



Steer

QUEER

HOME ISSUE  
PITTSBURGH'S QUEER  
ARTS + LIT ZINE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

DEAREST READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS,

## STEER QUEER

Vol. 2 Issue 4

executive editor...Catherine Conley  
production editor...Heidi Simpson  
cover artist...Cynthia Lee  
design...Maggie Lynn Negrete  
staff columnist...Brian Broome  
staff journalist...Dani Hicks

Steer Queer is a creative magazine based in Pittsburgh.

The magazine and all content is created by and for the queer community.

Steer Queer aims to promote collaboration, networking, education, support and understanding related to social justice within the Pittsburgh queer community. No qualifications! No queer stamp of approval! All are welcome to contribute regardless of artistic/written ability or experience, and to become part of a community based on personal expression.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

Facebook  
steerqueer.org  
or  
**@steerqueerpitt**  
on Twitter & Instagram

Welcome to the final and long-overdue release of Steer Queer Vol 2, Issues 3 and 4.

A lot has changed since our last double issue release in the Fall of 2015. I started a business, CatCall Designs, and I've changed jobs approximately 10,000 times as I've explored a new career path in the arts. It's not always been easy but it's certainly been creatively fulfilling in ways I never imagined.

Unfortunately, due to time and budget constraints, publishing these last two issues was put on hold, but no longer!

I am so very proud of this magazine and the work we've been able to do in the last three years. It's been an honor to collaborate with fantastic artists, Maggie Negrete and Cynthia Lee, as well stellar writers Brian Broome and Dani Hicks, as the most wonderful staff an editor could ask for. Thank you all for your time and your talent.

I want to thank my lit editor and partner, Heidi Simpson. I met Heidi after she submitted poetry to the first issue of Steer Queer when she attended our fundraiser at Gypsy Tattoo Parlor. She joined the staff just before our second issue was published and has helped with everything from emails to copy editing to event planning to handing out fliers. Thank you so much for all your help. I couldn't have done it without you.

The biggest thanks, however, goes to our contributors. Never in my life did I think so many excellent artists and writers would willingly share their work with me, and allow me to share it others. The quality of work we were able to assemble from people all over the world is still amazing to me. This is your magazine, thank you for making it great.

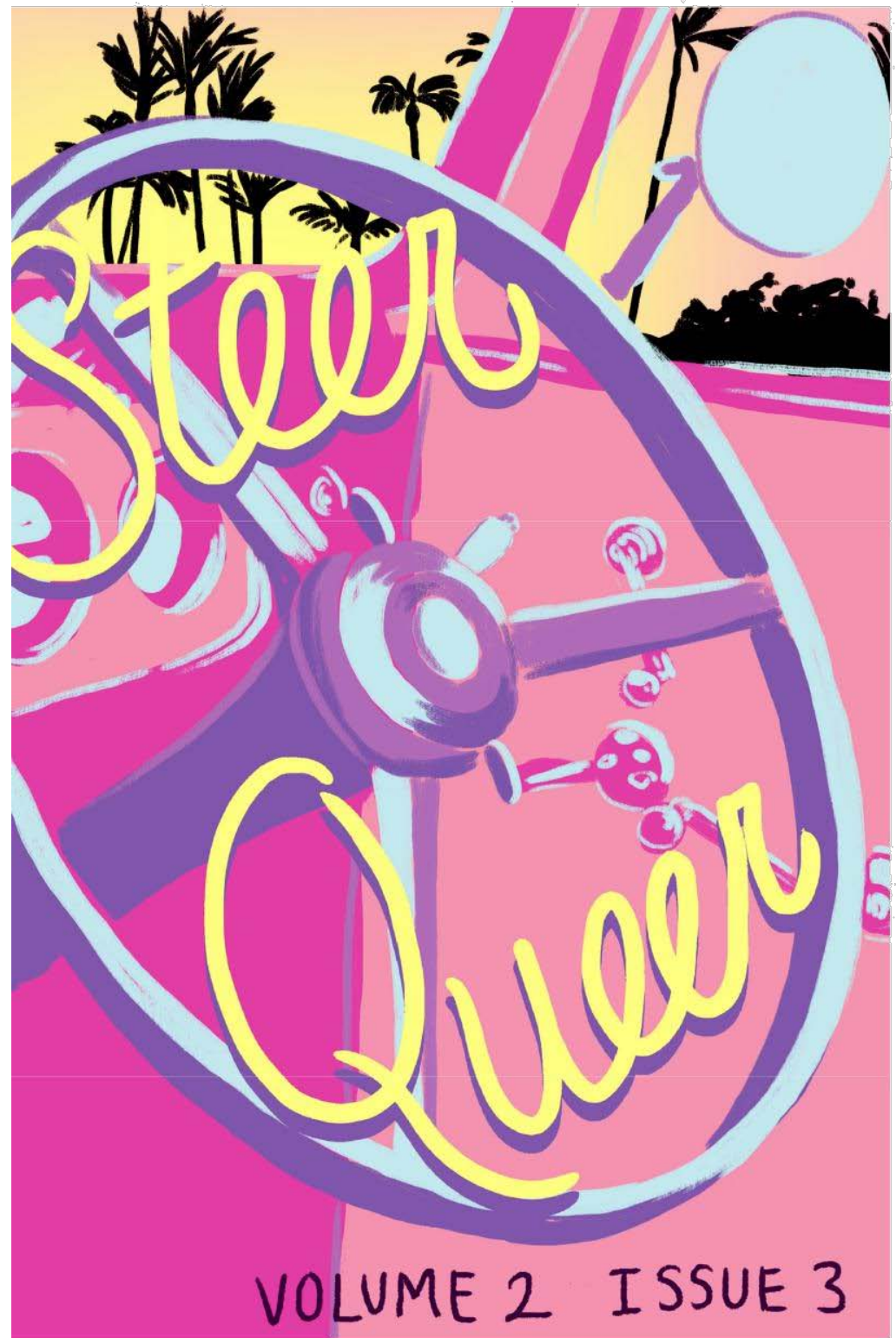
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If you participated by writing, making art, reading at a poetry slam, attending an event, being on staff, telling your friends, buying a zine, getting a tattoo at our fundraiser- you're a part of this and I'm so happy we crossed paths.

*UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN,*

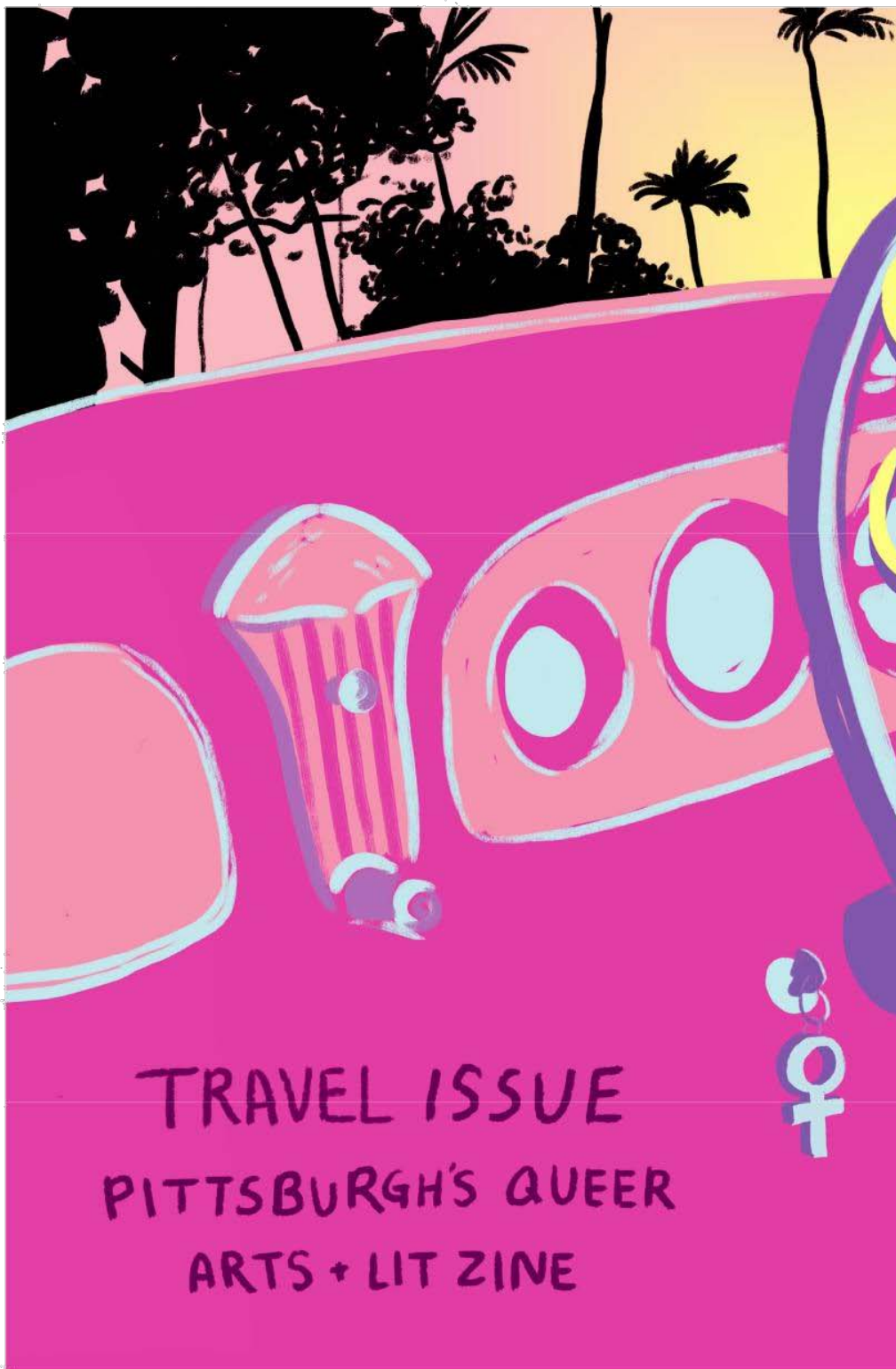
♥  
Pat





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# A NEW FREEDOM

Pushkar Bisht

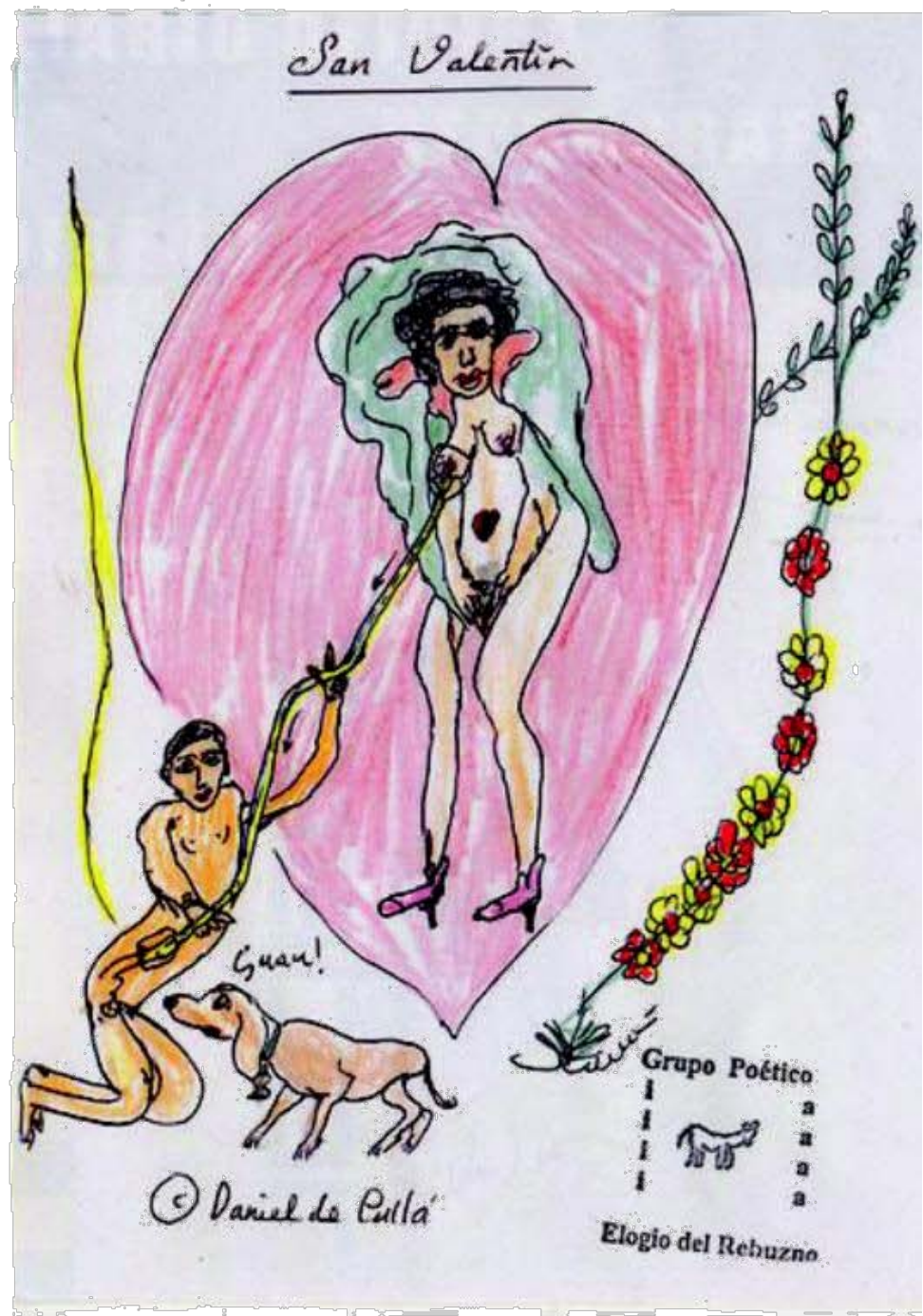
A new freedom  
Everybody wants to fly as a bird,  
Nobody wants to remain in chains,  
Because everyone has a new freedom to live  
merrily, But some cruel take our freedom away  
And make us their slave.

Freedom is a god gifted gift  
Which nobody can destroy from this earth.  
Freedom is not made for rich  
But for innocent poor dwelling in slums.  
Freedom means peace and love  
Not fear around us.  
Freedom is what brings a nice  
smile On everybody's face.

Freedom knows no boundary  
Of happiness and sprinkles its grace  
On everyone wonderfully.  
Freedom knocks at every door  
And kisses everyone in the early morning  
As a nightingale sings its lovely hymn for each person.  
Freedom walks from door to door  
To visit so that no one  
Can be deprived of it.









# RAIN AND BLOOD

Kamakl Kumar Tanti

One sunny morning, I, on a boat, was crossing the river;  
Accompanied by a peacock and a fox; smelling the clouds  
Scattered over the layers of water; and fall asleep; looking at  
The mirrors that I have and the sky spread over the hills.

I reached the other end of the hills; woke up and found that  
The Fox had eaten the peacock; smelling clouds scattered and  
rained; The mirrors are broken and hills become red by the sky; and  
My boat started sinking over the layers of red dusty water.

I started climbing up the hills; dressed in a dark skin and dusty cloths;  
After few ups and downs; reached the garden of reddish trees;  
Where fruits are always ripen and sweet; where birds always sings  
For the dead men and women; where nobody stays after the dark

There is neither day nor night; and there is no counting of time;  
No sunrise and no sunset;

One day, when it started raining; it's raining from blood; it was raining for  
the Dead men and women; and I decided to return to my old place for good.

Alas !  
There is no return to the old world.  
There is no come back to the earlier life.

And I wanted to die.  
But no one can die.  
And no one can live.

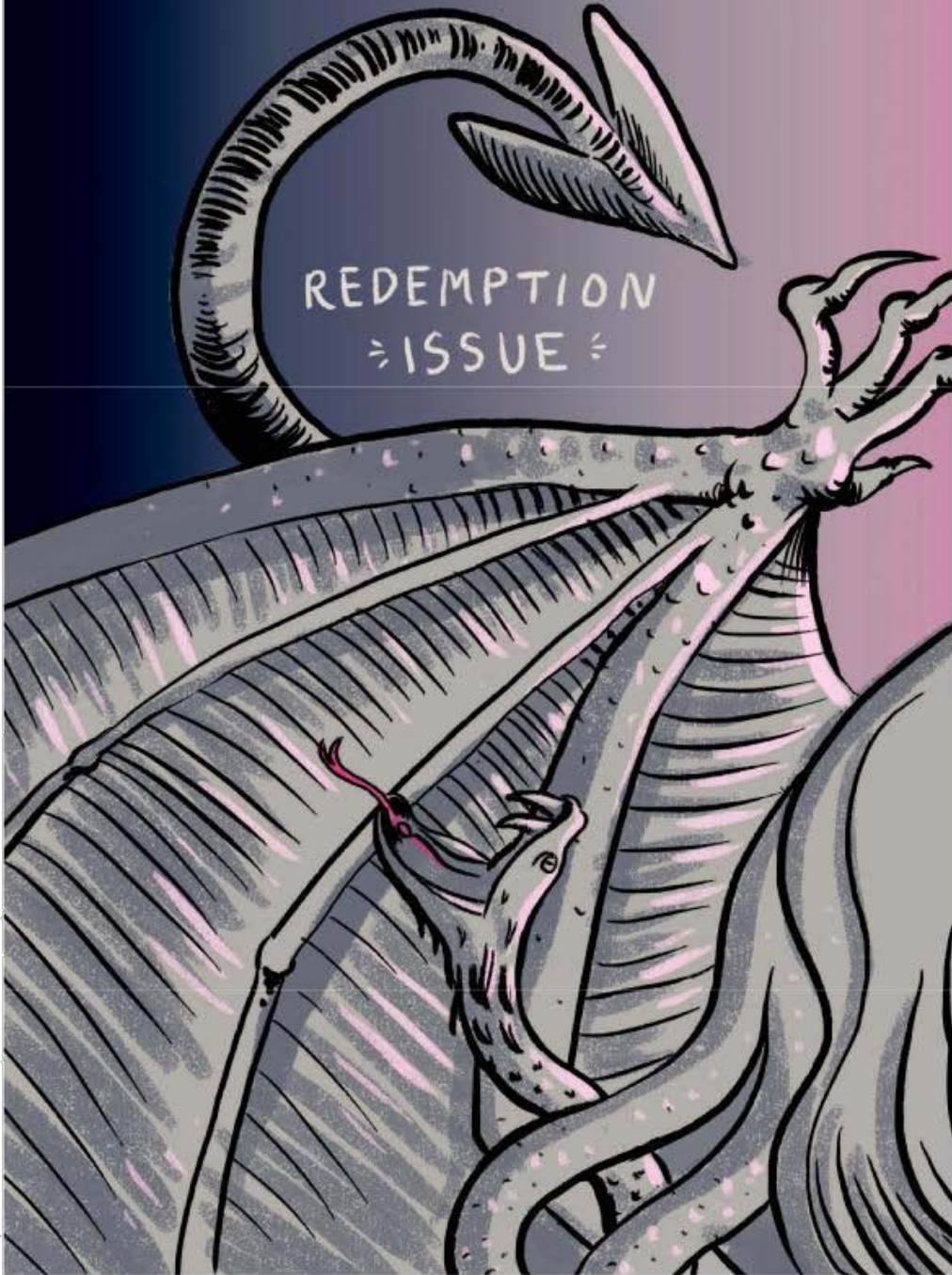
I started praying for the rain and blood;  
Rain of blood and blood for the rain





PITTSBURGH'S QUEER ARTS + LIT ZINE

REDEMPTION  
= ISSUE =



Women Brewers  
by Cynthia Y. Lu



# A SMALL PRICE TO PAY

G. Scelta

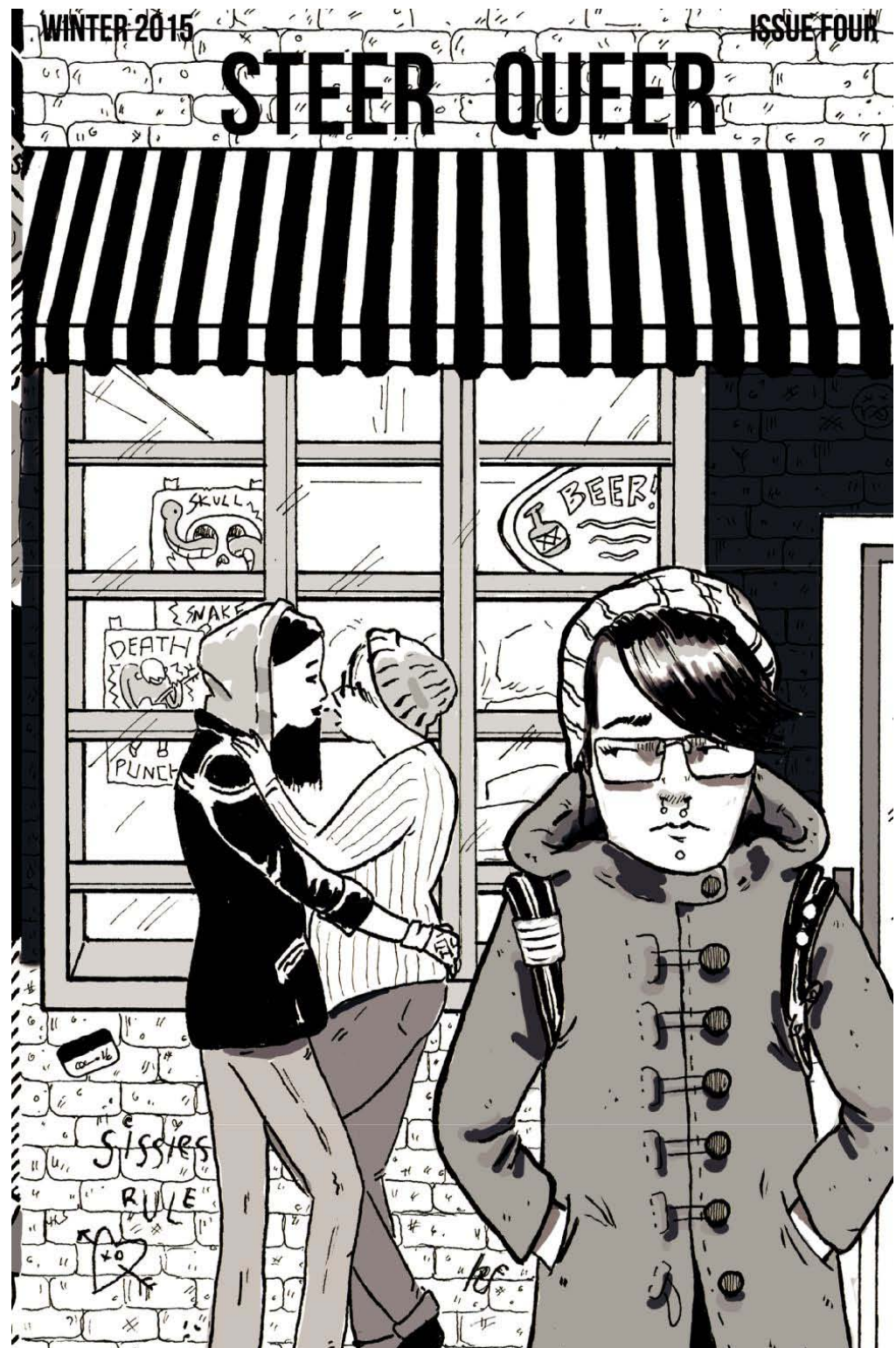
“It says it’s overbooked, but we’ll see about that,” says the white woman behind the counter, with the certainty of someone who has learned not to trust computers.

“Twenty eight fifty,” she says and Beau hands over two twenties from a worn wallet. She hands him his change and an envelope, inside, a one-way ticket on the 3:05PM southbound Greyhound. The Greyhound station is a bustle of activity, at least a bustle of activity for such a small town. A bustle in this town means that there are five people waiting for the 3:05 southbound to Bellingham on a Saturday.

One of the five is an elderly woman, carrying a canvas bag that reads “Aberdeen Summer Music in the Park.” She is wearing a blue dress with large white polka dots.

Just past the old woman is a slate grey felt notice board with white plastic departure and arrival times fixed into the shallow slots. In the Plexiglas covering the board, Beau sees a young man. He begins to nod at the man, acknowledging their shared darkness. He stops himself as he recognizes his own high Choctaw cheekbones under mocha colored African skin. Instead he smiles at himself, laughing at his momentary foolishness, the whites of his teeth shining like planets against the dark of the felt sky. He is a handsome man, he has grown into a handsome man and he is proud of himself for it.

The old woman in the polka dotted blue dress thinks he is smiling at her, and smiles back. Her two rows of yellow teeth jut in every direction, like they each are reaching for something just outside her mouth.







The greyhound station has no clock, but really, it's a stretch to call this a station at all. It's a small blue and off-white cinderblock cube that takes up a corner of Capital Street, just across from the park. There are six metal chairs; the plastic once-red vinyl pock marked by cigarette burns. According to Beau's cell phone, it is 2:55. He sits in silence, with his backpack on his lap, and rests his head against the wall behind him. He closes his eyes and smiles, only three days until he's home again. Two buses and then a plane out of Seattle, and then he can see his wife's sweet familiar face again, and sleep in his own bed.

Beau imagines meeting her at the airport, he always wanted one of those airport welcomes from the movies. The woman runs up to greet her beloved at the gate and he throws his bags down on the ground as she leaps into his arms for the perfect on- screen kiss. What will actually happen when his plane lands is this: he'll send a text message while his plane is taxiing in on the runway, she'll text back that she's on her way. Then, she'll drive around the airport loop in circles, hopefully no more than three or four times as he waits at the baggage claim for his suitcase. He'll hear his own old tan Mercedes roll up long before he sees it. It needs new engine mounts. When he first got it, it merely felt like driving a giant vibrator, but now it's more like driving a Lallapalooza subwoofer, with a thundering engine bass that makes him nauseous after long drives.

It seems like years since they've seen each other, even though it has only been two weeks. He'll throw his suitcase into the back and awkwardly fit himself into the passenger seat, he'll have to slide it back to accommodate his longer legs. THEN they'll kiss, still the movie star kiss, but not as dramatic with both of them seated separately in a thundering old car, her foot stretched to the brake pedal. Things would be different if their roles were reversed, if he were picking Marcie up from the airport. If it was him, a muscular dark man,



driving up to the airport terminal and driving off with that petite redhead. The suspicious eyes of the security guard on him guiltily looking away as she happily leaned over and kissed him.

“They’re gonna think I kidnapped you!” he would joke the first few times he picked her up from her new job in his thunderous old car.

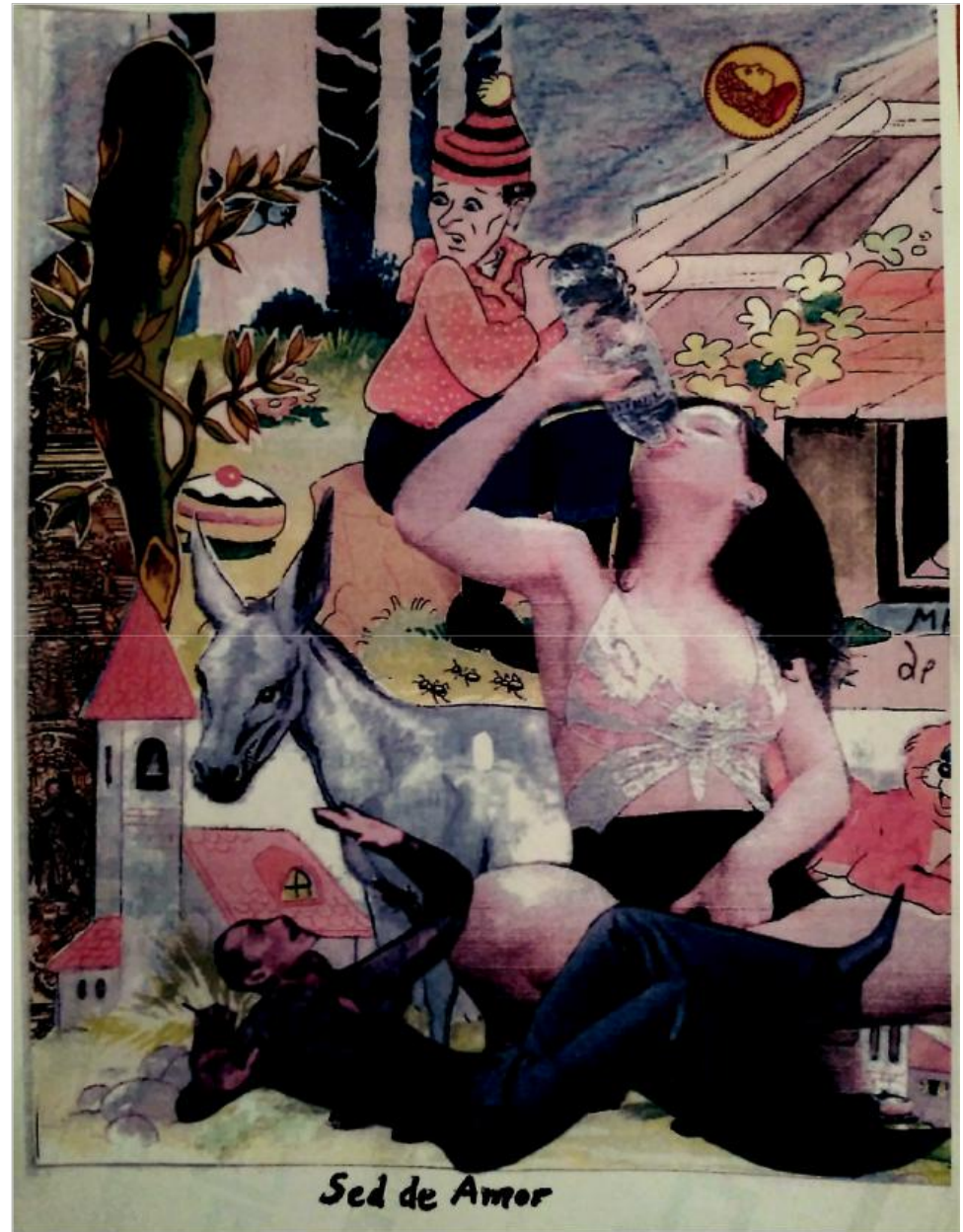
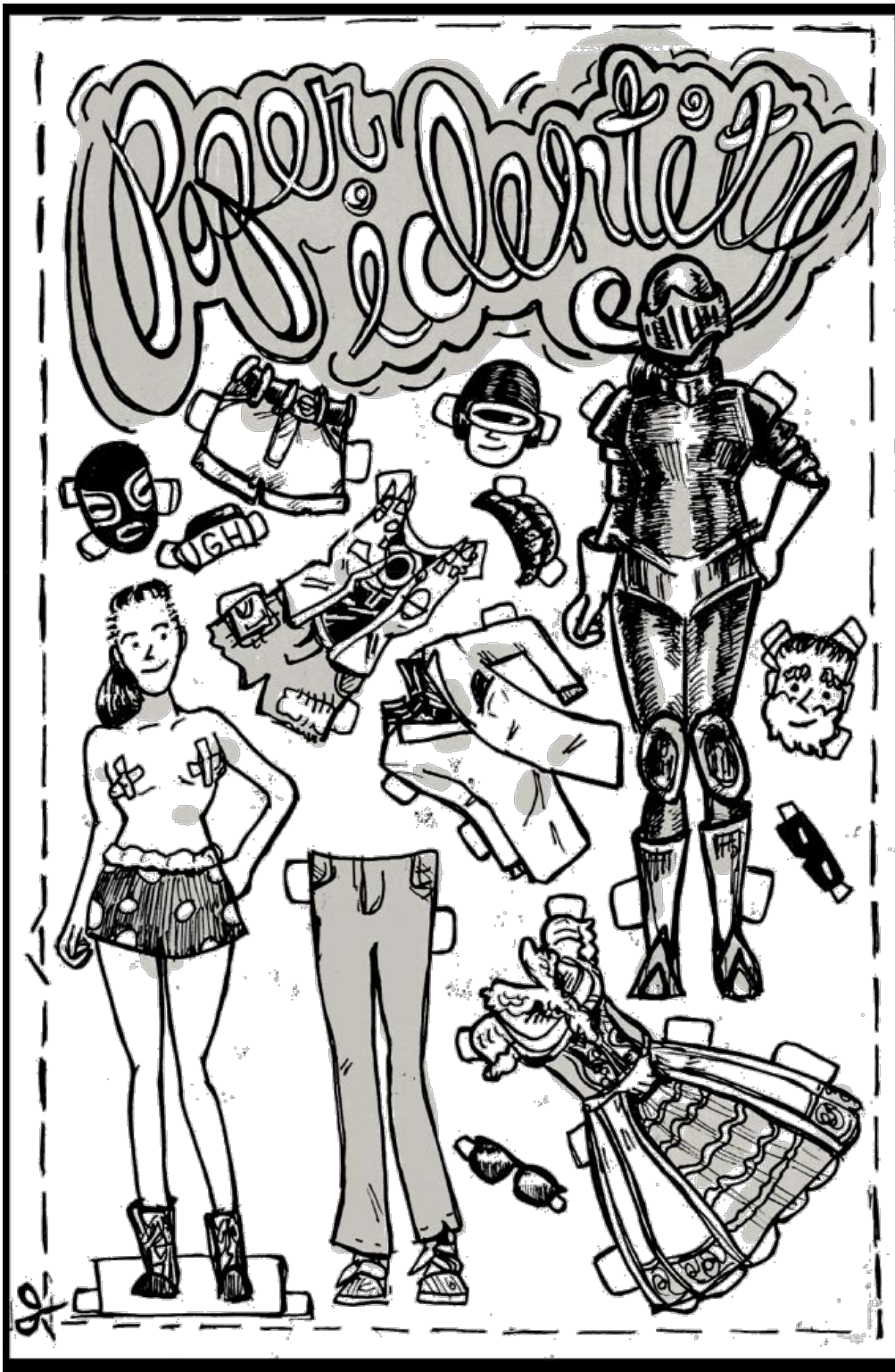
“I hope you have a better getaway car Mr. Big Black Kidnapper, cause this sure as hell ain’t gonna get you past state lines,” she would say as her hand reached over his, resting comfortably on the automatic shift knob.

Now it was less of a joke and more of just the way things were, not even worth a joke anymore. In four years of being together they had just grown accustomed to it. Beau preferred to fade into the background, just ignore the awkward stares. Between the two of them they called it the where’d-you-get-that-white-girl look. Marcie didn’t like the background though. Given any opportunity, she would mention that they were equally one quarter Choctaw. “Just because their were more white rape babies in my family tree!” she would say. That phrase, “rape babies” always made Beau cringe and want to fade further into the background. It usually had the same effect on whoever was glaring as well, which is exactly what Marcie was going for.

He didn’t mind it so much; he knew there were some things that were okay for her to say that would be completely unacceptable from him, especially now that he had grown into his masculinity so well. There was a time when people would have written him off as an uppity negro woman for a comment like that, but that seems like ages ago. With a more full transition now, he knew some things were off limits. It was a small price to pay.









# QUEER BEATS & RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE(PUSSY)

An Interview with Emily Gigler by Dani Janae

Emily Gigler and I met some time in the summer of 2015 and it didn't take long for me to realize that she's a boss and she's doing great things in this city. Naturally, I had to sit down and talk to her over tea and grapefruit at my house.

Emily describes herself as a "born and raised yinzer, third generation." She went to college in central Florida and lived in Oakland, California for a few years after college. She identifies as a queer lesbian woman and uses she/her pronouns, but also embraces they/them.

**What makes Pittsburgh home to you (if you consider it home at all?) Do you identify as a Pittsburgher?** I think that this city has shaped my personality a lot. There is a part of my epigenetics that recognizes this city. Part of my body that recognizes that Pittsburgh is a natural environment for me.

I asked Emily what reading she has done on epigenetics and she recommended *The Body Keeps the Score*--a book she had encouraged me to read before and it's wonderful so go and get it!

**What places do you frequent that are safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ people? Is there a place that you go that you consider quintessential Pittsburgh?**

Blue Moon and the open stage performances! I've seen a different kind of connectedness in that space. There is no other queer space like Blue Moon. There's more connectedness in different art forms as well. Performances range from burlesque, poetry, drag kings and queens, etc. I got into open stage after moving back to Pittsburgh when it used to be every other Wednesday. In the right context, with the right kind of community around, it can be really, really affirming.







the witch vibe she's bringing in and the brujeria too. She just goes from spitting to rapping in fluent Spanish, being able to code switch like that!

**So, you basically have an in home hair cut, coloring, and styling business? Tell me about that.**

I find doing hair really rewarding. I went to a school that was 85% male and cut hair for lazy frat dudes. Living in the Bay there were a lot of queers that wanted eclectic clipper cuts and that was something I wanted to be a part of.

**What's your clientele like here?**

Here it's a lot of straight men referred by their girlfriends. Lots of queer people, queer women and trans folks. In Pittsburgh I've served more queer women and trans women, which is so incredibly important. Our hair is intrinsically involved in our gender expression. I'm helping people feel strong in their femininity and affirmed in their gender expression.

**How does your hair connect to your gender expression?**

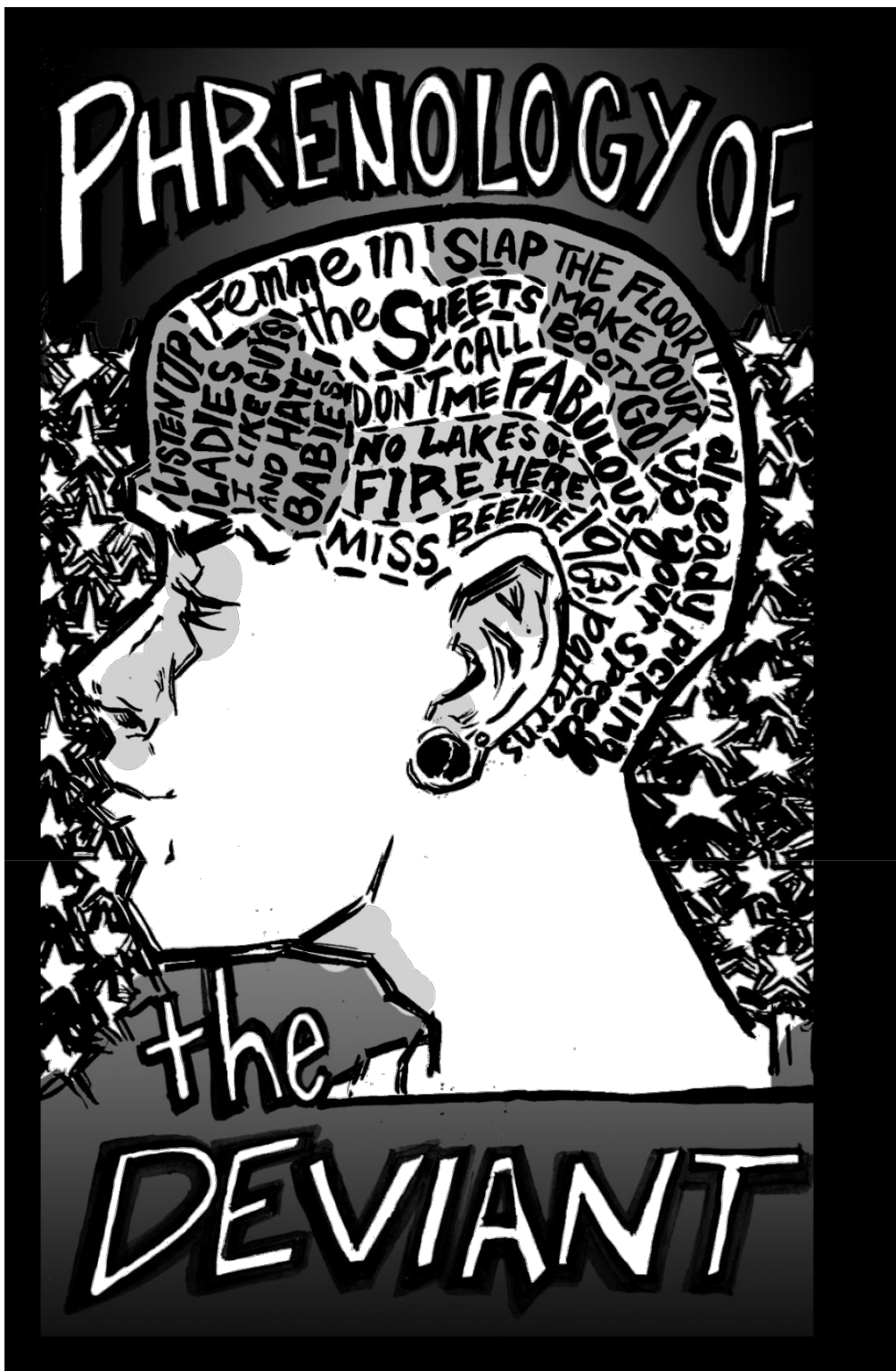
The way my hair is now is really tied to my femininity. Once it gets to a certain length, it's very tied up in my sexuality too. There are lots of long-haired butches that pull it off well, and I rock that look sometimes too.

**What about color? Emily's hair is a teal blue and violet.**

I feel very connected to water, it is part of my spirituality and emotionality. I don't have the words to describe my relationship with it, but feels familiar and right. I started dyeing my hair in the fifth grade so I have a long history with it. When I was in highschool I had it short-cropped and spiky--so typical. I did this thing called hot roots that I thought I had revolutionized; where it looked like my hair was growing out in funky colors.







So, this has come up already, but you mentioned A Camp. Other than the parties and dancing, what can queer women expect from that experience?

Camp has lots of panels, topics ranging from queer people in media in poetry to and other things that I'm not directly involved in. I'm not as involved with this type of thing but there's also a lot of cool crafting that goes on. You could learn how to hang your plants or macrame your own dildo harness! I was involved in a panel that spoke about being queer and in an interracial relationship, which is really common in the Bay area. You see it in Pittsburgh too, but there are less POC here, less queer people, and there's so much more segregation between races.

In short, A Camp seems like everything the L Word made you think being a lesbian was like, and more! Sadly, registration is over, but mark your calendars for next May. You can also catch Emily spinning at Remedy every once in awhile: look out for events featuring DJ DasGigler.

# WHAT IF THE TRIP FOLLOWS YOU HOME

Dani Lamorte

What if the trip follows you home?

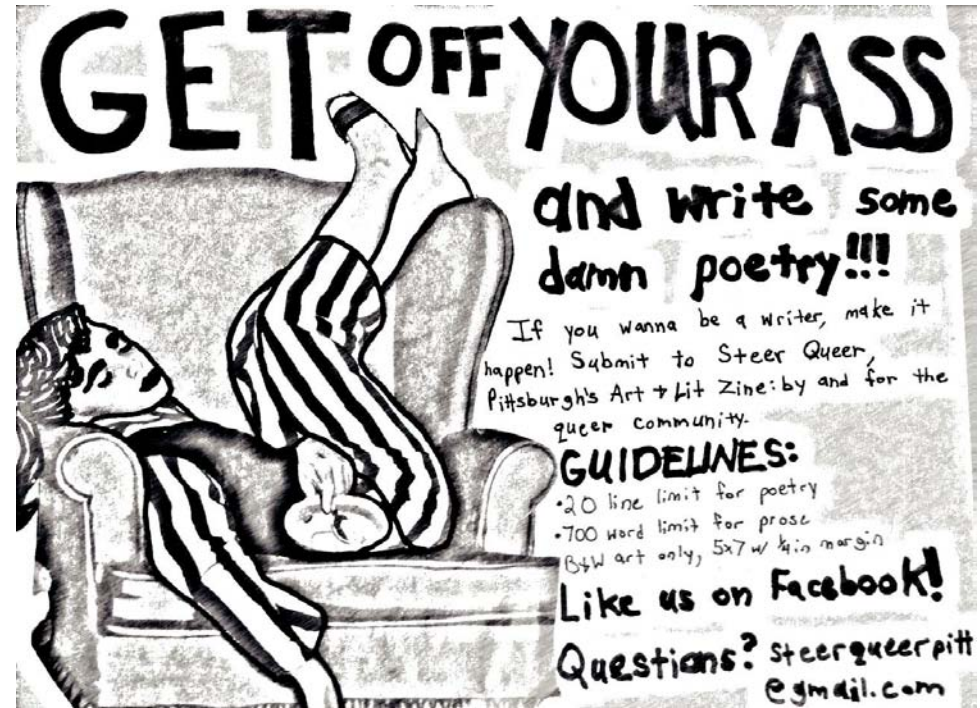
(This is where you start listening to “Once in a Lifetime” by Talking Heads. Repeat as necessary.)

And I found myself in a beautiful house with a beautiful person and I stopped short of asking myself how did I get here because I frequently flash back to memories of zipping down blacktop joy slides at speeds which are grossly inappropriate for our toothpick-and- J-E- L-L- O bodies all in an undeniably successful attempt to be here.

There’s a delusion in travel, a fracturing of routine awareness, a break with the dreaming morning commute, with the four clocks scattered in my apartment ticking incessantly in and out of time with one another. Even frustration can be part of a pattern. Maybe the pattern is the delusion. Yes, let’s assume the pattern is the delusion. Traveling is a moment of clarity, right? You step off of your cycling, hand-to- mouth labyrinth and realize what a tiny sliver of the universe you witness in your quotidian habit. A whole world goes on without you. But the clarity of travel makes me giddy, makes me feel like I’ve escaped the rules. I’m having one of those flying dreams again. I think and zip-zip-zip, I’m above the trees. I’m not sure dreaming and being awake are different, just like I’m not sure being delusional and being coherent are different, just like I’m not sure travel and home are different. It’s hard to be sure, isn’t it?

No lady is sure at night.

There’s a PBS documentary on bird nests and I’ve watched it all because I love birds. Using their beaks, they enduringly stack bits of earth rubbish into bowls, spheres, and domes. In short jaunts, the ovenbirds of Uruguay pick up mouthfuls of mud and squirt them into a circle, intermixed with bits of hay, to make an adobe abode, which can resist rain, wind, and meddling cowbirds.





# STEER QUEER MAGAZINE

NOW ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS!

The loose theme of our Fall issue is "Identity"

Essays, poetry, short fiction, creative non-fiction, art, photography

700 word limit for prose, 20 line limit for poetry

B&W Artwork: 5.5" x 8.5" with 1/2" margin on all sides.

Please send all submissions and questions to [steerqueerpitt@gmail.com](mailto:steerqueerpitt@gmail.com)

SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Issue Release/Poetry and Story Slam

Blue Moon Bar, Lawrenceville

October 16<sup>th</sup>, event at 8pm, performances begin at 9pm



Take that, 3-D printers/cowbirds. The ovenbird's home, when complete, reflects thousands of journeys made from a singular point to a pasture of puddles and back again. The grassy strands of their travels are integral.

When I first came to Tucson, I only had one story to tell and it was the story of coming to Tucson. Hope-devouring Google directions (continue on this road for 536 miles), endless episodes of The Splendid Table blasted over car speakers, and the visual shock of saguaro-topped cliffs made of red dirt. Small strands of memory from thousands of small jaunts taken across a period of 4 days, and they were all I had to build a new home. I spit-up my muddy tale at the new neighbors. I couldn't make a home without making something out of the travel that brought me here.

Birds are always on their way somewhere. To a monsoon-born creek, to a swampy patch wriggling with drowning worms, to Canada.

(I guess this is where you start listening to Joni Mitchell's "Case of You.")

Birds return home after their travels, but the home they return to isn't always the one they left at the start. I'm weaving this home with creosote clouds, hatch green chilies blackened over a gas flame, secret-named ancestors, and coyote sightings. I whisper prayers to conjure up the memory of how to construct, how to daub disparate memories into a coherent structure in which I can nurture new curiosities and hide out from bad cosmic weather.

I make a home in quiet moments when I'm alone and I can begin to unwind and re-weave the roads that brought me here. Or I make home in the excited tones of Harrison, gazing at tomato sprouts in a plastic greenhouse steaming up from morning sunshine. Or I make home in the eyes of people happy to see me, people who – just a few months ago – were happy to meet me.

# HOW TO COME OUT

Erin Dansevicius

Release the termites.  
Let them chew a gap in the closet door.  
Teach them to be reckless and persistent.  
Do not attach a single explanation to their backs.  
You do not owe them an apology.  
I know some say that we are an abomination.  
Years of fingerprints pressing their rights and wrongs  
Into the malleable clay of our hearts, of our gender, of our sex.  
Do not forget: the body and god are not separate.  
Do not forget.  
Forgive them for their ignorance,  
For their one sided minds, for their hate speech. Then let them go.  
Free them from curling up into your tendons and  
Tying knots between your shoulder blades.  
When you lay to rest let the heaviness go.  
It only holds you back and you-  
You are a creature of movement.  
Say "This is my body."  
When they ask you to identify with habitual labels,  
Box you in until the suffocation of stagnant air strangles  
Your ballooning lungs, tell them.  
Tell them how the trees change in the spring.  
Ask them for their baby pictures.  
Be the boomerang, the shoreline, the moon.  
Whatever you do,  
Forget what it feels like to stay in one place.  
Shake the iron from your legs.  
Walk through that door



# PRIDE

at  
**TechShop**<sup>™</sup>

# CRAFT NIGHT



## Thursday, July 28 6-11pm

Free STI testing by PATF!

Wear rainbow or Trans Pride colors and receive a  
code for a free TechShop class!

Make a craft with us or bring your own!

FREE PIZZA!

BYOB!



# STEER QUEER!

Pittsburgh's queer arts zine

fundraising event

@

Gypsy Tattoo Parlor

406I Penn Ave

PGH

March 14→16

11A → 7P

\$85

custom

palm

sized

tattoos

by appointment

only

PGH.

[michelle@gypsytattooparlor.com](mailto:michelle@gypsytattooparlor.com)



Again and again and again

Saying,

“Here I am. I am made of a light you cannot dim.

I am a ship who will not abandon its’ harbor.

I do not know who I will be tomorrow,

In four hours, or even this evening

But I am still going to be here.

Praising my body for loving what it

loves.” Love what you love.

Leave the rest to puddle at their feet.

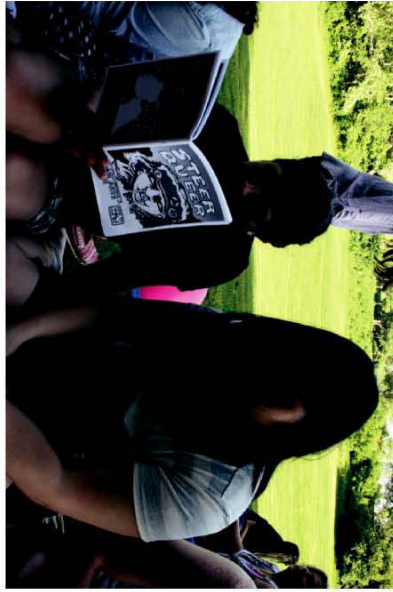
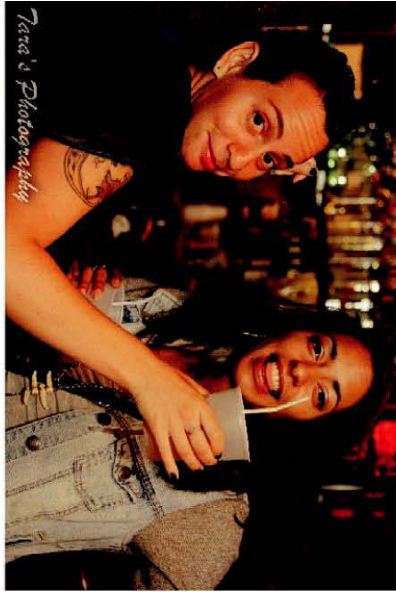
Promise me you’ll keep walking and when you’re ready

Ask them:

“Will you walk with me?”

# STEER QUEER

MEMORIAL PHOTOBOOK







Steer Queer

Yay! Queers!

Story and Poetry Slam

Fall Issue Release!

Oh boy! poetry!

All poets and writers welcome to participate!



Join in the Fun!

Zine Release: 8pm

Show: 9pm

Special musical performance by local artist



Legendary



PHARAH PHITTED!!!

She's awesome!



© 2011 likes  
@karrigangrace shared for the pine roads, Truckee Pittsburgh.



Tara's Photography

Tara's Photography





# STEER QUEER PRESENTS

**Good Jams, Vegetarian  
& Vegan Snacks  
\$5 at the door**

**Get a discounted zine with  
admission or bring a clothing  
donation for Project Silk  
& get your copy free**

**July 18th 9-2am.  
Young Brothers Bar  
1441 Woodsrn Ave (Northside)**