

# Transcript: Queer Out Here Issue 01

## [Pre-transcript introduction](#)

[Queer Out Here](#)

[Issue 01 link](#)

[Content notes](#)

## [Transcript](#)

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

[Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:20](#)

[Sweeper - Gary - 0:03:08](#)

[Link - 0:03:25](#)

[A Walk Down My Path - Adele - 0:04:06](#)

[Link - 0:12:37](#)

[As I am Walking \(I am Becoming\) - Jonathan - 0:13:52](#)

[Link - 0:15:56](#)

[Story from the Appalachian Trail - Aubri Drake - 0:17:18](#)

[Link - 0:28:51](#)

[Excerpt from "Finding Home in the In-Between with Travis" - Flex Your Heart Radio - 0:30:16](#)

[Link - 0:36:53](#)

[Sweeper - Ruth - 0:37:20](#)

[Link - 0:37:30](#)

[Excerpt from Floodlight Viscera #12 - Erin Kyan - 0:37:46](#)

[Link - 0:39:54](#)

[Kenyan Journey - Ania - 0:41:04](#)

[Link - 0:48:03](#)

[Out with Frankie the Dog - EZ - 0:49:24](#)

[Link - 0:53:32](#)

[An Aborted Swim \(Ladies' Pond\) - Jo Impey - 0:54:25](#)

[Link - 0:57:38](#)

[Sweeper - Sam - 0:57:58](#)

[Link - 0:58:44](#)

[New Year's Day Thoughts - Jenny List - 0:59:22](#)

[Link - 1:05:47](#)

[Excerpt from "Putting the 'Out' tn Outdoors With Elyse Rylander" - MtnMeister - 1:06:38](#)

[Link - 1:12:32](#)

[We've Won the Winter - Liz Tetu - 1:14:51](#)

[Link - 1:17:38](#)

[Sweeper - Peter, Dan and Jonathan - 1:18:14](#)

[Link - 1:18:34](#)

[Highway, Shepperton and Rooms - Belinda Rule - 1:19:03](#)

[Link - 1:22:14](#)

[My Seaside - Allysse Riordan - 1:23:04](#)

[Link - 1:26:11](#)

[Meditation at Bexhill - Mags - 1:26:41](#)

[Link - 1:27:24](#)

[Wendy at Camber Sands - Wendy and Jonathan - 1:28:11](#)

[Sweeper - Emma - 1:38:43](#)

[Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:38:52](#)

## 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.queerouther.com>.

### Issue 01 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-01>

### Content notes

The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains some swearing, descriptions of kissing/sex, mentions of exercise as a weight loss strategy, internalised homophobia, being in physical danger from cold and wildlife and transition-related concerns. If you have specific anxieties or triggers, you could check the transcript for particular words or ask a trusted friend to listen and give you feedback. If we've missed something obvious, please send us an email so we can add it. Some people might wish to take note of the following:

1. As I am Walking (I am Becoming) - rhythmic, meditative, potentially hypnotic cadence
2. Story from the Appalachian Trail - describes physical danger from cold and wildlife
3. An Aborted Swim (Ladies' Pond) - mention of minor physical injuries and blood
4. New Year's Day Thoughts - concerns relating to transition processes, exercise as a weight loss strategy
5. Highway, Shepperton and Rooms - family estrangement
6. We've Won the Winter - descriptions of sexual/sensual activities
7. Beach Meditation at Bexhill - wind distortion in audio
8. Wendy at Camber Sands - internalised homophobia

# Transcript

## Opener - various contributors - 0:00:00

[Sound of water]

**Aubri:** Who else is out here?

**Wendy:** Gonna throw myself in!

**Adele:** Think of all the sordid things that have probably happened.

[Singing on loudspeaker]

**Jo:** Can I just look?

**Jenny:** I've lived in this part of my world all my life.

**Aubri:** Who else is out here?

**EZ:** I guess there is a farm...

[Water splashing]

**Belinda:** Still the ragged lady gums dance their set.

[Faint sound of dogs barking]

**Erin:** Cold and fresh.

**Aubri:** Who else is out here?

**Liz:** Minnesota midnight...

**Allysse:** I dive in.

## Introduction - Jonathan and Allysse - 0:00:20

[Sounds of bells, insects, organ music fades up beneath the voices]

**Jonathan:** This is Queer Out Here, an audio zine that explores the outdoors from queer perspectives.

**Allysse:** Welcome to Issue One. I'm Allysse -

**Jonathan:** - and I'm Jonathan, and we are super excited to share the pieces in this issue with you.

**Allysse:** When we put out our call for submissions we had no idea what kind of a response we'd get - or if anyone would respond at all, so we're really pleased to be able to share pieces from fifteen contributors in this issue.

**Jonathan:** We received a great variety of pieces, from poetry and conversations, to field recordings, stories and sound art.

**Allysse:** We have pieces about adventures, walking, swimming, queer group trips, international travels -

**Jonathan:** - about relationships, fun times, sadness, love and companionship -

**Allysse:** - and about fields, beaches, towns, cities, woods and highways.

**Jonathan:** So, a big thank you to all our contributors, and to people who helped circulate our call for submissions. And also to you - the listeners - we hope you enjoy it!

**Allysse:** Before we leave you to enjoy this issue we need to do a little bit of housekeeping. But don't worry, it's not going to take long. You can find show notes for this issue on our website [queeroutherere.com](http://queeroutherere.com). You will find cover art by the wonderful Emma Charleston [<http://www.emmacharleston.co.uk/>], a track list with short descriptions and timings, information about contributors (including social and web links), content notes and a complete transcript of the issue.

**Jonathan:** The pieces in Queer Out Here talk about many things related to being queer and the outdoors. This issue contains some swearing, descriptions of making out and sex, mentions of exercise as a weight loss strategy, internalised homophobia, being in physical danger from cold and wildlife, and transition-related concerns. Please see our show notes for specific timings or check the issue transcript if you need to avoid particular words or phrases - again, both are available at [queeroutherere.com](http://queeroutherere.com). If you still have concerns, you could ask a trusted friend to listen through this episode first to check for your specific triggers - or you could send us an email: [queeroutherere@gmail.com](mailto:queeroutherere@gmail.com).

**Allysse:** And finally, this issue is quite long. Quite long for a radio show or a podcast, but not so long if you think of it more like a shorts programme at a film festival. Every three or four pieces, we have a sweeper - a greeting from someone who will say their name, what they're doing and "you're listening to Queer Out Here". If you're looking for a place to pause for a break or an intermission, these might be good spots to do so.

**Jonathan:** We hope you enjoy listening to Issue One as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

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

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

## Sweeper - Gary - 0:03:08

[Footsteps]

**Gary:** Hi, I'm Gary, and here we are in the middle of the woods somewhere, with the Rainbow Alliance walk - monthly walk - um, and we are on our five mile walk, I think it is, and, ah, you're listening to Queer Out Here!

## Link - 0:03:25

**Jonathan:** Thanks Gary.

Right, so let's kick things off with a piece from Adele, who lives in Brighton in the UK.

The piece is called "A Walk Down My Path" and I love how it unfolds in real time, how we get to experience Adele's delight at her chance encounters with birds and animals and her thoughts about the space as she moves through it.

There's also something kind of bittersweet about it - Adele and her partner are tired of living in the city, but Adele can still find something wonderful, a snippet of nature, in the city. And she really connects to it and she loves that particular little piece of the natural world while craving something more, and wanting to be somewhere else.

## A Walk Down My Path - Adele - 0:04:06

**Adele:** Ooh, there's a squirrel coming down! Oh, and a magpie! And another one! Oh! *One for sorrow, two for joy* . . . And a little, ah, I don't know, brown bird.

So. Hello, Queer Out There, Queer O(h) (yo)U There, Here. This is my walk in nature. My name's Adele, and first of all, I'll let you listen . . .

[Street sounds, faint voices, birds]

Now, I don't know quite what you're gonna hear in this type of, er, phone machine recording - it's my girlfriend's, I'm not very technological - but I'm guessing you might be able to hear the rugby and the road as well as the nature. And that's what makes me quite sad about living in the city. Actually, what I hate about living in the city is that that is part of my nature, and it always is when I'm out in nature.

So, this path that I'm walking down -

Ooh! A black, black magpie just took a bit of bird [sic] off the seagull! They're fighting over it. Ooh, and another seagull's come down. Haha!

So, this path I'm walking down, it's at Hove Rec, which is the rugby place next to Hove Park, and there's a path that's got trees down both sides of it. One of the things that I love is it reminds me of a path that was near me, er, back up in the midlands where I'm from, in a really similar place to this, like a sports bit of grass, and it had a path with trees along each side as well. So that gives me good memories there. But also it's the closest place to my house where I can be next to some kind of nature. So we don't have a garden, we just have a little bit of "outdoor space" (inverted commas), which is, um, about two metres of concrete. But it does have my girlfriend's little greenhouse thing that me mum bought her a couple of years ago for Christmas.

So I hope, as well, that you can hear the birds tweeting.

And the reason I wanted to share this part of nature is it is the place I go to the most regularly, and I look at the trees. Trees are one of my most favourite things. Ever. And, as I look at these ones, I always, every time I walk down, try to look for a lesson in them. And this year, they've taught me a lot about endurance, about persistence, about inner strength.

[To bird] Hello!

Is that a crow that makes that noise?

Um, so I've been going through a lot of transitions in my career this year and yeah, walking next to these trees, sometimes sitting next to them, touching them, touching the bark, just touching that piece of nature, it's been teaching me a lot of things. Now we are on December the 15th, I believe, it's quite cold, and the trees are bare. And they're teaching me, I think, today, something about stripping down. Bare roots. No need for excess. And, mainly, the trust. Trying to trust that when you strip yourself bare in that way that spring will come again at the time it's ready - and you can't force spring . . .

I'm getting towards about the last third of the path now, and I'm going to leave you to listen to that until we get to the end, coz there's just a little something I want to share with you at the end of the path . . .

[Street sounds, birds, traffic, distant voices]

So we're just coming up to the end of the path, where it turns slightly and the trees go over the top and it becomes - to say wood-like would be an exaggeration, but that way inclined. And often at this point I'll take my shoes off and feel the earth. I don't fancy it today, I haven't been well, but, um, I did do it a couple of weeks ago still, even in the cold, just to feel that different texture under my feet. And, hm, so now we're in this kind of bit that's more wood-like (not completely, but it is a bit) and there's some gorgeous, twisted trees, which are my favourite. And I just look at this, and every time I look at it I just - I just think of all the sordid things that have probably happened around these trees. This is Brighton. I think there's been a lot of deviant sexual activity going on. Um, and I just love that, I just love that kind of idea that nature would hold those stories, these trees have seen that, and it makes me very happy to be here. Looking around those.

And I'm going to take the microphone down, hopefully you can hear the leaves on the floor - all the autumn, winter leaves . . .

[Leaves crunching]

So, December 2017. The last thing I would like to add is my hopes for the future, which is to actually, very soon, be living within nature a little bit more. I'm absolutely thirsty for it. Last weekend, I went on a spontaneous six-hour walk, on my own, and it took me I would say until about two hours, until I got to a place where I couldn't hear a road. And that makes me really sad. So, I'm looking to the future to be somewhere out of this city life and to get in a place where I can follow an actual natural rhythm.

Thank you very much.

## Link - 0:12:37

**Alysse:** I like how cityscape and nature mix in Adele's piece. It's a sonic landscape that most of us are familiar with, the place we go to the most regularly - as she said. But within the seemingly urban noise there's details that remind us of the outdoors, that makes us pause, think, and meditate. Something that walking always does no matter where we are. It brings clarity and an identity.

This power of walking is explored by Jonathan in his piece entitled "As I am Walking (I am Becoming)." Here is what he said about it: I was thinking about how we bring ourselves into being, how bodies carry traces of the environments in which they are articulated, how we understand our embodiment, identity from deeply within but also in the way the world reflects our selves back to us. Are we a different kind of people depending on our environments? Does a person's identity change as the way they are reflected changes? I was also thinking that - what that might mean for queer people. After all, despite some of our perceived risks from other humans outdoors, the trees don't care about the shape of our bodies, the path doesn't care who we love or who we fuck.

## As I am Walking (I am Becoming) - Jonathan - 0:13:52

[Sounds of footsteps, cars, birds, insects. The words of the poem are repeated in different tracks, weaving in and out of each other.]

As I am walking  
I am becoming            myself  
in this world  
in this way        I am becoming  
a mind            full of the present  
I am a movement  
I am a moment  
I am presented to myself  
          as a footfall on grass  
          as a breath in the breathing of leaves  
          as a body  
enveloped by sky and earth  
by rock by water by trees  
defined            on a path

on a past      dissolving  
                         on the wind

As I am walking  
I am becoming      aware  
of place and pace  
and time measured in heartbeat  
and cloudheight  
as an ever unfurling  
now                      breath  
now                      step  
As I am walking      breath  
I am becoming      step  
I am a movement      breath  
I am a moment      step  
I am presented to myself as a footfall  
                         I am falling  
                         I am filling  
I am full

## Link - 0:15:56

**Jonathan:** I recorded the tracks used in this piece while on beaches, forests, paths, tracks and the bush in the UK (Norfolk, East Sussex and Wales) and in Australia (along the Snowy River). Many of these sounds were collected on the traditional lands of the Ngarigo and especially of the Krowathunkoolong people of the GunaiKurnai nation - I acknowledge your sovereignty, that your Country was never ceded, and I pay my respect to your Elders past, present and emerging.

Our next piece takes us further around the world, to the Appalachian Trail, which stretches 3,500 kms (or 2,200 miles) through the eastern states of the USA, between Georgia and Maine. It's a popular trail with long distance hikers and there is plenty of great writing about it - Rahawa Haile [<https://twitter.com/RahawaHaile>], an Eritrean-American writer, has written a couple of excellent essays about hiking the AT in 2016 and I recommend that you look them up online.

But we will be visiting the trail with Aubri Drake, a white, queer, genderqueer, trans hiker and backpacker. Aubri tells us that when they're not out in the woods, they do medical research, rock climb, read, crochet, and cuddle their ginger tabby cat - but on the trail things sometimes get a lot more adventurous...

Oh, and before we start - 20s or teens in Fahrenheit is about 0 to -10 Celcius.

## Story from the Appalachian Trail - Aubri Drake - 0:17:18

**Aubri:** Hello everyone. My name is Aubri, on the trail I go by Timex. And I just finished hiking the Appalachian Trail in August. August 17th 2017.

I started hiking on the Appalachian Trail in... September of 2013. I started hiking by... Um... backpacking my way through the entirety of Massachusetts, which is 92 miles [148 km]. Um. I'd

never backpacked a day in my life before. It was a bad life choice. It took six months before I could feel all the parts of my feet again. I didn't have the right shoes, I didn't have the right gear. I did a 27 mile [43 km] day. The Appalachian Trail is typically 2 miles an hour. It's pretty standard for people who are... Um... relatively experienced at backpacking. And, over the years, I - over four years I went and hiked the rest of it. All the way from Maine down to Georgia.

And it's kind of interesting because I started section-hiking on the Appalachian Trail, um, just about exactly one year after I began medical transition. I'm transgender, I'm non-binary, I'm genderqueer. And, um, it has been kind of an interesting coming of age kind of adventure, for me. It's been interesting to, to look at the person I was then and the person I am now. And some of that has definitely been impacted by my interactions on the trail. And so I figured I would tell you all one of my favourite stories from the AT [Appalachian Trail], which was was in November 2013. It was only the third time I'd gone hiking on the Appalachian Trail, um, I was still very much a newbie hiker. I didn't really know what I was doing. I didn't die, which was great! Um, even though it was a possibility, given the scenario.

So, as I said I hiked in September, did all of Massachusetts on the Appalachian Trail. It was intense, but I did it. And I was like, "Oh cool! I'll like keep section-hiking the Appalachian Trail, cool, this is, you know, something to do." And so in October I did a little day hike, and then in November - November, bad idea! - I decided to do a four day, three night hike, backpacking trip, in Southern Vermont. In early November.

And this might have been okay if things hadn't been relatively seasonal, there was a cold snap. And so the very first day I was heading out to the trail, it was in the twenties, maybe the teens [between 0 and -10 celsius] when I woke up that morning and started driving, and went and park my car. Um, I'd gotten permission from the town, um, the town offices to like park my car there. And I had my first hitchhiking experience, and hitchhiked to get to the trail head. Um, and the guy dropped me off and I started hiking. And it was snowing. There was snow that I, I hadn't seen on radar, on the weather. And it didn't look like it was gonna snow, but it was. There was also an ice storm there that hadn't happened back in Connecticut or Massachusetts. And so everything was covered in ice, very unexpectedly for me. So. I did not have traction devices for my shoes, I was wearing every stitch of clothing I had with me, and was still getting cold. My water bottles were freezing, it was snowing. And perhaps other people would have been sensible and turned around. Um, I've always, I've always been stubborn and specifically I really hate changing my plans. But, I kept pushing onward and I'd been sensible in that I had, um, borrowed a zero degree sleeping bag, which was probably the reason I didn't end up with any really negative consequences from this experience.

So, I was like, "Okay. It's super cold, it's snowing, it's icy - but!" It's this one section of the AT that I was on. It's 40 miles [64km] between one road and the next. There a forestry road in the middle but during the winter it's not ploughed, nobody's there. So, I was like, "Okay. I'm gonna put on every stitch of clothing I have, I'm gonna bundle up, I'm going to get to this one shelter that's in the middle of this 40 miles. I'll stay the night there. And then I'm gonna hike out the next day to get to my car. I'm going to hitchhike, I'm going to get to the road and hitchhike back to my car. Um, I'm done with this, none of this four days shit, like that's not happening. I'm so cold, and I'm stupid. Let's like, we'll just make this work."

[Sigh] And so I'm hiking up Glastonbury Mountain which is a 4000 foot [1219m] mountain. In the, like, driving snow. It's, you know, two or three inches [6cm] of snow on the ground. It's, visibility is very poor. Ice is everywhere. I've been slipping and falling. Um, I've seen no one. No one else is on the trail. And, I have my shoulders hunched up to my ears, and like the wind is just in my face. And I'm walking. And then there's a shadow, like a darkness in front of me. I'm like, "Who else is out here? Who else is silly enough to be out here today?" And I look up, and maybe, maybe, like 20 or 30 feet [6-9m] in front of me on the trail, in the middle of the trail, there is a gigantic moose butt. The back end of a moose is just hanging out in the middle trail. And, it swings its huuuge head around to look at me, and starts snorting and snuffing and digging its paw into the ground. Because they're prey animals but they're like a thousand pounds [450kg]. And so if they get scared, they'll kick or trample. And I've worked with horses, and the moose was just all wrong. It was just, the legs went on forever, they were little spindly things. The body was massive but too long. And then the nose looked like somebody had kind of stretched it out. And it's just looking at me and snorting and batting its ears around. Just digging into the dirt. And my instinct turned out to be correct, which was I froze and just didn't move, and just muttered under my breath, "Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit!"

Eventually, it was probably, maybe 10 or 15 seconds at max but it felt like a few years, the moose snorted to itself, turned around, and trotted on up the trail. And I just about like fell over, my knees went all watery, and I had enough adrenaline to pretty much sprint to the shelter. Um, on my way I like compared the hoof print of the moose and my hand. And... no surprise, the hoof was, about 2 or 3 inches [5-7cm] wider on every side of my hand. Um. Of course, after it started walking up the trail, I was like, "I have snacks. You seem so sure footed. Maybe, we can make an alliance! I could ride you!" But yeah...

So I got to... after that, you know, adventure, with enough adrenaline to keep me running for quite a while. I got to the shelter right around sundown and set up my gear in the shelter. And, ah, within an hour and a half of the sun going down at like 4.15pm, I was in my bedroll and trying to sleep because it was just so cold. My water bottles had frozen. I needed to use my stove to even get liquid water. And I forgot to put my [laughs] I forgot to put my water filter in my sleeping bag with me so it [laughs] it froze. And so the next morning my boots had frozen into gigantic ice blocks. So I put my feet inside of those at about, you know, six thirty or seven in the morning when the sun had finally come up and took my water b- my water filter and shoved it down my shirt, so it was sitting against my stomach, so it could defrost. And started hiking. And hiked up for the road 22 miles [35 km] away. And I made it about half an hour before sun down.

And, um, I stuck my thumb out. And, the first person to pass by, pulled over and stopped for me. And it was this lovely older man, and he asked me where I was going. And I said, "Well I'm trying to get to, you know, this nearby town. But, you know, I'm trying to go to this other town eventually." And he was like, "Oh! I actually live there. Where are you headed in that town?" I said, "I'm going for the town offices." He said, "That's perfect, I live a quarter of a mile [ $\frac{1}{2}$  km] from there, that's where I'm headed. I won't get you there quick but I'll get you there. Is that alright?" I was like, "That sounds perfect."

And he ended up pulling in and stopping at a McDonalds on the way. And he was like, "Do you like coffee?" I was like, "Anything warm. I love coffee!" [Laughs] He gets me the biggest coffee they sell. And he takes me and drops me off after, you know, a 45 minute ride, telling me all about his family and his kids and his grandkids. [Sigh] And, um, we get to the town offices and I get out of

the car, and I was like, “Oh wait, I have something for you,” and I get out some cash and I try to give it to him and he was like, “I won’t take it, I will not take your money. Keep it.” He’s like, “I’m not really religious but I believe what goes around comes around. And just pass it on.”

And that was my first experience hitchhiking on the AT. My first interaction with a moose. My first winter backpacking experience. Um, and it was just, I don’t know. There’s something about coming face to face with possible death that just simplifies things. And I don’t know. The woods has never gotten my gender wrong, even if people do.

Anyway, thank you so much for making this zine and I hope you enjoy my story. Thanks. Bye.

## Link - 0:28:51

**Allyse:** I almost missed this piece, which as an editor is a terrible confession to make. I thought I saved it in my computer but somehow didn’t and only listened to it quite late. But since then, I’ve listened to this piece many times. It’s an exhilarating story, my kind of story. Because there’s a naivety that Aubri possess that is enticing. They are under prepared (or they feel like it), but they go ahead with their plans regardless. And in doing so, in pushing boundaries, they find themselves. There’s danger in getting out of our comfort zone, but it’s in those uncertainties that the best moments happen. Just like meeting a moose face to face in the middle of a deserted trail.

In the next piece we remain on the Appalachian Trail for a while before moving further afield into the mountains of the USA. It’s an extract from the podcast Flex Your Heart Radio [<http://lacyjdavis.com/podcasts/>] hosted by Lacy. It’s a podcast about positivity, fitness, feminism, recovery, taking risks, and crushing at life. The section you’re about it hear is from the episode calling “Finding home in the in-between with Travis!”. We’re showcasing six minutes of an hour-long episode so you can imagine that there’s a lot more than USA mountains being discussed in the episode. But in the meantime here are Lacy and Travis talking about the outdoors.

## Excerpt from “Finding Home in the In-Between with Travis” - Flex Your Heart Radio - 0:30:16

**Lacy:** How did you get into mountain sports, specifically?

**Travis:** Mountain sports. Um, so I grew up next to Acadia National Park -

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** And as a family we would go hiking every once in a while and everyone would scream and cry and, you know, to the point where my parents probably just stopped, you know? And so I don’t really have - you know, I have maybe one memory of us camping and maybe one memory of us hiking. But at some point my father got me the Maine Appalachian hiking guide, the Maine AMC guide, and there’s a section on it for Acadia National Park. And so I just decided that I wanted to hike every mountain in Acadia.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** And these mountains aren't very tall, coz it's on the ocean, but they're dramatic and beautiful. Have you ever been to Acadia?

**Lacy:** No.

**Travis:** They're - it's basically like these exposed mountain cliffs that literally end at the ocean.

**Lacy:** That sounds perfect.

**Travis:** In the Atlantic Ocean, so you just see the horizon. And then you see all these little sail boats, like, everywhere.

**Lacy:** Yeah.

**Travis:** It's amazingly gorgeous and beautiful and, um, I would spend a lot of time there, just hiking. And I just, I just got it in my head that I just wanted to hike all of them. And I pretty much did, and you know, every time I would hike something I'd write the date and who I hiked it with and, like -

**Lacy:** In your LiveJournal! [laughter]

**Travis:** Well, in my LiveJournal, but really in this book, and I still have this book which is really cute. Um, and then, um, I was a skateboarder -

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** - and at some point when snowboarding became enough of a thing, I think this was like '93, I spent all my babysitting money and got myself a used snowboard, and I became a snowboarder.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** And, um, and so by the time I got to college I was *obsessed* with snowboarding. So that and the, like, I think I'm g-, I think I might be gay brought me to the school I went to, which was UNF [?]. Um. And so once I started snowboarding, just, I just became obsessed with that mountain in particular, which was Sugarloaf.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** Um, and then that's where, also where I started, um, mountain biking - coz there's just mountain bike trails everywhere - and just started doing lots of day hikes, and eventually I started backpacking, and, um, and that's - yeah, that's kinda how I, it just all started with Acadia and just . . . For some reason, um, I just feel pulled up mountains. There's like almost this, like, rope that just, like, pulls me up them. And then I . . . And I never, like, had language for spirituality or anything like that, I wasn't raised religious. But I felt something on those mountains. And I didn't know, I didn't have a language for it, I didn't know what I was feeling - I just know I felt something,

and I felt good. And it didn't matter, like, you know, all the sort of stress and harassment I would feel in my normal life . . . I felt different on a mountain.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** And, like, I felt good. I don't even know to explain it, but there's something, there's this draw.

**Lacy:** Will you tell us about your job?

**Travis:** Yes! Um, so I work for The Venture Out Project, which is a queer/LGBTQ outdoor organisation. We're a non-profit. And the founder, ah, lives in Northampton, Massachusetts. I found out about The Venture Out Project - a.k.a. TVOP. Um, I was actually already living in Portland, but I had just moved from Massachusetts six months prior. Somebody had posted something on my Facebook wall, and I was like, "Who is this person running these trips in Massachusetts, where I literally just moved from?!"

**Lacy:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And so I wrote to him. And we went through, ah, a series of, like, you know, he checked my references and interviews and all this stuff, and he - coz I asked if I could help him lead a trip - and, you know, after the sort of process he was, like, "Yes!" And so, we had never met in person before, but I flew out that August (so that was, like, in February) - that August I flew out to help him and another instructor lead a trip. So there was three instructors and two participants!

**Lacy:** Uh huh, uh huh!

**Travis:** And we spent a week on the trail - and it was awesome. I loved it and we were actually on the Long Trail, which I then later hiked, in Vermont. And then six months after that, um, he called me - and I was actually in a horrible job at the time -

**Lacy:** Really?

**Travis:** - and I was . . . It was very stressful, it was financially horrible, like, I got paid pennies so I was like, kind of living off of a credit card -

**Lacy:** Oof!

**Travis:** - and crying at night, and, you know that anxious feeling of, like, I have to go to work the next day, like, it just was horrible. And it was just like this weird universe thing. He called and offered me a job.

**Lacy:** Mm hm, like a full time job?

**Travis:** Yeah, like, "I want you to be my full time admin person." And I was like, "Oh my god -"

**Lacy:** "Thank you!"

**Travis:** Yeah - you have no idea! So I said yes and it was under the understanding that I would do this job, this was in January, and that that fall I would move to Northampton.

**Lacy:** Mm.

**Travis:** At the time I was in this partnership, with the same partner I'm with, and, you know, I talked to him about it, and I'm like, "I think, maybe - you know, I'm thirty eight now - and maybe that seems like one of those things that adults do, which is move to the other sides of the country for jobs, and then we just have a long-distance relationship until - maybe, maybe you'll move here, too!"

**Lacy:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Anyways, September came, when it was time for me to move, and I was like, "I love this job; and I also really love my partner, and I love Portland and I can't, I can't leave."

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** So, we just kind of like renegotiated.

**Lacy:** Wow!

**Travis:** And I was like, "What if I started leading trips out here?" And so that's what happened! So, now we have trips in the Portland, Pacific Northwest area *and* New England, which is great for both of us. And also, he loves travelling out here, so we lead trips together out here, and I go back east a bunch, which also allows me to be able to visit Maine a whole tonne. Coz I can't go to New England and not go to Maine.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** So I get to visit my family a bunch, and some - and, like, I almost see them the same amount that when I lived in Boston, when I lived like four hours away. I get to see them a lot, which is great, coz I love visiting home.

**Lacy:** Mm hm.

**Travis:** So, yeah! And so now I'm the Director of Operations for them and it's awesome! Like, I get to plan trips, I get to communicate with all the participants, um, I basically just, you know, I do all the social media - everything admin-related is me. Plus the like recruitment of the participants and, yeah, it's a really fun job.

**Link - 0:36:53**

**Jonathan:** Well, thanks again to Travis from The Venture Out Project and to Lacy from Flex Your Heart Radio for allowing us to use this excerpt. You can find the whole interview, and many others, by searching for Flex Your Heart Radio wherever you find your podcasts, or by visiting Lacy's website which is [lacyjdavis.com/podcast](http://lacyjdavis.com/podcast). You can find out more about the fantastic work of The

Venture Out Project at <http://www.ventureoutproject.com/>. And we'll put links in our show notes, as well!

## Sweeper - Ruth - 0:37:20

[Footsteps]

**Ruth:** Hi, I'm Ruth, and I'm on a beautiful walk near Burwash - and you're listening to Queer Out Here.

## Link - 0:37:30

**Allysse:** Thanks Ruth. Next is a piece produced by Erin Kyan, a disabled queer trans man who is a zine creator a spoken word performer. Described as poetry augmented with sound, his piece is an extract from his zine, Floodlight Viscera.

## Excerpt from Floodlight Viscera #12 - Erin Kyan - 0:37:46

**Erin:** Excerpt from Floodlight Viscera Number Twelve.

\*

Let's dip into some moments.

The first is brunch in the sun.

Sitting across from the man I love,  
we drink tea and point to passing dogs.  
We are at our favourite cafe,  
just a few doors down from our home.

The food is rich and delicious,  
and as we chat about politics  
and art and community,  
I gaze at him and think,  
every time,  
how glad I am  
for this to be my life.

\*

Beachside in the winter.

Cold and windy and wet,  
we are alone with the shoreline.

The ocean gulps and whispers,  
and even the gulls are quiet.  
Every breath drawn is cold and fresh,  
like crisp apples and morning dew.

The world feels bigger here.  
The breadth and depth of the sea  
reminds us that we are nothing.

Which is a relief, when faced  
with burdens overwhelming.

\*

I find road trips therapeutic.

It's easy to filter through your  
thoughts and feelings  
while gazing out a car window,  
because there's nowhere  
for you to go to escape yourself.

But you're not trapped.  
You're moving.

The changing scenery helps  
lubricate your subconscious,  
gliding you through  
the maze of mind  
until you can find  
peace, and  
resolution.

## Link - 0:39:54

**Jonathan:** Ahhh! I love the way that body and place mingle in Erin's piece - ah, and the way that he weaves field recordings around the poem to help immerse us in the moment. And I can really feel the atmosphere of the cafe, and the bite of the sea breeze, and the car pulling out onto the long highway.

As you can hear, Erin is Australian, and he notes that this piece was written, recorded and produced on the stolen land of the Boon Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation. The creator pays respect to all Elders, past, present and emerging, and extends that respect to all Indigenous people who are listening. Sovereignty was never ceded, Australia always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Now, that feeling of immersion continues in our next piece which is something of an audio travel diary, a scrapbook, or an art journal, ah, of a trip that the producer, Ania, took to Kenya in 2010. Ania says that she likes to take her recorder and make binaural recordings of her trips as audio postcards. When listening back to them she is transported right back to where she was at that time.

## Kenyan Journey - Ania - 0:41:04

[Ambient noise, birds, traffic hum. Insect. Hammering. Singing coming over a speaker, splashing water. Voice calling. Radio in a humming vehicle, voices talking, baby crying, radio presenter. Motor passing, background voices, "Welcome!", footsteps, distant voices and child crying. "Hullo . . . hi!" Motorbikes (or similar) passing from left to right and back again. Footsteps walking. Sound of a small crowd, announcement on a microphone, bass and drums noodle a bit. Live music - singing, clapping, synthesizer? Applause, "Yay!". Insects and night sounds, dogs bark in the distance.]

## Link - 0:48:03

**Allysse:** I love the immediacy of Ania's piece. I close my eyes and I'm transported to a different place. I can imagine myself meandering through the streets of an unknown city, moving through time and space. I can make of it what I want. I'm told it's set in Kenya by the title. Images are conjured up in my mind, but I'm sure they're wrong. And yet, not completely. I too am on this journey, and like any traveller, I will not notice the same details as travellers before me, after me, or even next to me. And I will definitely not take in the same details as local do and miss. Because that's the power of being foreign. You see things differently. In a city, you visit attractions locals never go to, and in the countryside, you discover habits and customs foreign to your land. Sometimes what is normal, taken for granted can become exceptional and a gift. And other things, well, they can just be weird.

In the next piece, we have a look at the English countryside through the eyes of EZ. In her piece "Out with Frankie the Dog" she takes us on a walk on the outskirts of Burton in the UK and reflects on the differences between English and Bulgarian countryside.

## Out with Frankie the Dog - EZ - 0:49:24

**EZ:** Hello. It's Ellie, um, and Adele and the dog Frankie having a walk in the countryside near Burton-upon-Trent, just before Christmas. It's a really foggy day, but beautiful. Sun is trying to strike through the, through the [gust?]. Quite warm. Damp. Love English weather . . . I feel . . . I feel calm and nice. Content.

**Frankie:** [Noise]

**EZ:** Nice. The dog just coughed.

**Adele:** How's our countryside different from yours?

**EZ:** How is the countryside different from Bulgarian countryside? Um, it's much more organised, ah, more clean, maybe, in places. Um, our countryside is more wild, not accessible for humans maybe, so much. Which is good in a way. But I think nature is nature, it doesn't matter where you are . . . What I can see is a really, really big field. Green. And the fog and sunshine trying to strike through the, through the fog. And I can hear people on the other side of the field. I guess there is a, a farm. Ah . . . What is Frankie doing? She's just searching for something?

**Frankie:** [Panting]

**EZ:** What's up? Oh my god! [Laughter] Is she alright?

**Adele:** She's just running around like a mad dog.

**EZ:** I think she's a mad dog.

**Adele:** She's excited about something.

**Frankie:** [Panting]

**EZ:** Oh my god! [Laughter] Do, do you think that she smells some other dog wee in the field? A friend of hers?

**Adele:** [Murmurs something]

**EZ:** Oh yeah, um. So, there is this rule in English or British countryside that you need to clean dog's poo - Oh, there is another dog there.

**Adele:** [Too quiet to hear]

**EZ:** No, just fetch her. So, you have to clean it, or you have to put it in a plastic bag, but you're in the nature. And then a lot of people leaving their plastic bags in the field with the poo. So what's the point of that? I mean, to put a plastic bag and leave it in the field, is that, is that a good thing? I think no. So it's, it's not very logical, I think. Anyway. Come on, Frankie! . . . That's it from me. I hope everyone have, ah, great Christmas celebrations and New Years celebrations, and may the force be with you.

## Link - 0:53:32

**Jonathan:** And also with you. Now, don't get me started on dog poo, though!

Anyway, I think, ah, both of us enjoyed the casual, everydayness of this piece. For a lot of people, going out to walk the dog is probably their main interaction with the outdoors - they go every day, whether it's sunny or foggy, hot, windy, raining, snowing - it just has to be done.

Now, some people take these daily or weekly habits and rituals just a little bit further!

Jo Impey, a producer at the BBC, has, over the last couple of years - and with some encouragement from her girlfriend - been discovering the great outdoors, mainly through walking, hiking and outdoor swimming. And when I say "outdoor swimming" I don't mean just any old outdoor pool, but the ponds on Hampstead Heath - in all kinds of weather, in all seasons...

## An Aborted Swim (Ladies' Pond) - Jo Impey - 0:54:25

[Sounds of a gate opening and footsteps]

**Various voices:** No swimming, no swimming.

**Jo:** Oh, no swimming?

**Various voices:** No, sorry, we're still iced, we're waiting for it to go . . . I mean, at the most we might get a plunge pool . . .

**Jo:** Oh, right.

**Various voices:** Could go to the men's . . . Yes, the men's is available for swimming . . . Sorry.

**Jo:** Can I just look and record some sound of the rain?

**Various voices:** You can . . . You can be here.

[Ambient sounds, ducks, footsteps]

**Jo:** Can you describe, like, what happens when people get in when it's covered with ice like that?

**Voice:** The problem with ice is that you can't see where the edge of the ice is. If, it, even if there's clear water, because the water goes over the top of the ice flow and then makes it look like water. Particularly when you're in there at the level of the water, you can't see the edge - and the edge can be incredibly sharp and can, be, extend several feet beyond what you can naturally see as ice. And it's incredibly sharp. Because it's sharp and because your skin's very cold you don't notice the fact that you get cut.

**Jo:** You've seen people with injuries?

**Voice:** Yeah, yes, they come out of the water and they've, it's like paper cuts. So we, we spend a lot of time stopping them going near the edge of the ice. Um, and they think they're completely fine, ah, then they come out and there's horrible cuts. So we have to be incredibly careful.

**Jo:** Looks just like a kind of black depth, doesn't it?

**Various voices:** Yeah, except where you can see the bubbles. Can you see the bubbles moving under it? See there? Yeah.

**Jo:** Oh, yeah.

**Voice:** And so it's actually very shallow.

**Voice:** I mean at the moment it's just raining - normally when it's raining the ice would have melted already because it's warmed up that much. But this is quite thick ice; it will take a while for this to go. The deeper the pond, it holds the cold longer.

**Jo:** Yeah, which is why this place freezes, I think, in a certain time - and it hasn't . . .

**Voice:** It will probably freeze quicker and lose heat faster, being shallow. But will also warm up faster. Sort of holds its temperature, having a depth.

**Various voices:** Mm, yeah.

**Voice:** The ducks were doing really good sliding -

**Various voices:** [laughter]

**Jo:** I always like that!

## Link - 0:57:38

**Allysse:** Plans don't always unfold as we want them to. Jo wanted a swim but the weather decided otherwise - and I'm glad it did. The result is an almost accidental piece, a found story like a found sound. And it paints a vivid picture, as if we are there, too, watching the ice on the water.

## Sweeper - Sam - 0:57:58

[Sounds of pigeons, echoes, reverb, slow synthesizer sounds]

**Sam:** Hello, ah, my name is Sam, I live in Melbourne, Australia. Today, I walked the city with my friend Hannah and even though it was a city we saw, I, I still think of it as, in many ways, the great outdoors, for various reasons. And we walked the Yarra River. And I'm looking at my pedometer and we walked twenty one thousand, six hundred and ninety three [21,693] steps today . . . And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

## Link - 0:58:44

**Jonathan:** Thanks Sam. In this piece, Jenny List, engineer and journalist, is out for a wander on New Year's Day. She addresses one of the central questions of this project - how being queer (in this case, being trans) relates to being outdoors, or whether it does at all.

Being trans doesn't mean that you will go walking, but Jenny points out that the hoops that trans people need to jump through - so in this case, the requirement (which is enforced by surgeons) that trans people not be fat if they want to access certain transition-related surgical interventions -

those hoops mean that some trans people have a very particular reason or motivation to be outside.

## New Year's Day Thoughts - Jenny List - 0:59:22

**Jenny:** Just do a quick level check - yes that's looking good.

Well, I'm Jenny List. Just walking along a slightly muddy bridle path on New Year's Day, ah, about where Buckinghamshire meets Oxfordshire, so I suspect I started in, ah, Oxfordshire and I'm now in Buckinghamshire. Just letting myself through a gate. It's a slightly raw and cold day, as January the first often is. Grey. But I seem to have the place to myself. Probably after lunch all the groups of grumpy, ah, holiday families will be out, exposing their, ah, familial rows after having been cooped up together at the home of the matriarch for the last week. But for now, ah, blessedly empty. Just walking along a very, very, very minor country lane with, ah, fields of, ah, winter wheat just poking through the soil on either side of me.

It's, ah, interesting to ponder the whole Queer Out thing, Queer Out Here thing, because of course I'm out here, I walk a lot, but, ah, am I especially queer by being out here? The answer is probably not. I've lived in this part of the world all my life and, ah, before I came out of the closet as trans I still walked around on New Year's Day in a pair of old wellies and a pair of old jeans and a jumper, just as I am at the moment and, ah, was I any more or less queer then? So, in a way, I'm not coming out here to be queer, but then again there is a queer aspect to a lot of the walking I do.

It's something that, ah - there's a bit of a narrative surrounding transition that people come out of the closet as trans, they, ah, wait a little bit, but end up going to the, ah, gender clinic - some gender clinics have a much longer wait than others, but if they're private they go straight into it - and eighteen months, two years later, they have their surgery and that's it, they're done! But of course, transition is not that simple. Many of the extreme fast-trackers who do that kind of thing, ah, then fall flat on their faces when they wake up after a few months and realise that the thing that's been their massive focus for the last two years is gone, and there's a big void in their life that they haven't filled, they haven't done the required, um, socialisation and all the other things. And that narrative rather, um, forgets the other side of the trans community, the people for whom transition isn't a speedy process.

For me, I've - it's eight years since I went to see, ah, my GP, in the first instance. I've had a very slow journey through the system, partly because I tried to stay in there for my wife (it didn't work), and I've had one or two medical ups and downs. But, ah, along the way I've met quite a few of the very fast transitioners and also come to know a group of slow train-ers, people for whom, they've got stuck along the way. And, um, most of them are stuck because they've got to the point where they're referred to surgery and they're too much, too, too overweight. They have to lose some, ah, some fat. And at that point you get into a very awkward kind of holding pattern. Ah, on one side you've got people fat shaming - I should say, I'm not one of those people, my reasons for being held back are different - but there's a lot of sort of fat shaming, a lot of invisibility that, ah, other people in the trans community don't really realise that, ah, these people are stuck in the system. And there's a lot of real triggering, ah, from people who've gone through very quickly and won't stop going on about it and don't realise that the person they're talking to has their own private turmoils with the length it's taking for them.

So, back to why that has relevance to being queer out here - obviously one of the ways to lose weight is exercise. And I find that one or two of my walking partners are trans women who have some weight to lose, um, and are slow-train-ers like me. And so it's very odd, coz we're not there to be queer out here, so to speak. But then again, one of the reasons we're doing so much exercise is related to our transitions. Ah, as I say, I'm the odd one out being very tall and lean, but, ah, it's kind of a theme among the friends I go walking with that quite a few of them are in this situation.

The, ah, damp and wet January countryside doesn't judge you by, ah, who you are, what your body shape is, or where you've reached in your transition path. I do wish there were more members of the, ah, wider trans community who would see it that way.

Anyway. I'm just walking up a slight hill with, ah, on my right a field that looks like it had oilseed rape in it last year, coz there's lots of little sprouts coming through - I think it's being left fallow over the winter, though. Um, probably about half an hour I'll come back in and, ah, I will have very cold hands.

Anyway, that's just my thoughts on the whole Queer Out Here thing.

## Link - 1:05:47

**Allysse:** Jenny's piece is the third piece that mentions the outdoors as a non-judgemental place. Nature doesn't judge people in any way, and I like that this is being reflected in the submissions. It's an open place where people don't have to hide. But at the same time, Jenny talks about the fact that the outdoors is not necessarily a choice. People can be there because they feel they have to in order to lose weight - and I wonder if this doesn't alter people's relations to the outdoors.

The following piece continues on with the question of being queer out here. Not from the point of view of transitioning but simply of encouraging queer people to explore the outdoors. The voices you are going to hear are from Ben from MtnMeister [<http://mtnmeister.com/>] and Elyse from OUT There Adventures [<http://www.outthereadventures.org/>]. It's an extract from the podcast MtnMeister.

## Excerpt from "Putting the 'Out' in Outdoors With Elyse Rylander" - MtnMeister - 1:06:38

**Ben:** What do you say to people who say, "Well, you can't have for only people who identify as queer, and segregate them from the people who are straight!" What's your response to that?

**Elyse:** Well, I mean, we have a history of doing it, you know? Outward Bound, National Outdoor Leadership School, those are, those programmes were all started serving the needs of white, cisgendered males. Um, maybe they'd throw a young man of colour in there every once in a while, but, you know those, those programmes were designed to help that particular group. The Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, we, we have a history of doing this all over the place. Um, and no one raises that into question because those are all dominant groups in society.

**Ben:** Mm hm.

**Elyse:** But I, I think that, for the same reasons that people felt those programmes were important, we feel ours is important. Arguably, I feel ours is even more important, right? Because you can't go out and get your needs met in the same way as a queer person as you can if you are someone who has a less marginalised identity.

**Ben:** I spoke with, ah, José González from Latino Outdoors [<http://latinooutdoors.org>] and his response - because I asked him a similar question, what do you say to the people who say, "Well, what if we to have an only white outdoors community?" - and he was like, "That's reality, already!"

**Elyse:** Yeah.

**Ben:** "That already exists."

**Elyse:** It does. Yeah, absolutely.

**Ben:** How, how do you get people who are, who don't identify that way to really care? Because honestly, I'm going to be completely honest, I see "Get Involved", the "Get Involved" button on the website, and my first reaction is, "Why would I get involved with this? I can't really empathise."

**Elyse:** Yeah. I think that, um, we are always trying to find a way to connect with people. You know, and we have, our organisation is interesting because it spans so many different, um, genres of people and of giving and philanthropy. Um, we - you know, if somebody grew up camping, you know, or they grew up fishing with their dad every summer and that was this really formative experience for them, you know, we can kind of tap into that, and we can say, "We're trying to provide a situation similar to the one that you were able to experience." Or, um, if folks are really interested in working with young people, um, and trying to help them become better leaders or more confident, you know, we're able to offer up reasons why, why we are able to do that as well. And then - and then you have the other folks that are attuned to social justice work that's happening across the country and, and then we're able to represent that community as well, you know? So, I think we do offer an interesting way for folks to be connected regardless of who you are. And, um, so often I hear stories - and this has happened with more frequency as I've been working on, on this organisation - people like, "Oh yeah, I have a gay niece," or "My sister is trans," or, um, you know, something like that. It's pretty amazing to hear the increase in frequency with which people are engaging with the queer community in some way.

**Ben:** Mm hm. Earlier in the interview, you said that, ah, the queer community doesn't have a history of engaging in the outdoors. Uh -

**Elyse:** Mm hm.

**Ben:** Why not?

**Elyse:** Um, well, I think a couple different reasons. You know . . . All of the formative milestones or the big milestones for the queer community, if you look back in this country, all those big things have happened in cities. The Stonewall Riots happened in New York, um, Daughters of Bilitis,

Mattachine Society - these organisations that started as underground, um, gay and lesbian groups started in San Francisco or New York. And we, even now, people tend to move from rural areas to urban areas, you know. I did that. I grew up in a town of two thousand people and went to college in Madison and then moved a few years later to an even bigger city, um, because you just find a higher diversity of folks and, and more resources, you know. But when you move to those cities, the things that people often engage with are bar cultures, um, you know, coffee shops, things like that - that connection to nature just isn't there.

**Ben:** Mm.

**Elyse:** And I feel like the narrative for a queer person is that you, you wait 'til you turn eighteen, and then when you're eighteen you try to get a fake ID so you can sneak into the bars, um, and that's, that's pretty much it -

**Ben:** That's not just specific to the queer community, I don't think. Is it?

**Elyse:** No. No, it's definitely not. Um, but, those are, that's what I remember being most excited about because that was the only way that I could connect with my community. I knew - you know, there's one major gay bar in Madison, and I knew that if I wanted to meet people who I identified with on this level, then I had to go there. I didn't know where else to go, you know? Um, and in, in places like Seattle you're seeing an expansion of resources, which is fantastic - you know, there's different groups that do different things, and there's, um, they're meeting every other week in a space that isn't at a bar, um, and talking about healthy lifestyles and all sorts of things, and that's fantastic. And we're just trying to contribute to that. But I think it is the unfortunate reality that that narrative is still the truth for a lot of folks.

## Link - 1:12:32

**Jonathan:** Thanks again to Ben from MtnMeister podcast and Elyse from OUT There Adventures for giving us permission to use this extract. You can find the full interview - MtnMeister episode 172 on <http://mtnmeister.com/meister/elyse-rylander>. And for more about OUT There Adventures, and their amazing trips for queer youth, visit [outthereadventures.org](http://outthereadventures.org). Again, the links will be in the show notes.

It's interesting to hear how Elyse's experience of connecting to queer community as a young person was based around bars and cities, and how one of the reasons she runs OUT There Adventures is to offer an alternative, a way for queer youth to engage with the natural world. I'm sure that some listeners will have had a similar "coming of age" experience. When I was talking to Elyse about using this excerpt, however, she noted that saying queer people in the USA don't have a history of engaging with the outdoors is incomplete and incorrect in that it centres white, mainstream, colonialist cultures and erases other people's experiences and histories.

This is a really important point, and it's relevant to this Issue of Queer Out Here. Because while we're really excited by the diversity of the pieces we've received, and while our contributors identify all over the queer spectrum, we also know that the majority of our contributors are white. And this means that we are - and you as listeners are - missing out on the perspectives of queer people of colour, Indigenous people, people from (quote unquote) "non-Western" countries all over

the world. So, if that is you, we would love to hear from you for future issues. And as with everybody, your contribution doesn't have to focus on identity, it just needs to be outdoors-themed. So check our website, [queerouthere.com](http://queerouthere.com), for submission guidelines, deadlines and the submission form.

We're sticking to the USA in our next piece, "We've Won the Winter" by Liz (or Ulysses) Tetu. Liz is a gag comic artist and writer and he is studying a Creative Sexual Communication major at Metropolitan State University.

"We've Won the Winter" blends poetic prose with creative nonfiction to describe the development of a sensual, sexual relationship between two young bi men, a relationship tied to the woods behind their local apartment building, a relationship that adapts and changes as one partner develops ulcerative colitis.

## We've Won the Winter - Liz Tetu - 1:14:51

**Liz:** Two bi boys walk to their local library, double-time because they're seventeen. On the way back, they bump into each other in the lush rush of forest behind the apartment building between their places, fondling each other next to a bruise blond pond. Back there, the breeze barks like a person pointing them out, and the boys back off often before fumbling into each other's arms again. The shorter boy will remember the way his body bites into the ruddy brown bark of the ash tree (especially his ass). His boyfriend has big arms, but even those become weary hauling up the bear-in-training to nibble at his big bare neck. The sun-orb dips below the natural pool long before they check their phones, one's parents promising to pick him up, the other rushing to the bus so they won't be busted. That's how the love-bitten summer ends.

While they're weaving their way to graduation, one's intestines begin to wear at themselves, and when they tear in college, he won't walk just anywhere anymore, not without a bathroom somewhere near. He watches the public restroom with a worn look, so far away from his nature, which is where his friend who barely sees the leaves quiver is, he's weeping so completely for what he has lost. When an illness of weeks winds its way to years, neither will remember a time where they would walk with one another without wayward sighs.

Five big ones it whittles away at the big man, the bitter bear in the frozen passenger seat of a minivan beaten briefly thinking about it as they breeze by farms whisked in winter's smutty white. Minnesota midnight, he slides in and out of the fast lane of his dreams. His boyfriend bumps his elbow below his ribs to wake him, slobbering kisses to his forehead leaving chilled skin wet. Grey eyes will themselves awake to the delight of the guy relying on them. Before the men, the woods of their memories, dipped in ice sheets and snow, the place from six years ago.

In the steel body stalled, a race is proposed, snogging the prize. The cub assures he just did it, zoomed straight from the vehicle and back again, but he never does anything straight, he chuckles, succumbing to the suction of saving grace lips who stopped here for sentimentality. The night snow reflected on his sick-white skin glows brighter in his mind's eye than weak flames for the ghost of a time that was. Between huffs, his brain wakes up enough to know that they'll have to go home soon for his sweet's stomach's safety but into hot kisses that sweep up his jaw and chin,

he feels what's living in his skin will last forever. Soft tongue in smile, they start to slide into the robust spring of their relationship.

Amongst the warm and winter woods, he's a winner.

## Link - 1:17:38

**Allysse:** It took me a while to relax into this piece, but with each listening it grew on me. So if, like me, you struggled upon first listening, persist. It's worth it. The narration weaves in and out of shared safe place, the woods. And I love how this place stands out. It's a secret, it's hidden and thrilling. It's also a place that holds memories of better times but ultimately, it's a place different from the rest of everyday life, a cocoon where you can lay aside pains and difficulty and find comfort and love.

## Sweeper - Peter, Dan and Jonathan - 1:18:14

**Jonathan:** Hi, I'm Jonathan -

**Peter:** I'm Peter -

**Dan:** I'm Dan -

**Peter:** And we're at the Drielandenpunt in Vaals.

**Jonathan:** And we are now in Germany [shuffling noises], and now in the Netherlands [shuffling noises, laughter], and now we're in Belgium...

**Dan:** And you're listening to Queer Out Here.

**Jonathan:** Woohoo!

## Link - 1:18:34

**Jonathan:** Thanks to Dan and Peter for recording that sweeper with me. Next we have two poems from Belinda Rule who is a Melbourne writer of poetry and fiction. Her work has appeared extensively in journals and anthologies and the two poems she reads here have previously been published in print - "Highway, Shepparton" in Eureka Street [<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au>], and "Rooms" in foam:e [<http://www.foame.org>]. The poems describe the ways in which place and relationships and memory are intertwined. I'll let Belinda introduce them...

## Highway, Shepperton *and* Rooms - Belinda Rule - 1:19:03

**Belinda:** Two poems from Belinda Rule

Like many queer people, I am estranged from a large part of my family. We were a camping and travelling family, and I have quite a passionate relationship with the places we used to go. But the memory of family is intertwined with the memory of place, so that even when I am literally standing in the beloved place, I still feel that I am in exile. And that's what these poems are about.

\*

### Highway, Shepparton

Did you know, the other day  
I drove that northern road again? Who knew  
you could assail the country of childhood  
so simply: just get in the car and go.  
But this country  
was not our country. The road  
I sought, long, straight and pale,  
lay beneath another road, across a membrane  
I could not pierce. Still the ragged lady gums  
danced their set across the river bridge,  
but the drought had lifted:  
the hearts of the horse-tail grass were green,  
the paddocks chartreuse, nubbled velvet strewn  
with what I took to be litter, but later saw  
was a voluminous cast of white cockatoos,  
gorging on plenty.  
But of course you don't know —  
you are not here to tell.  
The membrane is thickening,  
and that country is drifting away.  
There is no-one here with me  
to watch it go.

\*

### Rooms

All night and day it rains,  
till at dusk I lift a window for the air  
and my lost brother is outside,  
slick with rain, disdainning  
the bamboo pergola in his wild way —  
leaper into deep pools, eater  
of unnecessary chillis.  
How handsome he is. How well  
age wears his face.  
He does not see me.  
Now all  
the empty rooms of the holiday house

are full of my lost family.  
How did I not see they were here?  
I can hear the children  
I've never met  
bouncing on the candlewicked beds  
beside their lost parents;  
they shriek like whipbirds.  
On a dry patch of deck, my lost mother  
and the man recline with wine,  
tanned, loose, happy.  
She slides the flywire, mind on dinner,  
and her eye  
    slips right through me.

## Link - 1:22:14

**Alysse:** Belinda's poem makes me sad. It's not how I like to think of the outdoors, as a space filled with memories that hurt. They are not bad memories by themselves. But they can't be shared anymore, they've become estranged, stranded somehow in the landscape. They exist in the vacuum of the past, never to be shared again, cherished, and listened to for the hundredth time. Those privileges are gone and the places that hold them become a reminder of that loss.

But memories don't have to be like that. You can go to other places and create new ones. You can even close your eyes and fabricate new memories, which is what I did in the piece you're about to hear now. It's called "My Seaside" and presents to you how I like to think of a certain kind of seaside.

## My Seaside - Allysse Riordan - 1:23:04

**Allysse:** My seaside

When I think of the seaside, first there is the sea and the big all encompassing waves. Frrrrrr....

[Voice sound effects merge with field recording of big waves from a distance.]

Then, I get closer to the water's edge and details begin to appear. Splashhh, splashhh, pshiiii.

[Voice sound effect merge with field recording of small waves at the edge of the waterline with a background of bigger waves in the distance.]

I don't often think of the sand I walk on. Its wet surface absorbing my steps. But every so often the wind picks up and make it sings. Kri kri kri kri kri kri.

[Voice sound effect merge with field recording of sand being blown about by the wind on a wet beach.]

All in all it's a pretty noisy place. Until, I dive in. It's not silent but the sounds are softer, clearer. Splash, splash.

[Voice sound effect merge with field recording of small waves recorder under water.]

And every now and again, when I'm at the right place at the right time, I hear an unexpected sound, a sound not made for human ears. Clic clic clac clic clac clic clic.

[Voice sound effect merge with field recordings of clams under water.]

The seaside.

[Sound collage of previous field recordings to create a complete picture of the seaside.]

What does it sound like for you?

## Link - 1:26:11

**Jonathan:** A gorgeous piece and a great question! And we happen to have a short piece that answers it. Mags made this recording on the beach at Bexhill after a stressful day. She writes, "I find that the sound of the sea crashing onto the beach and the ebb and flow of the tide have the innate ability to create a sense of calm within me. At times I closed my eyes and just engaged with the sound of the sea and wind. I left some time later feeling a sense of calm had washed over me."

## Meditation at Bexhill - Mags - 1:26:41

[Sounds of waves on shingle, wind, wind distortion of audio]

## Link - 1:27:24

**Jonathan:** I'm familiar with the beach at Bexhill, so when I hear this piece I imagine the waves dragging on the shingle, the wind leaping and tumbling over the the wooden walls that hold the beach in place against the longshore drift. But I also hear - or I imagine I can hear - breathing. Is it Mags breathing the wind? Is it the sea breathing the beach? Who is breathing what, here?

**Allysse:** This last piece features Wendy, a second generation Holocaust survivor who lives by the sea on the south coast. She, like Jonathan, is a member of the Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance walking group. Wendy was keen to contribute to Queer Out Here, but wasn't sure about creating a piece herself, so she asked if Jonathan could record a chat while on one of their group walks and if he could edit it for the zine.

## Wendy at Camber Sands - Wendy and Jonathan - 1:28:11

**Voice:** Here we are.

**Voice:** We're all here. Are we doing a, a group photo?

**Wendy:** Group photo?

**Voices:** Yeah, yes.

**Wendy:** I always want to have group photos to send to Karen and Sloan so they're really, really-

**Voice:** Jealous.

**Wendy:** - upset that they're in Spain.

**Voices:** [Laughter]

**Jonathan:** Now, don't fall in.

**Voice:** Don't step back, don't step back.

**Voices:** [Laughter]

**Wendy:** Any short-arses need to come up here?

**Voice:** Any short-arses need elevating?

**Wendy:** Any short-arses need elevating?

**Jonathan:** Oh, just us.

**Wendy:** Just us!

**Voice:** Three, two, one, cheese!

[Sounds of gentle waves]

**Wendy:** My name's Wendy and I belong to the Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance. And once a month for the last four or five years we've been having a group walk, which is absolutely fantastic, because you can chat so nicely when you're walking outside, you go to lovely places, you meet friends and then we go to a pub and have a nice lunch. So, I can't think of anything I'd rather do more on a Sunday.

**Voices:** [Murmuring]

**Wendy:** It goes into Rye Harbour, which is before Rye.

**Wendy:** We're at Camber Sands. And, and this is a walk I've done, this is probably the third time I've done this walk.

**Voices:** [Murmuring]

**Wendy:** You could have a chain link ferry, like at, ah, Cowes. Across the Medina.

**Jonathan:** How about a zip wire?

**Voices:** Zip wire! Zip wire would be great, wouldn't it. [laughter] Yeah.

**Voice:** That would be less intrusive.

**Voices:** [Laughter]

**Voice:** Or a cable car thingy.

[Sound of waves]

**Wendy:** I was in it right from the word go. I can remember the first walk we lead, and that was on Firle Beacon and back down, coming back down on the coach road, back to Firle.

**Jonathan:** Yeah. Mm hm.

**Wendy:** And we went to a pub in Firle to eat.

[Water washing on the sand]

**Wendy:** I like to use the sticks because I feel it gives my upper body a good workout, as well.

**Jonathan:** Mm.

**Wendy:** And we bought the sticks, ah, when I was fifty four I bought them, so how old are they now? Fifty four, fifty five, fifty six, fifty seven, fifty eight - they're fourteen years old. And I bought them, and Chris bought them, because we were going to do six months around South America. And part of our trip was the Machu Picchu trail. It was gruelling! Very gruelling. Um, but fantastic, as you can imagine. And on my fifty fifth birthday I did Dead Woman's Pass, which is the, the most difficult day. Chris and I did quite well. We got up really early so we didn't keep everyone waiting - coz most people on that trip were in their thirties, some in their twenties, and there were only, like, I think five of us in our fifties. And there were thirty five people, so we didn't want to be the old fuddy-duddies who kept everyone waiting. We were about middle of the group as far as fitness went, but I had a very bad knee at the time. Since then I've had a knee replacement and I'm fighting fit now.

**Jonathan:** Yeah.

**Wendy:** I had retired, basically, when I was fifty, took early retirement; Chris worked 'til she was fifty five, um, as a nurse. And then I wanted our first holiday to be something really fantastic, that we could never have done while we were working. So we looked and, and . . . I'd never been to South America, so just . . . She'd never been to South America. And we, we tacked on a week in the Galapagos on the end of it -

**Jonathan:** Wow!

**Wendy:** - as we were in that area. Yeah. So, thus began our, our travelling days.

[Waves and quiet footsteps in water]

**Wendy:** When we were training for that Machu Picchu thing, we walked and walked and walked all over the place. And when we got back, we set ourselves the task - and we did it in a week - we walked round the perimeter of the Isle of Wight. We did between sixteen and twenty one miles every day. And that was when I had my bad knee.

[Water sounds, small waves breaking]

**Wendy:** We've experienced great friendliness to us as a couple of older women. You know? Um. We have never made it explicit that we were a couple, but I think people would have to be blind not to see it. We don't go around holding hands or kissing. I think I'm quite an independent person, and so's Chris, pretty independent. Um, we do show our affection for each other in lots of ways. But also, I think - I don't know if it's homophobia in my own make-up, but I don't wanna make people feel uncomfortable by, by them experiencing something that they don't think they're gonna see. So . . . When I'm with gay friends, when I'm with gay friends Chris and I will put our arms around each other, but in just the general . . . Like, when we do these walks or anything, I suppose I could put my arm around her and that, it wouldn't shock anybody. But we just tend to talk to different people. You think, "Oh, who do I fancy chatting to?" or it's who you end up being next to, isn't it?

[Water rippling, wind, dogs barking]

**Wendy:** I've loved some of the people I've talked to on this group . . . And you get chatting to people, you get to know their stories on these walks, you know?

[Beach sounds, footsteps]

**Wendy:** My mum always said to me, "Not long to go now, Wendy! Pull up your socks!" And she said I always used to kneel down and pull my socks up! [Laughter]

**Jonathan:** So did you like walking when you were a kid?

**Wendy:** No, I hated it! But my parents were very keen walkers - extremely keen! And on a Sunday they'd always take us out walking. [Laughter] And I mean, I, I would look forward to it as an outing but sort of half way through I'd start moaning and not wanting to do it and wanting to be carried and getting slower and slower.

**Both:** [Laughter]

**Wendy:** I just think it might have been too much for me, I don't know. Perhaps I was just lazy, I don't know what it was.

**Jonathan:** When did you start liking walking?

**Wendy:** Um . . . Um, I would say probably in my mid twenties. What about you?

**Jonathan:** Same.

**Wendy:** Same! Yeah.

[Rapid footsteps in dry sand, quiet background voices]

**Wendy:** I also like swimming. I mainly swim in pools and I mainly do lengths, which is very boring. But I have swum in lakes. And I do sometimes swim in the sea, because I only live like four minutes from, from the sea. So it's a nice hot day in the summer, I will go down to the sea.

[Quiet footsteps in water]

**Wendy:** So I said to Chris, "I'm going to put my costume on, I'm gonna rush down to the sea, gonna throw myself in. When I got down there, you could see about two miles out to sea. Low tide. You could see this bloke, just up to his knees, like, two miles away! So, I thought, "Luck's not with me." I went back and had a cold shower.

**Both:** [Laughter]

[Waves, water trickling]

**Jonathan:** How have you enjoyed the walk today?

**Wendy:** Oh, I loved it. I've loved every bit of it, and I hope this, this recording we've done is gonna be useful for the . . . fan zine.

**Jonathan:** Audio zine.

**Wendy:** Audio zine.

**Jonathan:** I am a, it is a fan, it's a fan of queer people doing stuff outside, isn't it?

**Wendy:** Yes, and I think queer people do stuff outside very well!

[Water, wave sounds, fading out]

## Sweeper - Emma - 1:38:43

Hi there, my name's Emma. I'm on top of the Cam Long Down ridge in the beautiful Cotswolds, and I'm queer out here!

## Conclusion - Allysse and Jonathan - 1:38:52

[Organ music, bells and ambient sounds fade up under voices]

**Jonathan:** Thanks Emma. And that's the last of our pieces.

**Allysse:** Thanks again to all of our contributors for sharing their pieces with us - you can find more about everyone in the show notes for this issue, available on our website - [queerouther.com](http://queerouther.com).

**Jonathan:** And thanks to you, for listening right through to the end. We hope you found something in here that delighted or inspired you. And if there was something that you wanted to respond to or a piece that got you thinking, please do consider submitting something to our next issue. Submissions for Issue 02 will open in May 2018 and will close at the start of September - so, get thinking about ways you could take our ears adventuring!

**Allysse:** In the meantime, please let us know what you thought of the zine - on Twitter, we're @QueerOutHere, and on Facebook we're the same. You could leave a review on iTunes, too. That's what all the podcasters say so there must be a reason they want you to do it, so... go do it!

**Jonathan:** But most of all, if you did like this issue, please forward it on to someone else who might enjoy it too. And that's it! So, from me, Jonathan -

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

**Both:** Goodbye!