit going on.

[A pause in talking, we hear footsteps and a variety of individual fireworks]

The party atmosphere continues, with families setting gazebos up out in the street. They'll have barbecues and the inevitable oil drum full of bits of burning wood and usually the remains of all the fireworks they've set off. And they play music. Ah. One minute you'll be walking past Dutch folk music and the next half street away you'll be walking past happy hardcore. Ah, definitely everybody's out there to have a good time - and it shows!

[Background music, fireworks, people chatting. Kids talking, one says, "Hi," to Jenny. Jenny replies, "Alright, guys." Footsteps, people calling, more fireworks and faint music.]

Really coming into the thick of it now, ah, walking down through a, ah, probably 1950s-built suburb of, ah, some new [detached?] houses and rows of [inaudible] row houses. [Fireworks really ramping up, obscuring some words.] And, ah, as you can hear the fireworks really get quite intense at times. And of course there's the inevitable little two-stroke moped, ridden by a sixteen year old who's got his first 50cc bike, buzzing around. Because this is the Netherlands, why wouldn't it be?

[Said bike revs up and zooms past. Fireworks and the bike off in the distance. Voices.]

So, I hope my little walk through, ah, the outer suburbs of a small Dutch town has given you an idea of one of the craziest nights I've, ah, spent in a while as a tourist! I'll certainly, after having seen this, I won't see the Netherlands in the same way. [Crack, crack, crackle, pop, whistle.] Ah, I came home to drop off my car keys after this and a friend of mine and I went out, ah, and we walked around town. And this went on into the early hours of the morning. We came back at about 1 in the morning and it was still going. Definitely something they don't tell you about the Netherlands, and something that everybody should go and see. It's far more interesting than the bulb fields and the windmills, I can tell you!

[A series of fireworks pops in the middle distance]

## Link - Jonathan - 0:10:52

[Quiet suburban atmosphere fades in. A currawong calls nearby. Other birds chat in the background. Currawongs continue to call off and on throughout the link.]

**Jonathan:** I'm sitting on my back verandah on GunaiKurnai Country, and I can see almost twenty currawongs, which you will probably hear in the background as I talk. Um, they make this [imitating the birds] *currawong-currawong* sound. They're a, a black bird with, um, white patches on their tail and, at the edge of their tail and on their wings. And they have come into town in the last few weeks, um, which they do seasonally, apparently, moving in from the bush for the winter.

[Currawongs continue.]

Anyway, I loved going along for that walk with Jenny. Um, I really enjoyed its lighthearted, community atmosphere and the beat of the fireworks throughout.

We're continuing the theme of walking at night, but taking it in a very different direction, with a piece from Elisabeth Flett, entitled "Winter 2020". Elisabeth is a writer, theatre maker, musician and feminist troublemaker, and this piece reflects her experience walking the deserted streets of

Aberdeen during lockdown. She tells us that with the isolation and loneliness of her lockdown routine, her sleep cycle became (quote) “worthy of Dracula”. On her nocturnal walks she says, “I felt like I’d slid into the pages of War of the Worlds... As a fan of Jeff Wayne’s musical version of the novel I decided to pay homage to him with this poetic soundscape piece.”

We think the eeriness of “Winter 2020” makes it a fantastic companion for a contribution from Shaughn Martel called “Uncanny Nausea”. Shaughn, also known as bit-form, is a new media artist in Tkaronto in Ontario - the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. And apologies for my pronunciation.

Shaun sent us a piece they describe as a “disorienting horror soundtrack”. They made it using sounds of the rusted strings of a piano that they found on the street this past winter, along with edited field recordings of that street and passing cars. It’s a very cool piece of audio art.

So, first up, Elisabeth Flett’s “Winter 2020”, then Shaughn Martel’s “Uncanny Nausea”.

[Currawongs call nearby.]

Let’s get creepy!

## Winter 2020 - Elisabeth Flett - 0:13:09

[A low, almost metallic, string or drone note fades in. Short, repetitive, mid-frequency notes join the drone in falling, pulsing phrases. Distorted, almost painful, sounds - similar to wind distortion. A voice - distorted, pitch-shifted, low, incomprehensible - speaks in the left channel. Rustling sounds - maybe footsteps? These noises continue as Elisabeth narrates.]

**Elisabeth:** Winter 2020.

The sky was on fire and so was everything else.

My daily walks turn nightly, my nocturne habits ensuring that I have the streets to myself in lonely glory, the occasional fox my only companion. Ears back, eyes glinting, both of us unsure at having our solitude unexpectedly disrupted.

[Another distorted, incomprehensible voice joins the first in the right channel. As they continue, it’s possible to hear that their cadence is the same as Elisabeth’s phrases - a creepy pre-cognition of her voice, lending a sense of inevitability to her narrative.]

Above the shuttered shops light pollution casts a sickly glow down onto the city, ghastly in its lack of life. (I hardly count, just a ghost which doesn’t yet know that it’s already dead.)

[A flickering digital pulse, almost like a horror movie cowbell played backwards, joins the atmosphere. Monitoring a heartbeat, perhaps. But whose?]

The arts centre at the end of my block - usually a looming gravestone of gloomy sepulchre granite - is decked out in decadent colour during the hours of the evening, the blues and reds and orange of projected light the only sign that anyone still lives in this deserted town.

[The wind distortion sound is becoming more persistent, louder.]

Or perhaps this light show, the one thing that makes me believe that others are out there somewhere in this grey necropolis, is simply on a timer set by someone long gone and I really am alone. Just another nighttime animal skittering around in the dark.

I retrace my steps, away from that terribly lonely rainbow, the sounds of Jeff Wayne ringing unbidden in my ears.

[A seagull cries, almost lost in the uneasy swell of atmospheric sounds. Then another, higher, more persistent - almost like an alarm.]

I always knew rereading War of the Worlds would come in useful, but I never expected it to become quite so... relevant.

[The drones continue for a while, then fade. The seagull calls. The wind distortion fades. A footstep or two. The flickering digital pulse continues into an empty world.]

## Uncanny Nausea - Shaughn Martel (aka bit-form) - 0:16:33

[This piece is made up of the sounds of rusted piano strings and other field recordings, edited and manipulated into an intense, dissonant "horror soundtrack".

Deep, insistent but irregular beats are overlaid with high, sharp stings of metallic notes - or sometimes just the metal sound of the rusted piano strings, almost percussive. The deep thumping or pulsing sounds create the nausea of the title. The manipulation and combination of the audio sometimes produces the effect of almost-a-voice, sometimes the harsh chittering of insects, the scratching of animals, the growl of some unknown thing. Towards the end, a few clearer notes ring almost like bells through the noise, and the uneasy soundtrack fades.]

## Sweeper - Mags - 0:17:33

[Sound of birds and woodlands, faint behind the wind distortion in the mic. It sounds chilly.]

**Mags:** This is Mags, out collecting litter in my local woods in Northumberland. [Wind distortion] And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[More wind, fading into the birdsong of Allysse's link.]

## Link - Allysse - 0:17:48

[Twittering birdsong plays under Allysse's voice.]

**Allysse:** Thanks Mags - it wouldn't be Queer Out Here without your voice in it.



Next up, we have three pieces that bounce off each other to think about human relationship to the outdoors, to question what counts as “outdoors” or “a hike”, what we gain from being outside. These pieces highlight the similarities and contrasts that can be found between cities and remote, less-populated areas.

We start with Bilen, a life-long enthusiast and student of all things outdoors. Originally from Ethiopia and now based in Brooklyn, New York on the stolen lands of the Lenni-Lenape people, Bilen reflects on the #52HikeChallenge - a challenge to complete one hike per week for a year - and her changing relationship to the outdoors.

She raises many questions, and taps into the conversation about the separation between humanity and nature. She writes, “Through this artificial cleaving and dispossessing, we produced a wilderness separate from us. We are forced to uphold binaries as though they serve us.” She asks us to, “Just be still and listen. With your whole being. Making a real and lived effort to be in right relationship.”

If Bilen’s piece questions, “Space in Nature” by Dee Lister provides a kind of answer. Dee, who also did our cover art for this issue, is a queer, biracial person of colour who lives with invisible disabilities. Dee’s in-the-moment stream of consciousness monologue explores her sensory response to the world around her as she goes for a local walk. She writes, “I’m very unwell right now ... but walking in nature brings me peace. This is my intention with the piece that may speak to listeners through conveying the simple beauty of mindfully moving through space.”

The third piece in this conversation comes as a poem from Celia, a cook and mountain guide who researches the intersections between outdoor and queer pedagogies. Their poem “Silence” is inspired by their time in the mountains of Bodø in Norway on Sámi land, and their experience of a “peaceful feeling of being alone between nordic mountains in a frozen landscape... There was no wind sound, birds tweeting, or people’s noise...”

[The sound of a running stream begins to fade up.]

We will play these pieces together: first Bilen’s “Being Outside”, then Dee’s “Space in Nature” and finally Celia, “Silence”.

## Being Outside - Bilen Berhanu - 0:20:20

[Sounds of a running stream, which fade out as Belin speaks.]

**Bilen:** Field note recordings from Bilen in Brooklyn, a black spoonie femme currently spooning out in bed with my cute little baby cat - who’s not a baby at all [laughs] who may interject with his opinions at some point. Um, but I’m just here spooning out after a pretty intense body pain flare moment.

Um, I decided to take some time and reflect on my time completing the 52 Week Hike challenge. Um. At the top of pandemic times in March 2020 I got sick with Covid, spent the majority of that year bedbound and fighting for my life (as the youth would say). Ah, gradually I found my way to trails, um, as gentle walks and hikes were a big part of my physical rehab, as well as just much needed necessary mental breaks, ah, while handling the chaos of the times. I have been very

fortunate to build community with loads of amazing, amazing people doing really interesting and innovative programming around addressing all the disparities and access and representation in the outdoor world. Um... by just creating more opportunities for people of the global majority or multiple intersecting marginal identities to have, ah, safe and comfortable ways to engage with the outdoors through recreational activities on stolen lands.

Sometimes I hear myself talk like this and I just... cringe. But, you know, here we are. This is what talking through brain fog sounds like, just a jumble of words which I hope will make some type of sense. But that's what I also love about these field recordings - whether I am out on trail or stuck in bed, it's an opportunity for me to just kind of, stream of consciousness allow whatever surfaces to surface. And, um, it's a good way for me to take some snapshots of where I've been at at various points and, in this hiking challenge journey.

Um. So, I found the 52 Week Hike challenge through Instagram and got very curious. I looked at the hashtag, looked at lots of people's challenges, um, and their reporting that they do through social media, um, and I wanted to just add my little piece to the larger tapestry of folks that take on this annual challenge. Um. I appreciated having something to allow me to be intentional and consistent when it comes to carving out space and time, and making sure I'm resourced enough to get out there. Um. And it's been a really lovely, lovely experiment that really helped me dial in a lot of my thoughts around why I just bristle at the concept of, you know, "the outdoor industry" or "outdoor recreation". Um, so much of my thoughts and feelings around this... much smarter people than me have written volumes on the fraught relationship between quote-unquote "humankind or man versus nature" [laughs]. [Aside] I feel like that sounds like the name of some type of TV show.

OK, reining it back in! In essence, I've always found it rather difficult, um... when thinking about how invested we become in this sort of false dichotomy of what is considered nature and what is not, and how this dichotomy allows for extractive, oppressive relationships between us - human beings - and the natural world. Um... So, knowing that, I tried to really undo a lot of my thinking around what is considered a hike, and who can hike where and when. And I just do my best to interrogate that every day. Cause I know I've internalised some of the false- falsehoods and I can catch myself getting swept up in, you know, those days where it, it was hard for me to get out on a trail so I'll find a trail at my local park, down the street, and - Prospect Park. Is that considered a hike? Is it not? Is that time outside? Is it outside enough? Etcetera. [Laughs] And you know, it's a whole bunch of foolishness in the end, but I find that when I am forced to interrogate these false dichotomies, I can find my way to thinking about and imagining what right relationship would look like and how to practise it in small ways every day. It looks like, at the start of every trail, pausing to really slow things down, ask permission, acknowledge all that's come before me, acknowledge the effects of my presence in these environments, um, and ways that I can show up in support of myself and my own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, or all. Um... And it becomes an interesting conversation.

[In the background, the sounds of crunchy, icy footsteps fade in. They continue quietly under the rest of the narrative.]

Because when I am on trail and I can quiet my busy mind, I can hear the land speak. It's not a difficult conversation to be in when you know to listen more than talk. Sometimes it's the only place I can go to set down what I cannot carry. It's the only place I can feel *any* form of relief and connection to my true authentic self. It's the only place I can experience a pause - enough to acknowledge grief, enough to invite in joy, enough to release what needs to be let go of and welcome in what needs to come. All of this is happening in an environment and a space where

there is an exchange. It is... The world around us is living, you know? And that exchange... when approached with humility, with intention, with open-heartedness is... supremely generative and nurturing. And sometimes confrontational because you have to pause and, a- and interrogate your framework, your thoughts, your narratives, all the different voices: where do they come from, what are they saying, and why, and who is best served by what they're saying? Um. And all of this happens on these hikes in moments of quiet contemplation, in conversations I have with like-minded folks, in conversation I have with the land itself, that is very much alive and speaking, when you know to listen more than talk.

[The sound of a trickling stream plays for a few seconds]

## Space in Nature - Dee Lister - 0:30:00

[Quiet, suburban park-like atmosphere fades up.]

**Dee:** Thank you to Queer Out Here for this opportunity to share.

[Footsteps, background breezes, traffic.]

I'm walking in a place that's familiar, that feels safe, that brings me joy just through being here with the trees.

Above the clouds are vast. They are mixed. There's light, there's grey and weight.

[In the background, dogs are barking. The sound of the breeze and soft footsteps continue.]

The wind, the wind blows, it moans and groans. But with a sigh in the air.

As four-pawed creatures bark in the background, having fun, letting off steam - just as I glean pockets of magic walking here, in this place. In this space I feel more at peace and in flow than staccato talk of everyday.

[Wind blows.]

The ground underfoot holds me. There's a steadiness to it. Even when I'm unsteady, dizzy, overwhelmed, as happens and flattens me often in, in moments and half hours that I pass and need to pause [Dee takes a deep breath] and breathe...

And I return to these spaces to be held, to be at peace, to feel more free.

[Wind and atmosphere fades out]

## Silence - Celia - 0:32:37

[Trickling water fades in]

**Celia:** Hi. My name is Celia. My pronouns are they/them, and I'm from a little village in the south of Spain. And this poem is inspired in a hiking that I did at the end of the last year in Norway, and it's

the feelings that I had when I was completely alone in the mountains. And I hope you can feel what I felt in that moment. And I also hope that you enjoy it.

[Water continues, deepening in tone a little. It continues under the poem.]

Silence,  
impressive and little-known,  
practically disappeared  
in our daily lives,  
in the streets, at work,  
among people.

Silence,  
pleasant, peaceful,  
calming and relaxing.  
We have forgotten it  
in the mountains, in the deserts;  
full of sand, full of snow.

What is silence?  
Nothingness, emptiness,  
the absence of human beings,  
of animals, of climatic agents.

Silence is what  
we constantly long for.  
Have you ever had  
the pleasure of contemplating it?

[Trickling water continues, fading out under the birdsong that precedes Allysse's link.]

## Link - Allysse - 0:33:56

[Quiet birdsong.]

**Allysse:** We hope you enjoyed these three pieces from Bilen, Dee and Celia, and that perhaps they've inspired you to think more deeply about your own relationship with the outdoors and what it means to you.

## Sweeper - Jackie - 0:34:07

[Audio fades in, the sound of traffic, a truck beeping to reverse, birds twittering, wind, clanks of moving objects, and so on. This continues for a while. Occasionally you can hear the slow breaths of the person holding the microphone.]

**Jackie:** Hi, this is Jackie. I'm on Wurundjeri land, in the garden on my third floor balcony, overlooking busy, busy Sydney Road. I'm watching the sun rise over Mount Donna Buang... and it's pretty queer out here.

[A car goes past on the road below, birds chat.]

## Link - Jonathan - 0:34:56

[Quiet sounds, mostly of breeze in trees and general small town background.]

Thanks for that sweeper, Jackie! I'm back in my garden, also. Ah, you might hear in the background noises of, ah, suburban traffic, ah, perhaps the neighbours' cat which has come to visit, breeze in the trees, perhaps we might even get the bell from the school just down the road.

We've grouped the next three pieces together around the theme of collaboration with nature, um, with landscapes and with other-than-human presences. And the theme calls back, actually, to Shaughn's piece earlier, which used sounds from an instrument that had been weathered by the elements.

[A bird shrieks close by, then further away as it flies off.]

First up, we've got a piece from Jaime Simons. Jaime is a Canadian sound artist and museum professional, living on the unceded and unsundered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabek.

[The beep-beep-beep of a reversing vehicle. Later, there is the distant sound of the school bell, then an indistinct announcement over a PA/tannoy.]

Jaime's piece, titled "Merging Temporalities", grew from research into queer sound theory. It queers time by merging sounds of the past and the present, spanning all the way back to the late Cambrian period. Jaime tells us that they treated the Ottawa River as a co-creator, and you'll hear field recordings of rapids and swirling currents, ice crystals, and underwater gurgling. But there are also less-expected sounds - whale and walrus calls, human voices, sounds from different geological eras - all of which encourage you to think about the different ecosystems, networks, times and histories that the river comes from and connects.

[Background sounds fade under the start of Jaime's piece.]

## Merging Temporalities - Jaime Simons - 0:36:22

[Gentle babbling ripple of a river with some birds chirping over it. The river's voice is continuous throughout, never fully disappearing. There is a deep noise under it. Ten seconds in, waves roll in and out before quietening. Insects buzz. The waves return.

At about a minute into the piece, a sonar bleeps. Whales calls, slightly echoing, are heard at a regular beat. The rolling of the waves grows in intensity. A walrus grunts, the whale's voice still heard faintly alongside it the first grunt. The walrus grunts are irregular and varying in loudness. The whale's voice returns but is soon drowned under the waves. The waves are loud, now - they crash, and disappear briefly, leaving a quiet space for the river and bird calls. The waves return, accompanied by some wind, then stop.

Birds and the river are the only sounds for a few seconds before the pulsating call of a whale is heard again, deepening to a nearly distorted sound. The river water continues to babble and ripple until near the end of the piece.

The audio gains in intensity in the last twenty seconds. The deep song of the whale immerses the listener under water. The waves roll in one last time, leaving the whale's voice to call out for the last few seconds of the piece.]

## Link - Jonathan - 0:39:30

[Quiet background atmosphere fades in.]

I can't get enough of that rich, watery tapestry of sound. I really love it.

Continuing the theme of collaboration - and rivers - next we'll hear from Fish (also known as Xym), a nonbinary disabled person living in Poland.

[A wattlebird calls a couple of times as Jonathan speaks. Every now and then, a door blows in the wind. Other birds chat in the background.]

This piece, "A Pretty One Sided Conversation with a Pigeon", was inspired by Fish's walks to the Wisla river, the river herself and especially moments of connection and solidarity with non-human animals. Fish writes: "As a person who has been othered and denied bodily autonomy because of their identities and status as chronically ill, I see many similarities between how I am treated and how other animals are treated. I wanted to examine how those experiences impact my connection with "the outdoors". I hope my piece inspires others to reflect about their relationship to nature and other human and non-human animals."

Following Fish's contribution, we have a short piece from Roxanna Barry, Alison Wormell and Mari Funabashi, called "Conduits for Joy". In this piece, Alison explains why they make their own reeds for their bassoon, and how riding bikes and connecting with nature influences their music.

But first, Fish in Poland.

## A Pretty One Sided Conversation with a Pigeon - Fish (aka Xym) - 0:40:44

[Pigeons coo and chat. Background noise of a park and town.]

**Fish:** Hello pigeon, how are you?

[Pigeons continue, and other birds twitter. A flurry of wings as a bird takes off. Some wind and breeze, the faint sounds of people talking in the distance.]

I hope the humans in this park did not feed you bread again. You know that stuff is bad for you, right? You should eat grain instead. But you know, I should not eat regular bread too. I need to

have a strict diet because of my chronic illness. I wonder if you can understand my feelings then? We are in the same boat after all. I hope I will be able to eat bread soon.

[Traffic sounds, other sounds continue. Crows caw.]

Anyway, the other day I met a crow, and I think I befriended it. Sort of. The crow tried to get to something that was obstructed by a small metal fence piece, that fell to the ground. [Crow calls.] They were pecking the ground, trying to get to something that was beneath the fence. [Siren.] So I moved the fence, even though the humans would probably say I was not supposed to, it was private property or something. The crow looked at me and after a short moment of hesitation, they moved to achieve their goal. In that moment I felt seen. We collaborated, we were partners. We did something together.

But I am boring you, pigeon, right? Still, you have been more kind to me than most humans around. I wish I could be more like you. Go wherever I want, whenever I want, however I want. [Birds - it sounds like gulls? - screech.] But I can't. I am limited by the thoughtlessness of other humans. Their fear, their aggression and ill will. Tell me pigeon, did other pigeons ever sneeze on you on purpose, just to make you fall ill or feel afraid? Because other humans did that to me.

Tell me.

[A pause. Kids call in the background, echoing slightly, while birds talk and beat their wings.]

Don't want to share? Fine, you don't have to. I am sure that your life as a pigeon has plenty of difficult situations that escape my comprehension. I have no idea what it's like to be you.

I wonder, what do you think of me? Do you think I'm weird? Humans think I am weird. They don't think of my existence much. To them I am probably worth as much as you are - and you probably already know that a lot of humans don't really care a lot about pigeons, or other animals.

[The gull returns, screeching.]

This reminds me of another story I experienced.

I was walking by the wilder side of the river, where the concrete ends, and where people don't go to party. Then I met a small mouse.

[The background changes, to the sound of close water trickling and the deep echo of traffic somewhere nearby.]

They were moving quickly, eating random leaves and grass, they had a very nervous energy to them. I instantly related to them. I stood there as a silent companion, witnessing the mouse's frantic search. The mouse seemed to not be alerted by my presence. Maybe they understood that we are a similar type of animal - and that I am a strict herbivore and wish the mouse no harm. Or maybe I was so quiet that I just avoided the mouse's detection.

A couple minutes passed, and two men with fishing poles came in our direction. I tried to give them a signal for them to be quiet, and to tell them to not disturb the mouse and me. They completely ignored my presence, walked past me uncomfortably close - so close they almost

touched me - and took out their fishing supplies. The mouse ran away as soon as they heard the men come closer.

I wanted to sing to the fish to warn them, but I could not. I was as afraid as the mouse. I felt violated. So I left.

If I could, this is what I would have sung to the fish:

Fish fish, run away, don't let yourself be caught and eaten.  
Ignore the fishing rod,  
don't catch the bait,  
and curse the fisherman.

[A capella singing begins as Fish speaks. Voices come in one by one, creating a sustained minor chord.]

Let seven misfortunes fall upon him  
and his spawn.  
Fish, fish, run away,  
don't let yourself be killed and eaten.

[The chord cadence changes and resolves. The voices begin singing in Polish, in a somewhat folksy-sounding song, written and performed by Fish.]

[One solo voice] Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
Nie dajcie się złapać, zjeść

[Two voices duet in harmony] Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
Nie dajcie się złapać, zjeść

[Solo] Wędkę, szaławik olewajcie  
[Duet] Nie dajcie się na to złapać  
A wędkarza przeklinajcie  
Jego sztuczkom się nie dajcie  
[Solo, getting faster] Siedem nieszczęść niech go spotka  
[Three voices in tight harmony] a także jego potomka

[Speed, volume and number of voices increase]

Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
nie dajcie się zabić, zjeść  
Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
nie dajcie się zabić, zjeść  
Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
nie dajcie się zabić, zjeść  
Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
nie dajcie się zabić, zjeść  
Ryby, ryby, uciekajcie  
nie dajcie się zabić, zjeść



[The last note is held for a few beats, and we are returned to the river and traffic noise. In fact, those noises never stopped, but the singing overpowered them for a while. Fish speaks again.]

Tell me pigeon, you observe the world from a different perspective than me. Why do people seek to dominate over that which is different than them? Why do they want to hurt, control and exploit beings that they see as lesser than them? Why do they see others as objects that exist for their entertainment?

Sorry for asking such difficult questions. I don't really expect you to answer. That's fine.

[A distant siren sounds]

I should go now, before someone calls me a crazy person again, because of talking to you, or because I'm still wearing a mask.

[The background fades slowly, disappearing as Fish finishes their narrative.]

Or because I just ... exist.

## Conduits for Joy - Roxanna Barry with Alison Wormell and Mari Funabashi - 0:47:36

[Light piano music and flurries of birdsong introduce the piece. The sounds fade slightly under Alison's voice as they speak, then swell again in the pauses.]

**Alison:** My music making is informed by the joy that I feel riding bikes, sitting outside, you know, watching the world go by.

I make reeds not to make reeds but to make really good music that tells stories and expresses things.

[String instruments join the faint music in the background]

**Alison:** When I play bassoon I'm trying to express those things that are beyond words, and to bring that joy that I feel - through the reed, through the bassoon, through the music - to other people.

[Birdsong fades down. From the very quiet background atmosphere of a forest, a bassoon - a baritone reed instrument - starts playing "Largo for Solo Bassoon" by Jean-Daniel Braun. We hear swelling, legato phrases that sway like trees in a gentle wind and which twine through the surrounding woodlands. Occasionally we hear Alison's breath. There are also some short, staccato notes, bringing to mind little jumps in emotion, or perhaps animals hopping through the undergrowth. Right at the end, the atmosphere from Jonathan's link fades in behind the last few notes.]

## Link - Jonathan - 0:49:12

Thanks again to the people we heard from in this section: Jaime's "Merging Temporalities", Fish's "Mostly One Sided Conversation with a Pigeon", and then "Conduits for Joy" featuring Alison's performance of Largo for Solo Bassoon by Jean-Daniel Braun outdoors in Grizedale Forest. This last piece is actually taken from a short film which we'll link in the show notes - so, make sure to check it out!

## Sweeper - Raine - 0:49:36

*NB: This sweeper was recorded on Gunaikurnai country.*

[A loud thunderclap, followed by rain and cicadas or crickets that continue beneath Raine's voice.]

**Raine:** [Laughs] Hi, my name's Raine. I am a trans man living in Australia, currently sitting out a storm in a caravan and it is damn close to midnight!

[A long rumble of thunder.]

You are listening to Queer Out Here.

[Thunder and insects fade out as rain drips slowly. Birdsong from Allysse's link fades in.]

## Link - Allysse - 0:50:06

[Quiet birdsong.]

**Allysse:** Thank you, Raine.

Next up: Bart, a Ph.D. student whose research focuses on the experiences of trans people in outdoors and adventure activities. In "TransBike Europe" Bart invites us to share a day from their six month cycle trip. We join them during the Easter week in Greece as they join a family in their holiday celebration.

What I love most about this piece is the simplicity of moments shared with strangers. People met and left in an instant and yet you can sense the openness of the welcome and the connection that happens in the sharing of food and stories.

Bart notes that the central part of this piece was recorded in the summer of 2020 for an art and performance project "In first person: The Dance". You can find more information about it in the show notes.

And now, as you'll hear Bart say, close your eyes (if you can safely do so) and let yourself be transported into a different place and time, and take a seat for a Greek Easter celebration.

# TransBike Europe - Bart - 0:51:09

[Very faint garden atmosphere behind Bart's introduction]

**Bart:** I'm Bart, my pronouns are they/them. And today I want to bring you with me for an adventure that I did back in 2017. I called it TransBike Europe, and I went with my bike and my tent and my little kitchen for six months through twenty-six European countries. I did over 14,000 kilometres, that's an average of around 90 kilometres per day. So, I'm gonna bring you with me on one of these days. But before, I want you to close your eyes and feel like you're laying at night inside of the tent, while you listen to this audio.

[Bart's voice changes in quality, sounding more like a narrator. It sounds a little more intimate, as they are speaking closer to the microphone. There are some very faint background sounds throughout.]

It was my fifth day in Greece and it was the Easter week. I could feel that the mood in the air was special: a big holiday feeling. After having some rough days, emotionally and physically exhausting, I was starting to feel expectant and happy about it.

[Spinning wheels and chain of a bike, which blends into a sound reminiscent of the seaside sound as Bart continues]

This day, I was cycling along the beach the whole day on a road directly next to the sea. It was a sunny and warm day. I took a few breaks to lay in the sun.

[Wooden or bamboo wind chimes]

At lunch, I stopped at Platanos Beach. I had some potato chips with me. It was something special - I didn't buy this often. On the other side of the sea, I could see big mountains with snow. The contrast between me, laying on a beach, and the mountains with snow was really beautiful.

After a few days camping, I decided to arrange a couch surfing place. Because of the holiday, my contact is with her family in the village she grew up, Xylokastro. When I get there in the afternoon, I realised that there is a big family [and friends (?)] reunion.

[Faint background chatter fades in]

I ate some of the food that is still left over from lunch: salad, potatoes, chickpeas. They also have a local mastica [mastiha] liqueur, which is made out of mastic, a resin gathered from the mastic tree, a small evergreen tree native to the Mediterranean region. And that they tell me that it is very traditional. It is really nice.

The mood is very relaxed and happy. It has been a long time since I laughed so much. The mother puts on music. There's also a friend of her, who used to be a teacher of Johanna. She's so much fun. The three of them start dancing. We are all laughing. They even somehow convince me to dance - I really suck at dancing, but I am so happy here and now. I also talk with the mum quite a lot about travelling by bike. She's interested on doing a bike trip around the Peloponnesus Islands.

In this house, I will have a small independent room, with its own bathroom. I take a nice, warm shower. It feels so fresh. After the shower, I change my clothes from my cycling t-shirt to a clean one for the evening.

[Very faint background breeze]

For the sunset in the early evening, I am going with Johanna and some friends to her grandfather's field. It is a bit outside, so we go there by car. The field has a small house with no electricity, a couple of big trees and grass. Johanna and I are talking around a tree. The sun is slowly setting, the atmosphere is very special. We gather around, sitting on some tree logs. After talking for a while, some of them have brought instruments and start playing and singing some traditional Greek songs.

[Guitar, hand drum, and a number of people singing. We hear a couple of verses, and the music fades down under Bart's voiceover]

Now, we're in the darkness. Just with the stars and some music.

[Quiet, atmospheric sounds - faint birdcall and insects]

It feels so magical. I am there, we are there, in the moment. It has been a long time since I have been enjoying time with a group of people, being so present.

Around 11pm, we go back. The tradition is that on this day they have dinner at midnight. We are going to the grandparents' house. They have prepared the traditional food for this holiday. I feel so humble to be able to join them on this special moment. There is a kind of Greek spinach pie, lots of fetta cheese, and a soup. The soup has some green vegetables and meat pieces. We are eating and talking. Even though the grandparents don't speak English, they are asking me many things and Johanna is translating.

While I'm eating the food I realise that the meat has a different texture. Meanwhile I am actually biting on a piece, they tell me it is made of the inner parts of the animal. I try not to make any weird facial expression and just keep eating it. I don't eat meat on my day to day life, but during this trip I have decided not to reject any food that people offer me, whatever it is! I am happy that there is a lot of spinach pie and fetta cheese. The fetta cheese tastes SO good in Greece. When they ask me if I want more soup, I say that it was really nice, but that I am full. It was my first time eating bowels.

After dinner, I go to the terrace with Johanna.

[Faint sound of fireworks echoing in the mid-distance]

We are sitting on a swing bench and there are fireworks happening. She has made Greek coffee for us, which we take in cups. We both feel very comfortable, and we are talking about our views around life, about our own experiences. We were opening ourselves. We talk about travelling alone when you are perceived or read as a woman, and how it differs now for me that people read me as a man, though I still fear being discovered in situations where I might not feel safe.

[Birdcall]

I didn't see the village of Xylokastro at all, but I feel like I know this place so well, and that it is one of the most beautiful places I have been during the whole six months travelling. Tomorrow, I will continue cycling. It is a bit sad, because I like it here so much. But Athens is also waiting for me.

[Change in atmosphere, as Bart begins some concluding comments recorded at a different time]

So, this was one of my days, a day that I hold in a special place in my memory - but there were a lot of amazing days. After this day, I kept cycling and I arrived one day later to Athens, where I met some queer activists and I had some relaxing days - with not so much cycling!

There were many reasons for doing this trip, but one of them was that Athens - and Greece - has a lot of history regarding sports and the Olympic Games. And for me, as a trans person, cycling for three months from the south of Spain until Athens, it was my way of telling them it doesn't matter that they don't want us in sport, it doesn't matter that they don't let us, we will keep doing sports, we will keep going out and we're doing it really good.

After Athens I also continued cycling and I went up until Finland, Sweden and I finished in the north of Germany.

I hope you enjoy, today, this little piece of my adventure. And... see you outdoors!

## Sweeper - Rachel - 1:01:42

*NB: This sweeper was recorded on Gunaikurnai country.*

[Sounds of birds, insects and distant traffic fade in]

**Rachel:** G'day, it's Rachel Steinmann here. I'm out for a lovely walk around the Flooding Creek on the edge of Sale. And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

[Background sounds fade into Allysse's link]

## Link - Allysse - 1:01:59

[Quiet birdsong]

Thank you, Rachel.

In our next piece, we join Cheryna Guzman, a queer Dominican woman and an offroading enthusiast located in Oakland, California, USA.

In her piece "My Shiny Jeep and Me", Cheryna shares her burgeoning journey into the outdoors via a mode of exploration I know very little about: offroading with a four wheel drive. I am not drawn to offroading, not least because I do not hold a driving licence but Cheryna's enthusiasm for her newfound love of the outdoors and an unexpected discovery of community is contagious. Through her words and field recordings of her experience, it is easy to be drawn into her world and experience of the outdoors.

The recordings were made on the region that is now part of Tahoe National Forest, which is the ancestral homelands of Nisenan, the Washoe, and many other Indigenous communities.

## My Shiny Jeep and Me - Cheryna Guzman - 1:02:55

Hello! My name is Cheryna Guzman, I use she/her pronouns and I'm based out of Oakland, California, over in the States. I'm going to talk today about what it's like to have a jeep in the wild

I have an instagram called "Lez.be.Jeeping". Um, I post about off-road adventures that I take with my fiancé, my friends, or solo, exploring backroads, mountains and trails. It's been a truly incredible way for me to experience the outdoors and feel confident in this setting.

I didn't grow up going hiking or camping. Growing up in Newark, New Jersey there wasn't really anyone in my family that was doing outdoorsy things. Especially not in my Dominican family. My mom would say to me, "Por qué vas a dormir en el piso si tienes una casa y una cama." Translated to, "Why you gotta sleep on the floor, when you have a home and a bed?" And I understand where she's coming from, but I know there's so many valuable things that can't be experienced from the comfort of home. Exploring the outdoors can only be done from there: outdoors.

I've had the jeep, known as Nacho, now for two years and it's given me the freedom to explore. It's helped me find a new community, and nourish a real love for camping, hiking, kayaking, and of course off-roading. I've taken Nacho on fire roads, dirt trails, over rocks, and through river crossings, too. Honestly, it's a good thing I love driving, because it's a ton of extra driving!

My love for jeeps and interest in off-roading started when I was young, watching "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" featuring Angelina Jolie (wow!). Specifically it's the scene towards the end when she's hanging from a parachute, slowly floating down onto a 2 door, open top Jeep Wrangler. And WOW! I just needed that car! It became this dream I wanted for so long.

Many years passed since then, and the pandemic hit - boom! - in 2020. And it was a tough time for all. Especially for me, since I work as a video tech doing events and suddenly in the busy city of San Francisco there were zero events. I tried to keep my mind from going crazy, and happened to find this show on YouTube called "4WD 24-7" based out of Australia. It reawakened this dream of owning a jeep, of off-roading and figuring out what that meant for me. It sparked what I do now, exploring in the outdoors.

I bought my jeep, named it Nacho, in 2021 and haven't regretted a thing. I've taught myself how to do basic maintenance and preventative maintenance on Nacho so I don't end up with a large dealership bill for breaking things that I could've easily prevented. I like learning how to fix and work on my jeep, and enjoy sharing about what I'm learning on Lez.be.Jeeping. I want other women and queer people of color to find my page and feel like they can do this too, or at least be able to learn from someone in the LGBTQ community. I'm also lucky to have an off-roading community, um, that is always, always willing to lend a hand, a tool, or moral support.

I'd like to play a clip from my first winter adventure in Bowman Lakes, Tahoe National Forest, from October 2021. I'll play it low. And in this clip, it's of a water crossing that I did. Um, and that means when you literally drive your 4 wheel drive vehicle across a flowing body of water.

[Audio of water in the background, and low voices]

For me, it was a creek - with no fishes around, thankfully. It was the most exhilarating experience ever. I was cruising along to only get hung up on the exit bank on the other side. My heart was pumping out of my chest, and I was stuck.

[Background shout and water sounds continue]

I had to reverse back in the water -

["Oh shit! Oh shit!"]

- and then I turned the steering wheel hard to the right -

[Laughter]

- foot on the pedal, and gunned it up the bank!

[Relieved laughter, water sounds fade out.]

It was a defining moment in my life. Breathtaking, scary, exhilarating. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

I never thought that the outdoors would be for me, a butch lesbian, mostly of how it is portrayed on television and ads. A queer Latina with my femme identified Polish and Chinese fiancé isn't what is advertised as the typical outdoorsy folk. And growing up in the States, I've always seen it as a White America thing to do, and off-roading as such a male, masculine-dominated pastime. It can be a scary place to navigate. And - but when I started to go out and explore I was pleasantly surprised by the people and groups that I found in the off roading community of Northern California. Everyone has been so welcoming to me, my fiancé and my friends - even as queer people that are as gay as a bucket of rainbows washing over a herd of unicorns! I've never had to hide who I was and, on the contrary, it gave them - these straight people - an insight to our lives. They don't typically have many queers in their circles and I think it gave them a chance to also bring down their own assumptions around the LGBTQ community.

I've really gotten to learn so much about myself in my outdoors journey. It's a form of mediation now. It's something I can do at any time, whether by myself or with friends and family. And it brings me so much joy too. Because of that I couldn't pass up the chance to join my fiancé on her three month national book tour and road trip. We're turning Nacho into our home on wheels and taking him to the four corners of the United States. I know we'll learn a lot - and we'll share a lot - on this journey. Stay connected by following @Lez.Be.Jeeping on Instagram.

Thanks for listening and I'll see you out on the trails. Let's go!

## Link - Jonathan - 1:08:56

[The sound of rain on a plastic roof fades in, getting louder and sharper, coming in waves.]

Jonathan: Thanks for that piece, Cheryna.

As you can hear, it's raining today as I'm recording this link. You can hear the rain on the Laserlite, ah, plastic roofing over the deck.

I really enjoyed hearing from Cheryna because, you know, as much as Allysse and I both love walking and cycling and wild swimming and gardening and camping, - it's really fun to hear from people who are enthused about different activities. And, if you're listening to this and you do something different - if, if you're a skier, or a, a, scuba diver, a hang glider, a rockclimber, please do think about making a piece and sending it in.

We're now going to play a mini documentary from Travis Clough. Travis was born and raised on unceded Wabanaki land now called Maine, he's a Registered Maine Guide, a quilter and a banjo player. This piece follows Travis and Tam Willey (also known as Toadstool Walks) to a queer forest bathing retreat in the southern hills of Vermont. The documentary gives an overview of what a forest bathing retreat is like and offers a window into a weekend filled with queer connection and meditation in the woods. Enjoy!

[Rain sounds fade.]

## Queer Forest Bathing with Toadstool Walks - Travis Clough - 1:10:34

[Upbeat, bluegrassy music plays for a few bars, then continues under Travis' voice.]

**Travis:** My best friend Tam is leading a queer forest bathing retreat this weekend in southern Vermont. I'm driving to Vermont with my buddy Cam. I'm picking him up in Wells, Maine to begin our three-hour journey to Base Camp at Beaver Falls. Altogether, there will be twelve people from New England and beyond for a weekend of forest therapy led by Tam. In-between guided meditations in the woods, delicious group meals and sing-a-longs at the campfire, I found a moment to sit down with Tam to ask them a few questions.

[Music fades]

**Tam:** My name is Tam Willey. I'm a Certified Forest Therapy Guide and I am at Basecamp at Beaver Falls in Vermont, guiding a queer forest bathing retreat. Forest bathing is a slowing down practice that is typically like a two to three hour experience.

[Sounds of leaves rustling underfoot]

**Travis:** Before heading into the woods. Tam leads us in a grounding exercise.

**Tam [in situ, outdoors]:** I'm just going to invite us to get up and to just take a moment to, like, notice where we are. Just look around, ust take this place in and just take a moment to arrive.

[More rustling and movement, fading under Tam's voice]

**Tam [interview]:** If I was going to describe what we're doing, it's really forest therapy, which is inspired by forest bathing. And forest bathing is the literal translation of this word Shinrin-yoku from



Japan, in the early eighties, which was coined in response to a national health crisis due to a spike in stress related illness as a result of industrialisation.

I mean, I've always loved nature, and I always knew that I felt better when I took time to be in nature. I'd say I've always been a bit more disconnected from nature, just not growing up in a more rural area. I didn't really realise how disconnected I was until I learned about this practice and where it came from and why, and I really resonated with the experience of disconnect.

[Jangly music, still upbeat but a little less jaunty than at the start, it continues under the next segment]

**Travis:** Lauren is an ASL interpreter who drove up to Vermont from D.C. to attend the retreat. I asked her how she found out about the event, what she thought forest bathing would be, and how her experience has been so far.

**Lauren Hamilton:** I found one [event] that said queer backpacking. But then I saw forest bathing and I looked it up and I was like, "This is something I've never done before." And I told my partner, "I think I really want to do it." So I clicked, and it was sold out and my partner realised they'd signed up for that too. So they dropped the class so that I could join. I thought of laying down on the ground in the forest and feeling what the, the earth felt like, watching the trees sway, meditating, breathing. That's what I thought it was.

I got so much more out of it than I thought I would. I was looking for a way to let go of technology, and that's really what I wanted to come away with. But what I came away with was so much more than that. Like the forest bathing part was so eye opening, beautiful. It showed me that I was capable of slowing down, when I didn't know I would be, you know?

[Music fades up again]

**Travis:** Tam describes the forest bathing experience as combining rest and wandering interspersed with facilitated group gatherings and solo time. This is my fourth forest bathing retreat, and it's still hard to put the experience into words. What I can say, though, is that each morning we spend 3 hours in the woods next to a small river under the golden and red leaves of autumn.

[Sounds of the river fade up and combine with the music under Travis' voice]

**Travis:** Tam offers invitations to us that last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour or more. Sometimes we're laying down on the forest floor or sitting in a camp chair by the river. Sometimes we're walking slowly, but always deeply grounded and connected.

[River fades down, music continues]

**Travis:** After a wonderful weekend of friends, fires and Forest therapy, Tam guided us through a beautiful goodbye to the land and each other.

[Music fades down]

**Tam [in situ, outdoors]:** Before I teach this song, I just want to say something about the importance of marking things and ending things. And that desire that we have to linger is deeply connected to our denial of death. I want to offer this song. [Tam sings slowly] I am grateful to be...

**Others [echoing Tam in song]:** I am grateful to be...

**Tam [singing]:** Breathing, heart beating...

[The upbeat music fades up over Tam's singing]

**Travis:** To find out more about Tam's work, check out [ToadstoolWalks.com](http://ToadstoolWalks.com), or under the same name on Instagram. Music by Stud Green, Tam Willey and Travis Clough. A huge thank you to The Venture Out Project and Base Camp at Beaver Falls for hosting this event.

[Music fades out, birdsong fades in as we transition to Allysse's link.]

## Link - Allysse - 1:15:30

[Quiet birdsong]

And it is now time to bring this issue to a close with one last piece, a song by Indigie Femme titled "Grandmother Earth, Grandfather Sky."

Indigie Femme is formed of two members, Tash Terry and Elena Higgins. If the second name sounds familiar it is because you've heard it before. Elena was featured in Issue 07, in "Memories of Sheep Farming" from Country Queers' "Ode to Sheep".

Indigie Femme weaves Navajo/Dine, Maori, and Samoan Cultures with their voices, drums, and percussion. "Grandmother Earth, Grandfather Sky" is also the title of the album which we will link in the show notes so you can listen to more of Tash and Elena's music.

[Birds fade down]

## Grandmother Earth, Grandfather Sky - Indigie Femme - 1:16:13

[A hand drum pulses with a persistent beat over a low drone. Shakers rattle. Two voices begin to sing in unison, "A-vey-ah-ney, a-vey-a-ney" as higher frequency drones join in. The reverb on the track gives an open, ethereal feeling.

Singing in Navajo - no transcript available. The drum maintains its insistent beat, other rattle percussion joins in. After the verse, the "A-vey-a-ney" refrain repeats. Another verse in Navajo, with additional lead and bass guitar. A full drumkit kicks in, and lead electric guitar wails for the next refrain "a-vey-a-ney", repeated three times.

Instruments dial in to hand drum and some drones/lead guitar as a solo voice continues singing.]

**Indigie Femme [singing]:** Driving alone  
Grandmother's home  
Grandfather's gone  
His spirit lives on

I see the moon  
Look to the sky  
Sacred prayers  
I know deep down inside

[The drum stops, leaving long reverberating drone and high, celestial notes as the solo voice repeats the refrain, softer now. The notes hold, swell, linger and fade. Birdsong fades in.]

## Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:21:45

[Birdsong.]

**Jonathan:** Well, that's it for Issue 08. We hope you've found something that sparks your brain, tickles your ears and opens your heart.

A big thank you to our contributors: Jenny, Elisabeth, Shaughn, Bilen, Dee, Celia, Jaime, Fish, Roxanna, Alison and Mari, Bart, Cheryna, Travis and IndigieFemme.

Thanks also to Mags, Jackie, Raine and Rachel for making sweepers for us. We always welcome these greetings, so please do consider sending us one!

And thank you to Dee Lister for our cover art. Hopefully you can see it in the thumbnail on your app, but as we said at the start of this issue, you can see it full size on our website - [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com)

**Allysse:** And thank you to all the people who helped get the word out about our call for submissions - we love hearing from new folks, so keep spreading the word!

And of course, thanks to you, the listener. If you've enjoyed this issue, please share it with someone else you think might like it. And if it's your first time listening, you can find the back catalogue at [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com) or on whatever app you used to find this issue.

**Jonathan:** And do keep an eye out for our next submissions window, and think about making a piece. Whether you're exploring your neighbourhood, heading to the beach or the hills, waterskiing, painting, doing fieldwork, rallying, cruising, farming, grieving, building a house, socialising in a park - whatever it is that you do outside, we'd like to hear about it! We'll open submissions again by the end of 2023.

**Allysse:** For now, we're going to leave you with the sound of the dawn chorus by the foot of the Black Mountain in the West of Bannau Brycheiniog in Wales.

And so from me, Allysse -

**Jonathan:** And me, Jonathan -

**Both:** Goodbye!

[Birds tweet, a breeze stirs in the trees, a few sheep call in the distance.]