
DYKE III
LEGACIES
Issue no. 22
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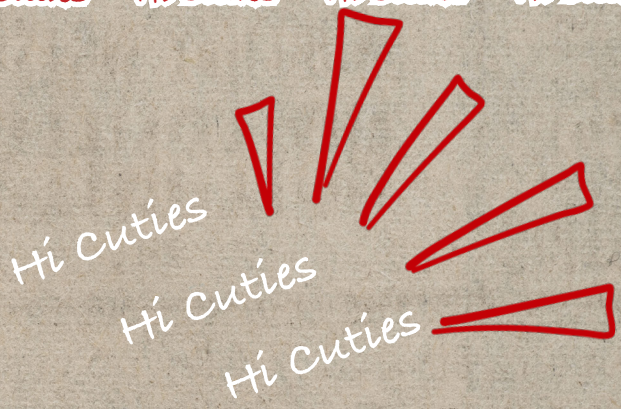
November 2026

Hi Cuties,

You asked, we listened: QT's Dyke issue is back.

For the final installment of QT's beloved DYKE trilogy (or triptych, as we like to call it), we challenged artists to explore what it means to be Dyke in its rawest form. We asked them to show us a piece of their life's tapestry, taking us back to the things they scribbled in notebooks, the words they carved into the wood of elementary school desks, and the thoughts that once felt too transgressive to say aloud.

We wondered, "when did the possibility of living against the grain snag your attention? Was it when you shrugged on a padded suit jacket for the very first time, or the moment you clipped a carabiner to the loop of your jeans? Was it something you saw in a tattered old magazine, or a person you glimpsed from across the street?"



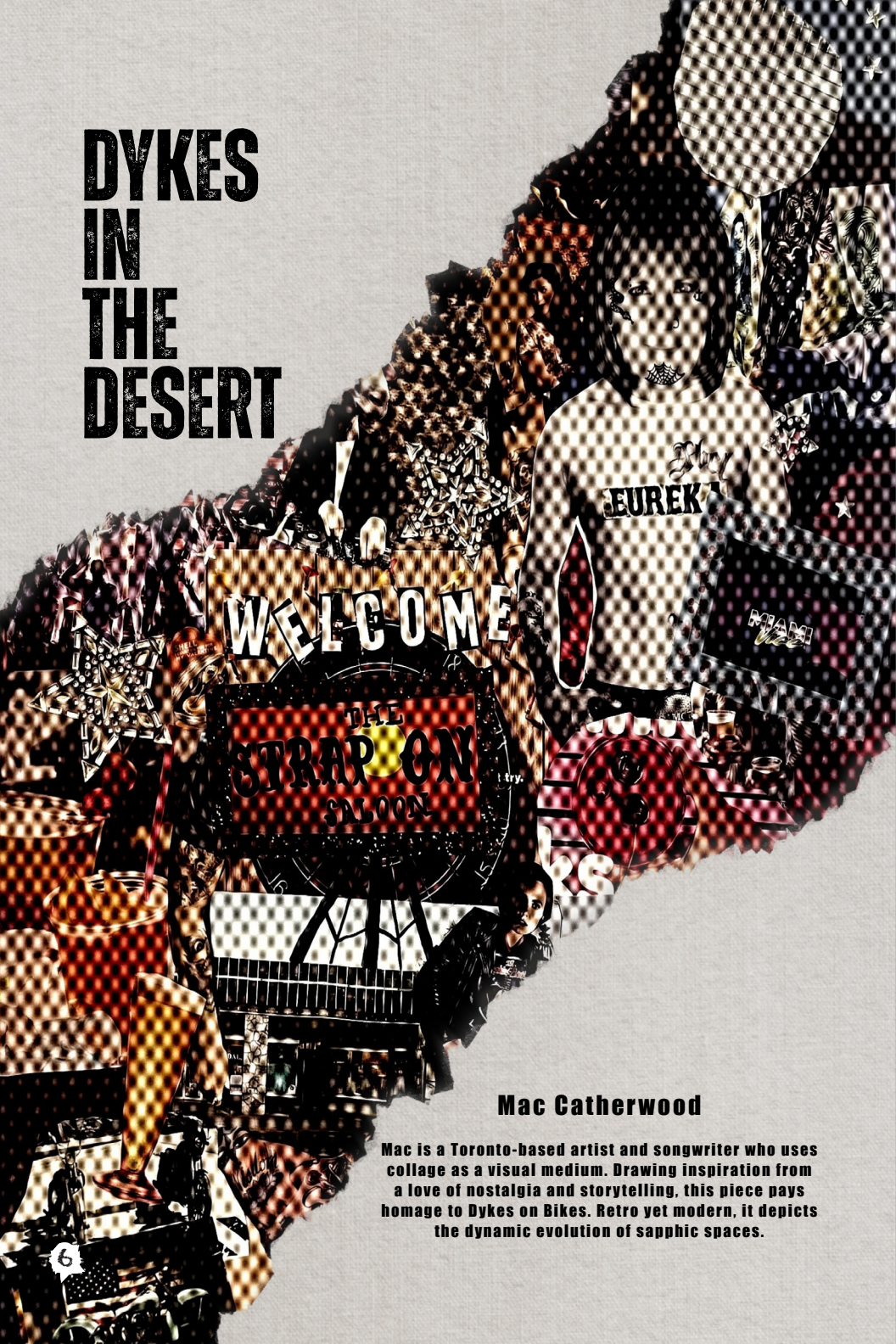
What we were shown was a finished(ish) tapestry, but also the loose threads that hung off it, as well as every rip and snag in between. Ultimately, these works explore the past, present, and future that Dyke weaves. At its heart, this issue is about memory, preservation, and discovery. Each contribution has become part of an archive: a living link between our queer histories and futures.

Dyke III is both a continuation and a culmination. We are grateful to every artist who helped us carry this legacy forward in each of the three issues. By bringing these works together, we have carved out space for the many ways Dyke has been lived, remembered, imagined, and remade.

Thank you for weaving this tapestry with us.

– QT Team

DYKES IN THE DESERT



Mac Catherwood

Mac is a Toronto-based artist and songwriter who uses collage as a visual medium. Drawing inspiration from a love of nostalgia and storytelling, this piece pays homage to Dykes on Bikes. Retro yet modern, it depicts the dynamic evolution of sapphic spaces.


MY Vegas
WELCOME
THE
STRAP ON
SALOON
EUREKA
MIAMI Vice

CONVICTION OF THE BRUNSWICK FOUR

A FOUND POEM

Women
sung a lesbian song
on January 5, 1974.

I Enjoy Being a Girl
I Enjoy Being a Dyke

sophisticated witty

a cut above
amateur entertainment.

Left the audience
seething with unrest.

Delighted.

Objectionable masturbation
performed by a man.

Flabbergasted.

Two women
being manhandled
by eight policemen
under arrest for trespassing. Detained falsely.
33 year-old childcare worker
assaulted by policemen.
Repeated
sarcasm
jokes

about being lesbians

offend.

A spirit of hardy humour

shut off.



Master of ceremonies
no business
on stage.

A four-letter word

shut off.
Get off.

Women swore.

A see-through blouse,
nothing underneath.

Police,
not enough force.

Tolerant?

Trouble brewing,

cut off.

Stirring up
the same story.

Unidentified man
poured a glass of beer
over Miss Pott's head.

Women
removed by force
kept in a locked garage

taken away.



Charged with

disturbance.

Conviction.

Bette P. Caperon

Bette P. Caperon is a writer based in Toronto, Ontario. She is an immigrant to Canada and a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. She has poetry published and forthcoming in various literary journals, most recently Voices Unbound, an Anthology of International Poetry, produced by Fresh Words (May 2025) Swifts and Slows by Arteidolia Press (September 2025). Bette holds a PhD in health with psychology and has a form of synesthesia which she often uses in her work.



WILL NOT HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY



Will not have it any other way (2026) pays homage to the artist's own heavy-duty masculinity and the lovers and femmes who enjoy and embrace her just the way she is. The piece also celebrates the artist's own androgynous personal identity.

Ayonti Mahreen Huq

Ayonti Mahreen Huq (AMH) (she/her) is a Bangladeshi-Bengali visual artist currently residing in Toronto, Canada. Her work plays with the edges of imagination and reality.



UM, R.

um, R. i mean ~~she~~ was a dyke for sure. standing in some doorway, something about it was butch. when we re-met i had a new name.

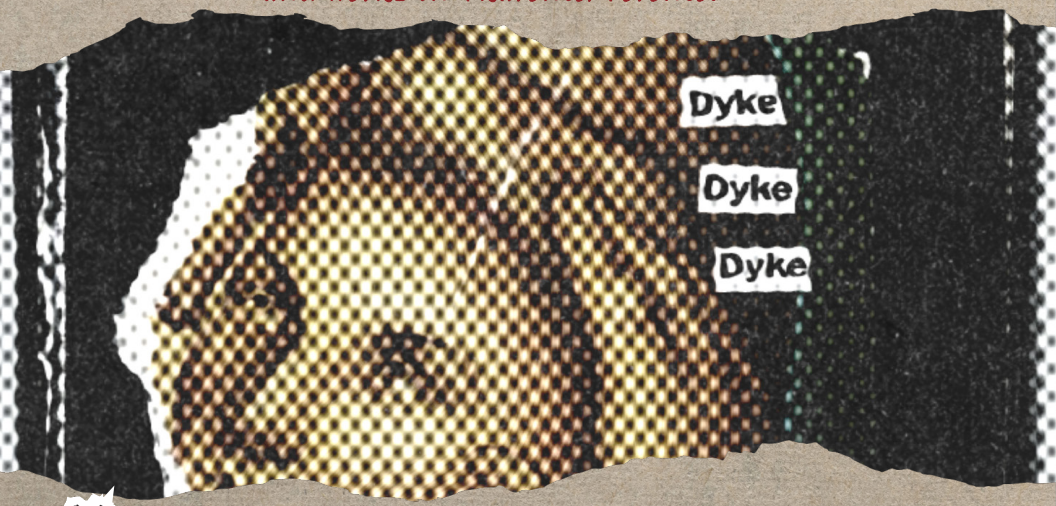
T and i under that red umbrella in her room. i scorned myself for wanting to kiss her. or even having the thought.

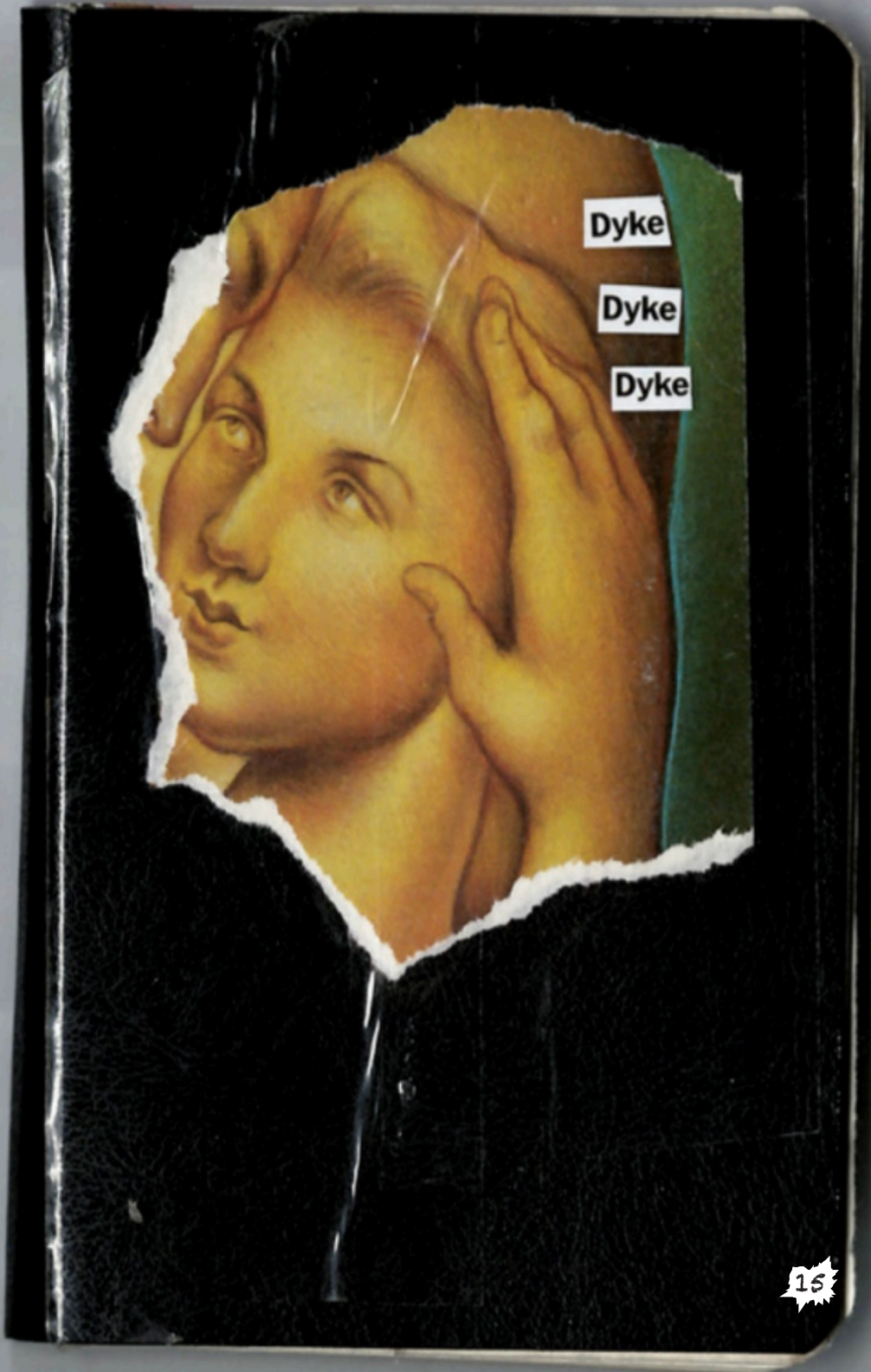
someone zooming in on the CN tower. red bags. big lights. im in the park.

at catholic camp there was a girl with slits through her eyebrows, or there was a certain way she arched them like a boy. and i was so enamoured i felt sick. so then i couldnt ignore it, although i did. but it came back of course.

yeah im in the park. a dog rolling on its back. all brown pantsuit. my sister is scared to go outside. pink dress. another two dogs. im sitting here. is this a love story.

HEIKE
HEIKE (they/them) currently lives and works in Tkaronto/Toronto.



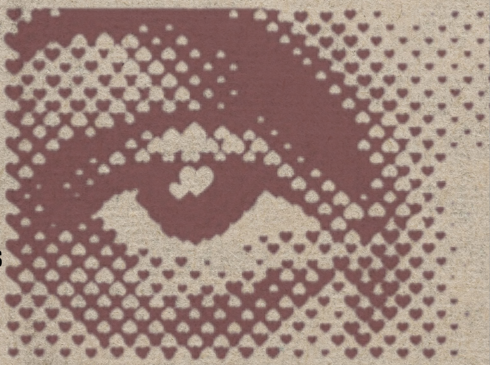

Dyke
Dyke
Dyke

DID ANYONE ELSE SEE SWANS IN THEIR CARABINERS?

So it turns out-
my hands were doing things
before they were ever affixed to me

before I was even born

my hands - took your money
my hands - tried on dresses
my hands - promised you grandchildren
my hands - agreed to a ring in twenty years
my hands - pinky swore
signed the relevant papers
my hands lived a whole ass life it seems
before they were even mine



Now my hands outline animals
with the shadows on the wall
contort my shape
by poking at its bounds
everyone just displaces light
till they die

and when I first cut my hair short
it was for a role
I told people

A Postman
I was so excited I bought a bag
second hand
played at delivery

It was a little car to get the mail but not much to ease
my masculinity

Now it's my everyday wear
and my hair's only gotten shorter

my first crush moved just far away enough
to be an inconvenient drive
she says they're inventing
a type of feminine luxury that speaks

I'm somewhat flattered-
you could have just sent a post card
kissed the envelope



It seems in my absence
my masculinity became a saw
you won't say anything
but bleed so readily
I realise I've been bleeding so eagerly

but now?
I think I'm fine with being an adverse object in tactile space
with a one way soft one way rough texture
they'll remark on in children's fun fact books
you've got to look at it
with your blue and red glass
or else the image looks funny



SAPPHIC WARNING

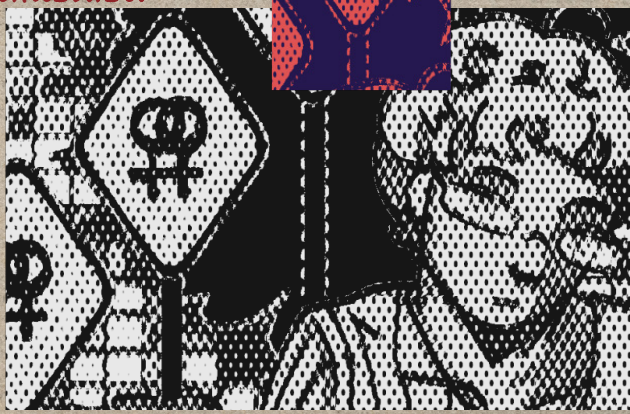


Charlotte Taylor

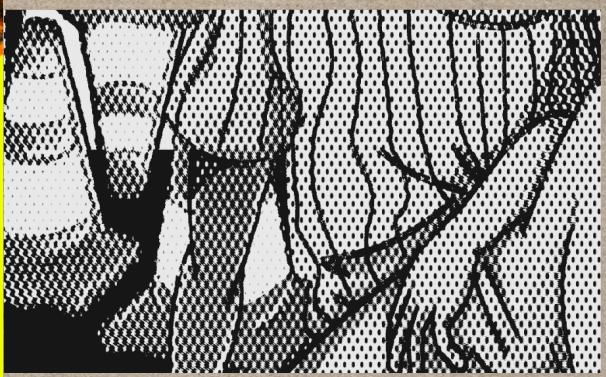


Charlotte is a digital artist and bad movie enthusiast.





They try to prod at the world through vague and dispirit symbolism.





LESBIAN LEGACIES

I lay down beside my lover in the tent under the trees,
and realized we are the shadows of the dancing leaves
to our lesbian sibling's legacies.

The steps we take:
a mirror of the roots
grounded in the years it took to grow
our rights, our freedom, our space for joy.

The shadow now:
Us, here in this tent
hands in the sky to manipulate the silhouette.
A shadow is not a mirror
but an extension,
to the things that allowed us here
to lie down side by side,
without the fear of hate,
and to the actions we take for all lesbians alike
to rest in the safety of this tree's shade.



Pulp pressed and printed into the papers
published into words for me,
little lesbian panic over fictionalized fantasies,
novels, movies, kissing dykes in our wildest dreams,
for other queers to see,
to continue to honour their actions
through our words in zines, books, and poetry,
upholding and uplifting,
remembering and making:

Lesbian history,
a grand tree
that crowns themself a laurel of fresh greens,
and on my knees, my shadow
is a pedestal to uphold your story,
as my hands unseen
by my silhouette,
sowing the seeds for the next generation
of lesbian legacies.



Mary Poirier

Mary Poirier [she/they] is a hard-of-hearing, lesbian, and Filipino writer based in Hamilton. They have a graduate certificate from Humber for Creative Writing. Her writing has been featured in a variety of literary anthologies and magazines. She was shortlisted for a 2026 Creator Award from the Hamilton Arts Awards.

HYMN

remember when i wore your shadow like a winter coat?
now i reach out into the naked dark,
i can still run my fingers over the memory of you
and sometimes i shake so badly
i can feel you in the uncertainty.
possibly, you are there

which is to say i saw you yesterday in the grocery store,
your shadow fell over my shoes
that i kissed trembling with guilt that night at home
and it wasn't even you i saw
but two feet close enough to usurp you.

i heard you cut off all your hair
the girl in you unmaking a woman of me
oh my god, i breathe, oh my god, oh my god...
but probably it is your name,
that i breathe in the dark.



Ava Schultz

Ava Schultz taught English in a k-12 school in Normandy before studying Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. A young writer from the Midwest, she also enjoys playing chamber music, the Packers, and oil pastel. Her work revolves around her experiences growing up in the United States and France, where the countryside is an active character in the coming-of-age of girls and poets.

SHOW ME YOURS FIRST SHOW



SHOW ME YOURS FIRST SHOW

I (WE) HAVE BEEN HERE BEFO



I (WE) HAVE BEEN HERE BEFO

RE YOURS FIRST I (WE) HAVE



HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE
HAVE

RE YOURS FIRST I (WE) HAVE


THE ALTAR, 2026
THE ALTAR
THE ALTAR, 2026
THE ALTAR

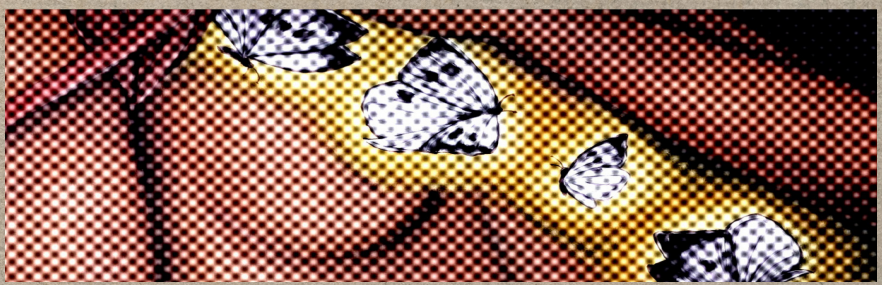
Larissa Monique Hauck



Larissa Monique Hauck is a queer visual artist with a BFA with Distinction from AUArts (2014) and a B.Ed. from the University of Calgary (2023).



Her paintings move through luminous colour and surreal figuration to examine identity, power, and the construction of the self within the queer feminine experience.



HOW TO BE A BAD GIRL

Bad Girl

I.
Follow the buzz in your sweet underbelly.
Unscrew fluorescent lights off walls. Suck
until your teeth are bright purple.
Circle the busted bad girl bars, gagging
on foolishness.
Pick a real bad girl to love, eyes on eyes
so bad she makes you want to be good.

II.
Get completely crushed while re-imagining
free love. Your mistakes are mine.
Here I am, the archives.
You bump into your old sweet-mouthed girl and her
(way too pretty) new girl. Drama loves the sensual scent
of a bad girl's cologne.
The dance floor is dangerously sharp.

III.
You've cut and carved yourself out to be bad enough
sliced darkened hair and pierced more of your face,
A community that loves the performance.
The shadows on the midnight blue walls move freely,
combine and expand into shapes of monsters.
There is no evidence
of where you begin and where we all end.

IV.
You hook arms and legs in rhythm
with a smooth, bad girlboy
who crossed an ocean and switched tongues for
the love and chaos of their loudest prayers.
Remember what got us skipping these neon strips
Bad is litany for survival.
Here I am,
the archives.

Picnic



Lipstick Lewd
Torn Apart
Bruised Crimson
Fingers Deep

Rusty Residue
Dimpling Dyke
Fire Ants
Burning Knees

Firm Leather
Berry Blood &
the Stained Mouth
of the Woman
Who Wants Her

Certain parts of Mount Royal Park are nearly deserted.

Gabriella Braia

Gabriella Braia is a poet based in Montréal, Québec. She studies Teaching English as a Second Language at McGill University. Her poems have been featured in the Veg Magazine, Snaps Online Journal and Pixie Literary Magazine.

GIRL CRUSH

my best friend and i
in the third grade
would zip our hoodies together
and become one.



my best friend and i
would share lunches
of tuna or hot dogs.
a feast we could afford.

she and i would play
mommy and baby,
in the snow,
taking turns caring and being cared for.

she and I during recess
once kissed,
got married in the grass
and we wore dresses with jeans.

when she was supposed to move and
I cried on the phone to her,
she sang, "i'm a barbie girl"
until i laughed.



when we got older
and her strawberry blonde hair grew
along with her boobs,
i realized something.

she was my Venus
with freckles and pink skin
glowing and lovely.
incomparable.

she was on my bus,
every day the same route
but our seats
became further apart.

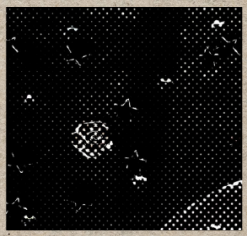
something happened,
we stopped being close,
but I still loved her
and kept my vows.

i miss running through the grass with you
holding hands, giggling.
i miss the age when loving you
was met with your smile.





GIRL CRUSH



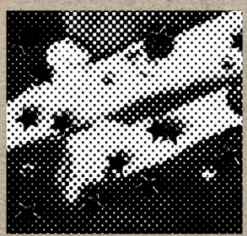
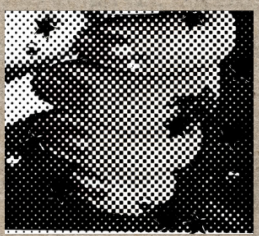

Crush

Crush






Crush


Taylor Duchamp

Taylor Duchamp is a multimedia artist and writer residing in Toronto. Their current favourite book and movie is Invitation to a Beheading by Vladimir Nabokov, and The Piano Teacher (2001). Desperation and perversion are Taylor's two favourite literary moods and are reflected in their media consumption.
Substack @duchampolown

STANDING FIRM

The phone call came. I had just been offered a full-time position. It would be my first job in my new line of work: creating and mapping environmental data.

I soon started off on the long, demanding drive to my new place of work. En route the sky and earth formed a seamless palette, a band of white paving the way ahead. Exhaust left a long, lingering streak of grey that pierced the air. It was well below freezing when I later arrived in the remote community, I now called home.

The start of this job signalled the end of multiple years of under-employment with time spent healing from early trauma.

My well-worn t-shirts and jeans were quickly traded in for workplace attire as I started out in my new role. Most of my colleagues were middle aged workers, likely having spent years sitting in the same office or cubicle. No one took much notice of my arrival.

I felt isolated in my new workplace, but I was doing a good job. Even with the continuous, super tight deadlines. Part of my time was spent travelling to various locations across the province, seeking public input into resource planning proposals.

There were two men on the project, among many others. Both were stocky, gruff, and significantly older than me: the kind of guys who liked holding a gun and peppering their sentences with expletives. They had leading roles on the project, representing resource sector folks from various communities.

On our drive back from one of the public consultations we stopped at a restaurant in a small industrial town. It was one of the few restaurants around. Sitting at a table, everyone older than myself, one of the two men looked at me and said "Hey, are you k.d. lang?" This wasn't the last time they'd ask if I was k.d. I felt singled-out and alone.

Outside of work the landscape continuously inspired me. I spent weekends exploring the outdoors with newfound friends from the queer community I had met through my roommate. A cold, dark lake, trees that touched the sky, moose drinking lazily from a pond; there was a magical quality to nature in the north.

A few weeks later we were in a different part of the province for more public consultations. After setting up the displays we waited for participants to arrive, but the session was not well attended. The event stretched from late afternoon well into the evening, during which time both men repeatedly addressed me as k.d. lang. It was done maliciously, with ill intent. I was visibly annoyed and asked them to stop, but their behaviour continued.

That night, cornered, I ended up at dinner with the two of them. They asked how old I was, 22 or 23? I didn't answer. They grilled me about whether I dated men, and if I was "normal." I replied evasively, again not really offering any answers. Unsavoury sentences involving the words "balls" and "tasting meat" complete with sexual overtones directed at me soon followed. At one point, one of them moaned, with the other saying, "Hey, you sound just like the whores in Winnipeg." The evening continued in much the same way and later came to a dramatic close with a veiled threat of molesting me after they somehow got me drunk.

Thankfully, "getting me drunk" was not a realistic scenario. I was, however, concerned. I was also scared. I wasn't sure where this was headed. I decided I had two options: either quit my job or file a complaint. My savings nearly depleted, I had no soft spot to land. I needed the job, so I chose the latter.

The two men were clearly harassing me for my masculine looks, for my gender expression (and suspected sexual orientation). But by the late 1990s, "gender identity" and "gender expression" had not yet made it into any of the federal, provincial or territorial human rights codes. Nor was it a protected category at my workplace. I filed my complaint, alleging harassment based on sexual orientation.

The complaint was taken very seriously. I was told that they would do their best to keep my name off the front page of the national newspaper. Not long after, I received a phone call from one of the top managers inviting me to a meeting with himself and a male colleague. He asked how I felt about being interviewed by two men and said I could bring a friend to the meeting for support.

I got off the phone and thought "I'm not sure about this." I wasn't convinced my complaint would be treated fairly. After voicing my concerns to a few friends from the queer community, I was put in touch with a psychologist who had successfully lodged her own harassment complaint. She agreed to accompany me to the meeting as a friend offering support.

The meeting was long, and grueling. We went over all aspects of the complaint. They were interested in my motivations, the facts of the case, how well I was doing my job. Every time my friend felt I was faltering, she asked if we could take a break. She pulled me out of the room, offered her perspective and allowed me to regroup. At the end of our meeting, one of the managers looked at my friend as if to say, "You were good."

I was uncertain how the process would unfold. It felt like the two managers were looking for every possible angle to discredit my claim. I was also physically and emotionally depleted. The harassment, the complaint process, and the years of struggle leading up to this job, were taking their toll. Under increasing strain, my brother stepped in and took over all dealings with my employer.

Thanks to significant assistance from a labour union, my claim was later finalized and settled. Although the terms are confidential, I can say that afterwards I was still working at the same organization (for a time.) I still had a job, and an income. The top administrator also sent an email to all employees, spelling out their workplace discrimination and harassment prevention policy in fine detail. This email, so I was told, was a direct result of my complaint.

The harassment and complaint process came at a significant personal cost. These recent experiences along with my underlying history of childhood trauma combined to affect my health, my relationships, my work, and my trust in people and institutions. There was a long recovery period, with minimal supports.

In the years that followed, I continued to navigate a world where gender-based harassment and discrimination were woven into the fabric of my daily life. It happened on streets, in restaurants, stores, at events, in medical settings, and most prevalently, during visits to washrooms.

I am confronted so often in gendered washrooms that I try to avoid them altogether. Neither the women's nor the men's washrooms are good options for me. While I might be glared at and questioned in women's washrooms, I fear the possibility of violence in the men's.

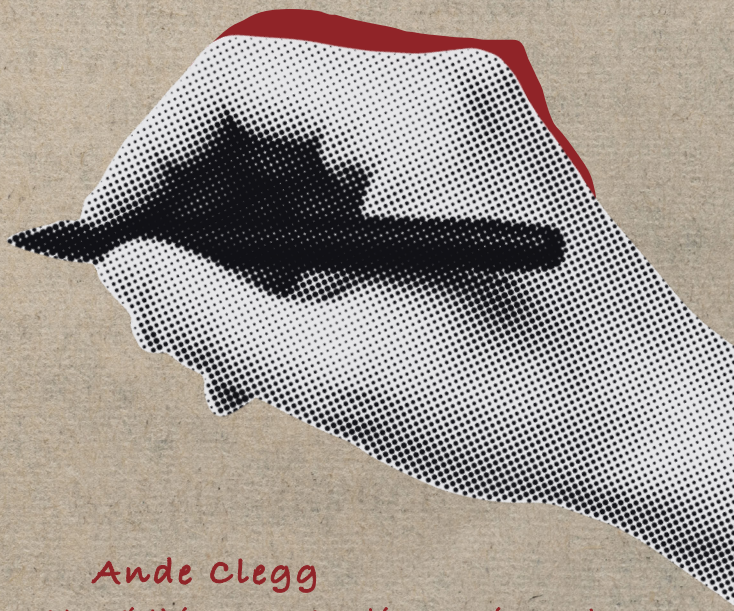
I noticed Justin Trudeau making a formal apology for past wrongs towards 2SLGBTQ+ communities. I found it a bit odd that he was crying, and I was not. I am not sure why he was so upset. It may well be that he was reckoning with a country that had afforded him so much status and privilege, a country which was not quite as just and equitable as he had been led to believe by his father.

In retrospect, the outcome of my complaint could be considered a resounding success. I was believed and offered a settlement. On the other hand, it didn't result in a workplace more open to difference, nor did it have any effect, of course, on my daily comings and goings in the broader community.



Filing a harassment complaint won't change the world, but it might be a small step in that direction. If faced with a similar scenario I don't know if I'd choose to file a complaint again, but I am thankful I was brave enough to do it once. By doing so, I sent a clear message to my harassers and employer: that I deserved to be treated with respect and that my life and wellbeing mattered.

A few years after filing my complaint I made the switch to different types of work where I felt valued and respected. But regrettably, I am all too aware that much remains to be done to protect and advance the rights of trans, nonbinary and gender-diverse persons whose lives are often marked by discrimination and violence.



Ande Clegg

Ande Clegg (they/them/iel) is a trans/nonbinary writer and photographer based in Montreal, QC whose work focuses on trauma and recovery. They are the author of an award-winning zine on the Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club and a senior member of the Equity Team at McGill University.


SHE
SHE
CHASE
Cafe Tozz
COMING SOON
THE TEARS' TAPE
THE TWOMEN CLUB

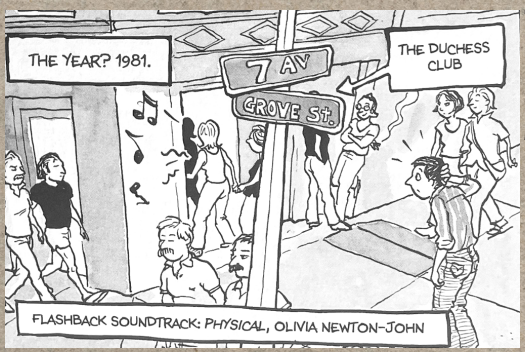

THE 3rd BAR
101
PLEASE
ENTER
ONE WAY
ONE WAY
WOMEN'S
FREEDOM
RALLY
CAFE · BAR

PAST



c. 1939 tax photograph of 70 Grove Street. 1940s Tax Department photographs, 1939–1951, REC 0040. Courtesy of the Municipal Archives, City of New York.

"What happened to Café Topaz? Starbucks."



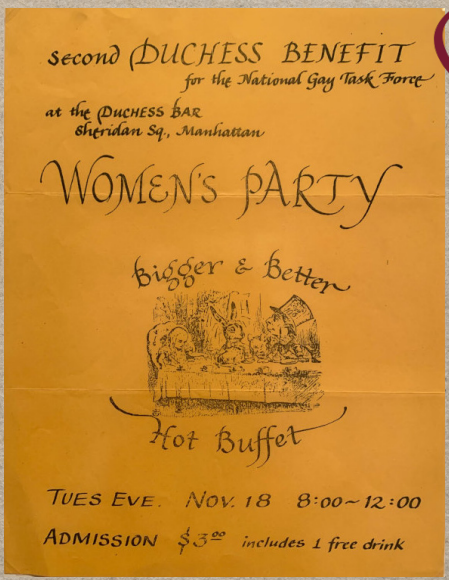
The site is deeply connected to history. It was the original site of Duchess / Grove / Pandora's Box, a lesbian bar immortalized by Alison Bechdel in her comic series Dykes to Watch Out For. In her work, Bechdel reflected on how places like Cafe Topaz—a fictional hangout beloved by her characters—often vanished, replaced by commercial spaces like Starbucks.

Top: Alison Bechdel, "Cartoonist's Introduction," The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008), p. x. ° Alison Bechdel. Scanned by Yuchun Zhang from a personal copy.

The commercial space of this building held several lesbian bars from the 1970s to the 1990s, beginning with the Duchess in 1972.Pandora's Box, the last lesbian bar to occupy this space when it closed around 1992, appears to have been particularly popular with Black and Latina lesbians.



Left: Cynthia Russo
Manager of Pandora's Box in the early 1990s
Photo courtesy of Cynthia Russo, used with permission.



From 1972 until 1982,

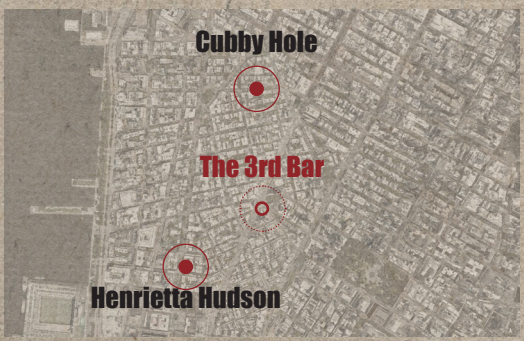
a racially and economically diverse crowd patronized the Duchess, a lesbian bar located on the ground floor of 70 Grove Street. Guidebooks at the time described the bar as, "A friendly and relaxed atmosphere, popular with 'movement' women" and with a "relaxed Feminist atmosphere." A small space, the Duchess did not offer as many attractions as other bars; a jukebox near the entrance provided music for the small dance floor. It also offered a Sunday buffet and table service, like some other lesbian bars of the time.

Left: Flyer advertising a benefit for the National Gay Task Force to be held at the Duchess.
Courtesy of The New York Public Library.

PRESENT



"There are only two lesbian bars in Manhattan."



This project stems from an observation of a stark disparity: Manhattan has a multitude of gay bars but only two lesbian bars. Lesbian bars, however, are more than nightlife venues—they intersect with issues of gender, sexuality, and community. Questions surrounding commercialization, women's economic power, societal expectations, and safety linger at the core of this exploration.





Inspired by Cubby Hole, a space known for its vibrant bulletin boards and welcoming atmosphere, I envision The 3rd Bar as more than a place for drinks; it is a hub for sharing information, fostering relationships, and creating a safe, inclusive environment. It represents a shift from exclusivity to openness, making it a cornerstone for community building.

FUTURE



"An inclusive, community-driven hub for connection and support."







Here, I imagine a more optimistic scenario: The 3rd Bar thrives and influences its surroundings, encouraging a sense of inclusion and community-oriented change.

The street's transformation embodies openness and inclusivity, with the Starbucks displaying a banner for the reopening of Cafe Topaz, reconnecting history and community. The Chase Bank retains its function but features a bold SHE banner, signaling inclusivity. A "Please Enter" sign replaces "No Enter," inviting engagement. Design enhancements, including added streetlights, rainbow-adorned balconies, outdoor seating, and a vibrant purple and pink crosswalk, foster safety, interaction, and visibility, bridging the past and present.

The three portraits symbolize a temporal and emotional connection across the past, present, and future. Alison Bechdel, in the foreground, bridges history and modern reflection, drawing viewers into the narrative as the project's inspiration. Cynthia Russo, observing from the upper window, represents the resilience of the past and the preservation of lesbian spaces. Meanwhile, the figure of myself at street level embodies the ongoing struggle and hope for a more inclusive future, reflecting a personal and

Yuchun (Yuki) Zhang

Yuchun (Yuki) Zhang is an interdisciplinary designer and spatial storyteller working across queer spatial histories, critical mapping, archives, and public-facing research. Her work uses visual narratives, zines, participatory mapping, and digital media to explore how overlooked histories can be documented, shared, and reimagined.

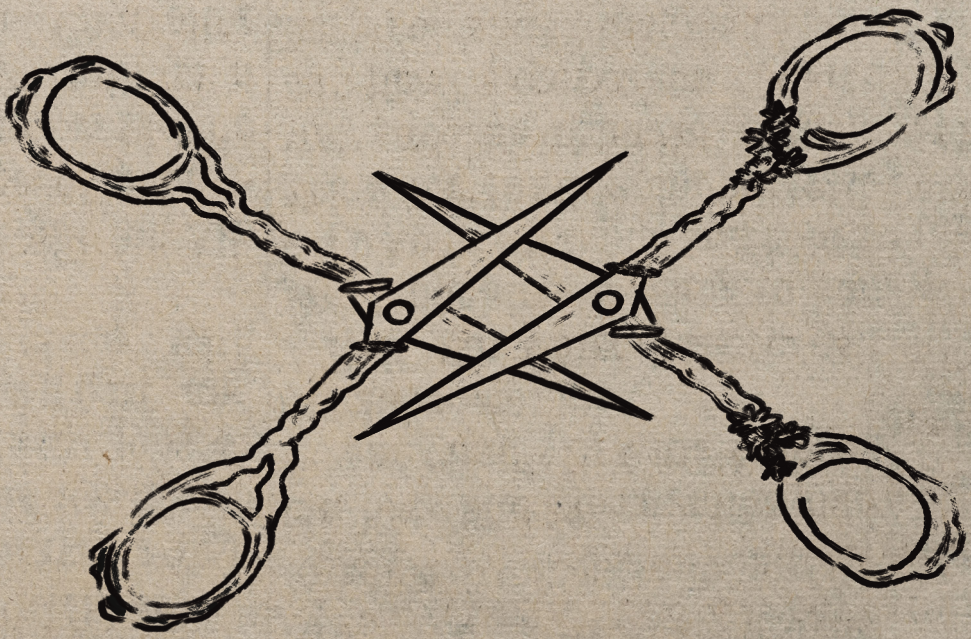
THIS ISSUE'S SPONSOR

CAITLIN DOHERTY'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

Cait (she/they) has been a longtime supporter of QT and close personal friend to many on our team. Working with queer and trans folks as a social worker helped her realize her own truth, inspiring their own coming out story later in life. After a conservative religious upbringing, Cait lived the stereotypical heteronormative life (think nuclear family and white picket fence). They wanted to sponsor the last issue of DYKE because the theme resonated with her story, particularly the moment when she was able to say out loud, "I am a lesbian," while laying awake in bed in the dead of night. A few years ago Cait came out and changed the trajectory of their own life, as living authentically has allowed them to be the best person, mother, and friend they can be. Coming to QT events, like the second DYKE launch, has also helped them find their place in the community.

Cait is a registered social worker who offers queer and trans affirming therapy to clients, specializing in those who are neurodivergent and/or have Bipolar Disorder or Borderline Personality Disorder, as well as other mental health challenges. They have worked as a social worker for 10+ years, practicing therapy in many roles. When she decided to become a social worker, they wanted to be the type of social worker that she needed as a teenager and young adult, using humour and music in their work to bring joy to therapy. They have particular focuses on working with survivors of violence, whether intimate/family, as well as systemic or institutional violence. Cait specializes in Internal Family Systems and Narrative therapy.

Call or email Cait now for a free 15 minute consultation at caitlindohertytherapy@gmail.com



ABOUT



Queer Toronto Literary Magazine is a non-profit dedicated to elevating and celebrating queer voices in Canada.

QT was started in response to the criminal shortage of Canadian queer literary magazines. There are so many queer artists out there! And in times of crisis, maintaining community and connection is vital.

QT brings together our collective projects to create that sense of shared space. QT celebrates the art queer individuals make for ourselves and for each other. We accept epistles, fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, personal essays, reflections, memoirs, as well as artwork, drawings, comics, photographs, collages, and other visual media.

www.qtmag.ca
@qtlitmag

Thank you to all the volunteers at QT, without whom the organization would not exist.

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