

*queer*

**horn**

*used to defend the gays against  
discrimination and injustice*

**mane**

*for all the fabulous  
mane flips*

**anus**

*where rainbows  
come from*

THA RUNKA

**mouth**

*used to spill tea, neigh*

**stomach**

*unicorns have a diet of sugar,  
spice and everything nice*

*(sometimes the occasional insolent  
prime minister)*

2018

# THARUNKA

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*Tharunka* acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Gadigal and Bedigal people of the Eora nation, on which our university now stands.

[www.tharunka.arc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.tharunka.arc.unsw.edu.au)

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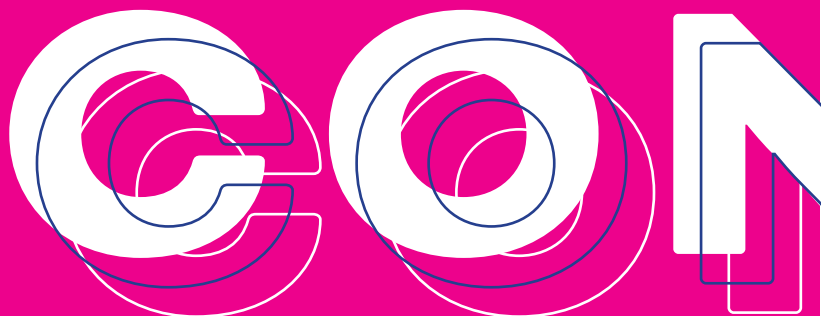
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# EDITORIAL LETT

Guest Editor / Queer Officer

## REUBEN CHALLIS

I love the queer community. We are diverse, strong, caring and have a vision for the world that is more loving and more accepting of difference.

So many members of the Queer Collective have improved my life or given me support. Everyone has inspired me to take on the responsibilities of Queer Officer and to improve the lives of queer students at UNSW. I would like to give a special thanks to Dylan Lloyd for mentoring me in student advocacy and for being a reliable and beautiful friend.

This year has provided our collective with new challenges. In the aftermath of the highly successful marriage equality campaign, it has been hard to pinpoint the biggest needs of the queer community and also been difficult to motivate political involvement. Nonetheless, we organised a very successful event for IDAHOBIT, raising awareness and money for the Ending Queer Youth Homelessness Campaign.

Another point of success has been our ability to work really well with the LGBTQI Champion, Mark Wilcox, and his working group. Accordingly, we have collaborated on events like Wear it Purple together, whilst simultaneously sharpening the needs of queer students in the minds of staff.

Roisin McGee deserves the biggest thanks. We built a working relationship and friendship from scratch and I believe our skills and passions complement each other perfectly.

My lasting message to all queer students reading: you have autonomy and have a voice in UNSW. Don't be lazy; engage in dialogue; fight for your rights; engage socially with other queer students. The queer collective needs more presence and it needs an even greater support network than it currently does.

Guest Editor / Queer Officer

## ROISIN MCGEE

2018 – or, as it's better known, twenty gayteen – has been an interesting year for the queer community. We came out of 2017 with marriage equality, after years of fighting and months of intense organising. Even then, state legislation forcing divorce upon those wishing to change their gender legally meant that we didn't *really* have full marriage equality. Even now, a year on, we've been slapped with a new Prime Minister who's spoken about how he sends his kids to private school to avoid queers, that conversion therapy isn't a big deal and that trans kids in school are being manipulated by their "gender whisperer" teachers ... all in his first fortnight in office.

Even with all of this, the queer community has remained strong – and the UNSW Queer Collective has, as always, been a highlight of my uni life. Putting together this issue of Tharunka has brought out the voices of so many collective members and I'm so proud of all the work that's been put into this issue.

Enormous thanks go to David Tu, our wonderful designer – you've been so generous with your time and talent. And to our subeditor, Eric Qian – this issue would not exist without you and your incredible dedication.

Here's to closing out twenty gayteen with a bang, and finding another solid queer pun to last us all of 2019.

# ERS

*Subeditor*

**ERIC QIAN**

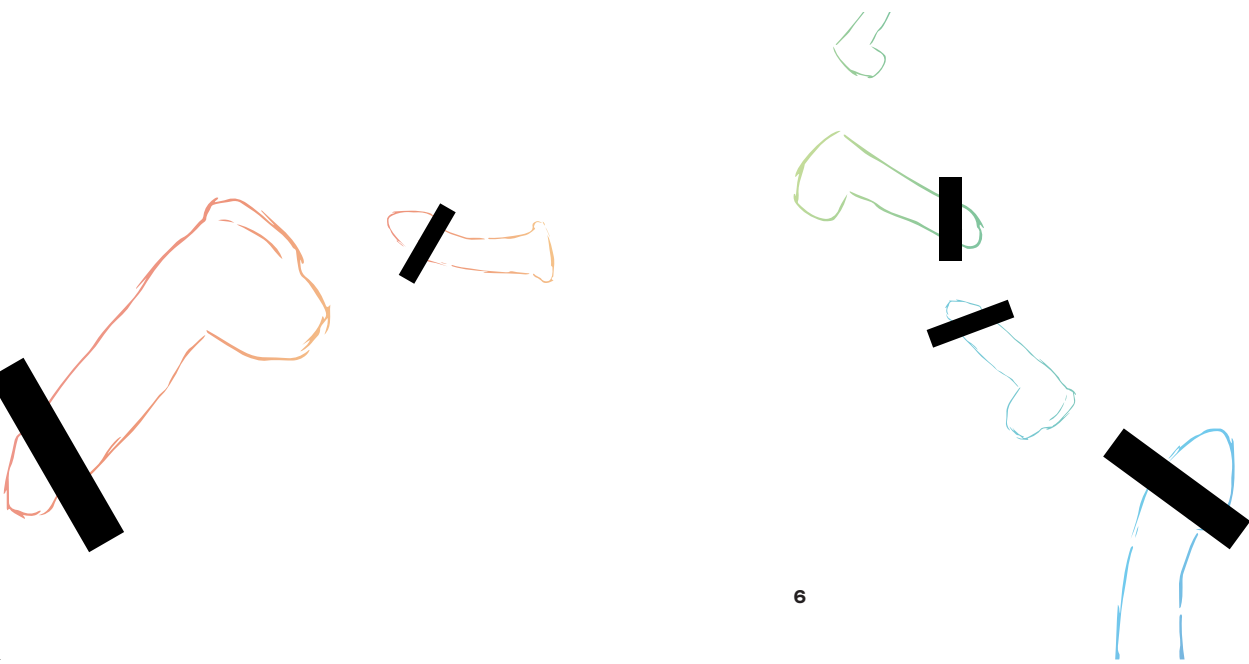
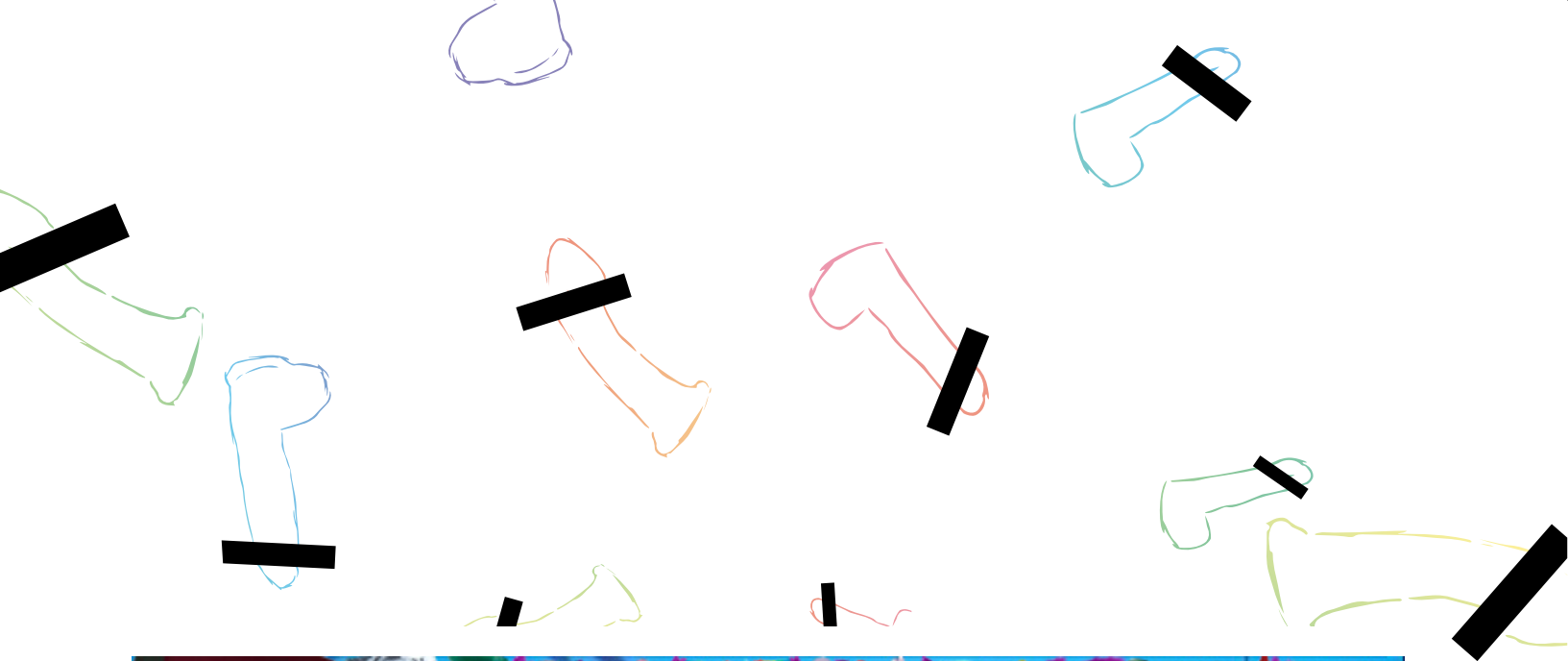
Thank you everyone who submitted something. It was delightful to see everyone expressing their ideas in varied ways, whether it be loudly calling attention to our continuing struggles through a socio-cultural or medical lens, or carefully placing the quiet (and essential) moments of our lives onto the page.

See also: photoshopped dildos, killer queer music recs and uncannily accurate zodiac advice.

*Designer*

**DAVID TU**

Third time's a charm.



On the 8th of August 2017, I embarked on a 122-day adventure of photoshopping dildos every day onto images of the former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in an almost stream of consciousness online diary I so lovingly named "daily malcum dildo".

I felt humiliated and dehumanized during the SSM shitfest and the twenty minutes that I spent each day photoshopping various dildos and buttplugs onto Turnbull's head allowed me to communicate and relieve some of the overwhelming feelings I felt during the plebiscite.

I would post daily, reminding people to make sure that they were enrolled to vote in the upcoming plebiscite ("stay well my gays and use a right we actually have and make sure you're enrolled"), asking those who were following my dildo journey about their day, and ensuring that the true meaning behind the plebiscite was being communicated: in the eyes of our government, LGBTQ+ citizens were not equal.

I was on exchange when the results of the plebiscite were announced. Sitting on the floor of my small dorm room I gazed at the livestream I was following on my computer, watching the bodies on my screen dictate to me from 15,000+ km away. Now whether my trance was brought on by the two bottles of wine I had downed, desperately trying to drink away the all-consuming anxiety that was crawling its way up my throat, or the fact that Act 3 of the plebiscite was about to end, (Act 1: SSM is not legal/Act 2: Talk of legalizing SSM/Act 3: plebiscite) I don't think I will ever know, but it was happening.

A fraction of a second before the 'Yes' vote was announced I crumpled in on myself and began sobbing uncontrollably. I sobbed because I thought the 'No' vote would win, I sobbed because of the months of shitness LGBTQ+ people had dealt with caught up to me, I sobbed for the young and the old who did not make it to see this moment in history, I sobbed because I could soon stop photoshopping dildos.

# DAILY MALCUM



*Lianna Day*

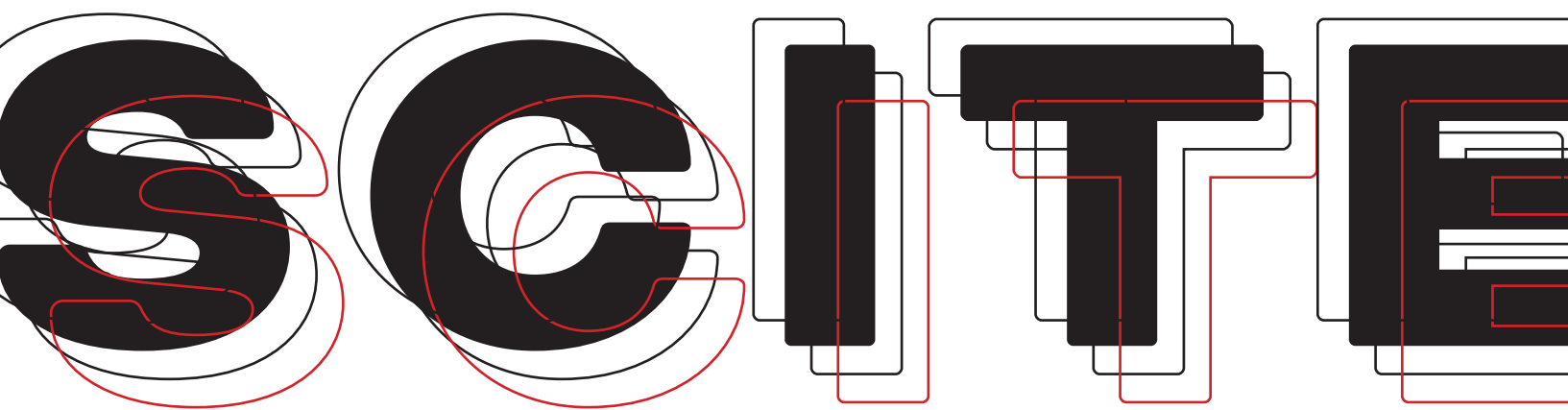
# PLEASE BE

*We are  
not done  
yet*

*Bonnie Hart*

It feels surreal that the plebiscite was only a year ago. It still feels so raw. I remember how it felt everyday during that period of debate, carrying the weight of uncertainty and feeling more a minority than ever. I remember feeling like I had taken steps back. The year earlier I had worked so hard on coming out, being involved in queer spaces and really figuring out my sexual identity. I told my parents, attended queer events and openly advocated for queer rights on and offline. And then the plebiscite came.

I felt exposed and vulnerable. I remember turning on the news and hearing people spout hate speech about homosexuality and queerness being 'unnatural', going out with my friends and being yelled at when walking down the street holding my friend's hand. I regressed. I didn't want to tell people I was queer and have them weigh in on my worth. Everyone thought it was open debate and it was 'just politics' – but it wasn't just politics; it *was* and *is* my life. I felt like in every conversation I



# ONE YEAR ON

was torn between being quiet and betraying my community and coming out again. It was exhausting and to be honest, eventually I just wanted to hide away until it was all over.

But then we got the vote and it was one of the best days of my life. I breathed a huge sigh of relief. We all said, 'Phew, it's done. Now we can move on'.

A year on and it feels like it should all be over, but of course it is not. We have just brought in a prime minister who openly voted no and encouraged others to do so. And we have an ex-prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull who has claimed he delivered 'marriage equality' through a 'hugely successful' postal vote, when in reality he put the mental health and well being of LGBTIQ+ Australians at risk for political gain. The Safe Schools program was cancelled. We once again have people taking credit for queer activism and advancement of queer rights, and acting like it's all finished. It is not over and we are not all free. Trans identifying people in Tasmania and

the Northern territory still need to get divorced before they can get their gender changed on their birth certificate, and trans people in all states still need to have sex reassignment surgery before being legally recognised as their preferred gender. This puts the onus on trans people to meet the standards of cis-heteronormative society and go through major and expensive procedures just to be afforded the same respect as other Australians. In regards to mental health, 60 percent of transgender men and 50 percent of transgender women reported having depression, with gay men, lesbians and bisexuals also experiencing generalised anxiety disorder at significantly higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts. Match this with severely stretched services particularly in rural and regional areas, and we have a lot of work to do. We are not all free.

Today, I have a wonderful girlfriend and we always hold hands when we walk down the street. I am openly out, proud and engaged in the queer community. People stare and yell at

us less. I met her mum and we talked about national parks. Things feel better.

But they're not over. There is still so much work left to do in queer activism and in lifting up all members of our community. We need to build on the work of the real heroes in queer activism. People like Marsha P Johnson, a revolutionary trans woman of colour who led the Stonewall riots and advocated for homeless trans youth. Or the Mardi Gras 78ers who were imprisoned and bashed by NSW police for protesting for their rights. We need to keep working, keep pushing, and keep honouring the work of these queer people who risked it all so we could get married and hold hands down the street. We might feel better, but we cannot stop until we are all called the right name and treated the same.

# LOVERS' DREAM

*Debby Xu*

Crystalline visions from morning till eve,  
I see you as you  
pass  
different selves,  
from vulnerable, uncontrolled,  
to an easy contagious laughter.  
I want to be there beside you  
through it all –  
hand squeezing, chin resting,  
eyelash kisses.

Once in a while, a mother bird  
flying low will gaze at you and me with  
watchful eye, approving –  
cocooning us and the eggshells we tread  
with the truth that  
this is right.  
This will become right, when our sincerity melts away  
their prejudices.

By the light of a candle in a dark room,  
let us duel, writhe, wrangle when we  
do not understand each other.  
The darkness looms, but the light flickers  
as hope that we might  
in this little space, invisible to others,  
gouge open each other's mouths, peer  
down and retrieve carefully remnants of  
soul,  
uncover repressed truths,  
or lies undisguised. Let us then  
become less dream, more human,  
and really loved.

I fear yet I cannot wait for when  
my penchant for solo ventures, single-  
mindedness and mind-fuckery will cease  
because the reality of you, your steady inhale  
and exhale,  
pricks my Achilles heel  
with the lovers' dream.



# OPTING OF BEING

## *My Health Record for gender and sexual minorities*

*Ryan Horn*

Between now and the 15th of November 2018, you have a complex decision to make. Do you want a My Health Record\*?

While a person's gender or sexual identity may significantly influence their health, the threat of systematic outing posed by My Health Record may impart more harm than good to the queer community. There are currently a number of barriers to accessing healthcare faced by members of the queer community, including a lack of sensitivity and knowledge of queer health issues among healthcare professionals, discrimination, and the queer patient's own engrained fears and mistrust. My Health Record threatens to consolidate these barriers whilst introducing the novel element of data privacy concerns.

### *Consolidation of current barriers to care*

While improvements have been made, sensitivity training and education for healthcare professionals on queer health issues is limited. By making information relating to a patient's queer identity readily available, My Health Record reduces the onus on healthcare providers to build trust and rapport with their queer patients and ask each patient about how they identify with respect to their gender and sexuality. It reinforces the binary, heteronormative and non-fluid assumptions that are already rampant in the healthcare profession increasing the likelihood of a negative healthcare experience.

With 20-30% of queer Australians already reporting to have experienced discrimination in the healthcare setting, My Health Record runs the risk of perpetuating this (3). Additionally, the fear of discrimination or sub-optimal care based on sexual or gender identity may delay queer patient's seeking the care they need (2). A system that risks inadvertently outing queer patients may perpetuate these fears of discrimination and exacerbate delays in seeking help. For example, if you were involved in a car accident and required hospitalisation, how necessary is it for the team involved in your care to know your queer identity?

While the individual does have control over authorisation settings, the onus falls on them to monitor and maintain these settings. This would involve deciphering complex clinical information intended for other healthcare professionals, a task that may be quite onerous for those with low health literacy.

### *Data privacy concerns*

Intrinsically, the My Health Record system facilitates paternalistic breaches of privacy by allowing healthcare professionals to access to information without consent in emergency situations. Information can also be accessed without consent by government agencies for a range of vague and somewhat concerning reasons including 'prevention' of criminal offences, breaches of law and improper conduct and in the interest of 'public revenue' (4). These provisions are particularly concerning for people living with HIV due to the criminalisation of transmission.

Additionally, there are serious concerns about the security of the system itself with a poor track record of securely storing data (5). My Health Record will be accessible to thousands of registered healthcare providers who will be responsible for maintaining security requirements to reduce the risk of both internal and external unauthorised access.

### *To conclude*

While having a My Health Record may be beneficial to some, the risks posed to marginalised health populations are substantial. My decision to opt-out of a My Health Record stems from my fundamental desire for autonomy and control over my queer identity. I believe that the risks posed by having a My Health Record far outweighed any potential benefits in my situation.

# GOVT ED

*\*My Health Record is an online summary of your important health information accessible to you and any healthcare providers involved in your care. It may include information about your allergies, medications, medical conditions, test results and also more detailed clinical documentation from your healthcare providers. My Health Record is an opt-out system with the opt-out period ending on the 15th of November 2018. For more information or to opt-out please visit: [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au)*

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*How giving blood made me  
feel like a second-class  
citizen.*

*Jay Zabakly*

I've always believed in giving back to Australia.

As a second generation migrant from the Middle East, I could very well be living a different life. This country has given me so much. Growing up, I never felt discriminated against. And although I'm no longer ignorant to the bigotry that blemishes our multicultural society, the truth is I had never experienced it firsthand.

Until I decided that I should start giving blood.

To me, giving blood seemed straightforward. It was almost idiotic that I wouldn't. All it required was me sitting still on my phone for around 30 minutes. I did that regularly.

Unfortunately, queer men and women are effectively banned from donating blood in Australia. If you have had at-risk sex then you cannot donate blood for 12 months. All male and female queer sex is considered 'at risk'. This is effectively a gay blood ban.

I can't remember exactly how I learnt that I wasn't able to do what most other people could, and were in fact encouraged to do. I just remember being mad. Feeling betrayed. For the first time in my life I personally experienced injustice. Needless to say, it mattered a lot to me.

At the same time, I had decided to go on a period of celibacy. Among other reasons, I needed to focus on myself and my own growth. So I decided to stay away from sex and relationships for at least one year.

After 12 long months I gave blood on the fourth of June, 2018. I thought that by giving back to Australia, I would finally feel fulfilled. But instead it made me angry. During the donation I felt a wave of anger over the injustice. I became consumed by the

overwhelming urge to confront the Red Cross workers and tell them I was gay. I wanted them to know how hard they had made for me to donate.

In the end, I didn't. These people weren't the ones who decided on the ban. They were just instruments of a bigoted system.

But my anger only grew.

First, when I got a letter from the Red cross thanking me for donating and urging me to donate more.

Again when I found out I was O- and therefore a universal donor.

It seemed ironic to me that the Red Cross simultaneously needed more donors but could do without a huge chunk of the population who would be more than willing to donate for the good of the community.

That's when I realised how much of a second-class citizen I felt in my own home.

It's not as though it has to be this way. In the UK last year the deferral period was reduced to 3 months as new testing systems are accurate enough to make it safe. There are even studies underway on how to reduce this deferral period for donors who have a lower degree of risk.

The Red Cross has been recommending a change to the deferral for around six years, albeit to a still unreasonably high six month period. In those same six years we've won national same sex adoption, almost eradicated gay panic defense and achieved marriage equality. But the fight for equality seems to have no end.

I want to be part of Australian society. I want to give back. But a discriminatory regulatory system has left me feeling angry, marginalised, and feeling completely drained for entirely the wrong reasons.



# TOMORROW WAITS

Harry Gallagher

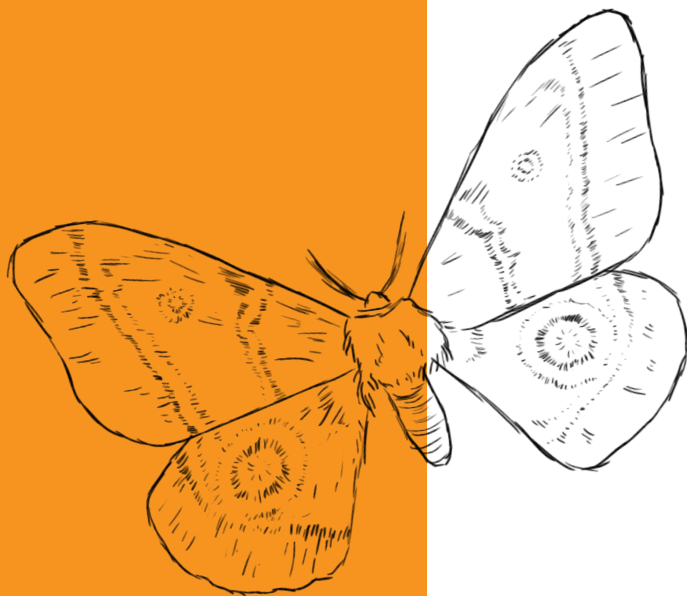
I have often thought about that time  
When Fenrir has raised its head.  
The sun's light grows colder now,  
That howl we all half dread.

The mourned will never hear the mourners.  
Those remaining say that time will tell.  
My good conscious and great heart, no,  
I have only my soul left,  
That emanating spark.

For he was wrong, the centre never held.  
It broke from the first fratricide.

An Irish airman, a housewife,  
and he who gave me hope.  
In the deep place that they all share,  
the flame is burning still.

I have kissed the lips of death  
and felt the burning hands of life,  
I have danced with an angel  
and held hands with the devil  
on a moonless night.



Ash

## DRAWN TO FLAME

She was born to speak to moths. They would flutter around her when she visited the village and come to rest on her shoulders when she was bowed down in prayer. The villagers would smile at her and approach meekly; they would ask, miss, if you would so please, tell us what Grandfather is saying from beyond the earth; does Grandmother miss us as much as we miss her? And the moths would swoop down to rest on her knuckles and whisper back.

*She was born to give light. The Guardian saw what her parents failed to see in her – the potential to be important. Upon his request she would sit at the top of his tower every night and shine her brilliance on the sea, guiding lost seafarers back home and casting well-wishes onto the daredevils who set sail on choppy waters.*

She wished night would never come, as the night rendered her impotent. The moths were no help, as they were as blind as she. Their only hope was the moon, shining clear against a cloudless sky. The cane gifted to her was of no use, for how could one navigate an endless plain with a single stick?

*She wished day would never come, as the light would render her worthless. She could not wander out for fear that she would blind her brethren, and not even the Guardian could look at her when he delivered her meals. If the burning glare of the sun was a blessing, why then was she a curse?*

The moth came, fine hair brushing against her hand as it perched on her little finger. Beautiful speckled brown wings trembling in the breeze, it spoke of a land far away, with exotic flavours and scents, where every single puzzle piece was eternally soaked in light. For the first time, the moth said, we could see everything the land could offer.

Where is this land you speak of, she asked.

Across the sea, the moth answered.

*The wind was vicious tonight; she had seen too many boats overturned, too many ships rushing back to land. But in the distance, miles away, she saw a small boat on its way. It bobbed up and down with the large waves it rode, narrowly missing the sudden streaks of lightning that shot out of the sky. Every passing minute she feared for its life. Every passing minute it came closer to her.*

Without the moths, she would never have survived. Their antennae flickered in the storm, and they would inform her precisely where the next bolt of lightning would strike, or when

the next wave would propel their boat forward. There was no moon in the sky tonight, but she felt no fear. Perhaps it was the bright light in the distance that gave her strength tonight.

*She woke up and rushed to the window. The sun was bright as always, and the waves were calm. The merchant ships had left once again, and the fishermen tended to their nets. Her eyes searched and searched, looking for something, anything.*

*She found it.*

*A single floating wooden boat tied to a small post.*

*It had survived.*

The moth was right. The land was beautiful, so beautiful it quickly became overwhelming. She leaned on a pillar to catch her breath and took in all the sights and sounds around her. Excuse me, a passing peddler asked, did you just arrive this morning?

Yes, she answered politely, I was guided by the light that shone from atop a tall tower.

Then you must thank the light, the peddler advised, and pointed to a brick-red tower that stood proudly by the bay. You will see when darkness falls.

*She was brooding by the window when a knock sounded on her door. Someone is here to see you, said the Guardian.*

*Who, she asked.*

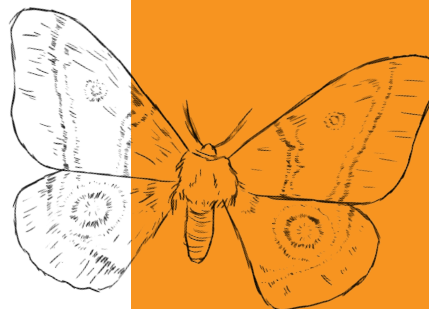
The girl sitting before her was brilliant. Long blonde hair covered the girl's face, and the girl had to brush it away to look at her. Pure light shone through her skin, illuminating the surrounding darkness. The moths left her to alight on the girl and whisper salutations. She wanted to do the same.

*Hello there, said the girl with the choppy grey hair. I wish to thank you for your guidance last night. Without your light, we would have been lost to the sea.*

*Her smile was gentle, almost loving, as the moths left the girl, distracted by the light.*

The sitting girl smiled back.

Hello.



The first time I heard about lucid dreaming was in high school. I thought I could use it to control what I saw in my dreams (and study in my sleep).

I later learned that keeping a dream journal helps with lucid dreaming, so I started writing them down:

*30/03/2014*

*At the swimming pools. Another serious diver told me I should quit because I'll never win. My sunburnt nose was chipped a lot. I was no longer streamlined. I left the divers. They were jerks. I went to the kid's pool to play.*

\*

My most recent dream:

*26/08/2018*

*We got off a cruise at Sydney. We went to my favourite ice cream shop. I stole a scoop of sesame ice cream and I hid it in my shoe. Turns out my friend P worked there. They gave me two scoops for \$1.50. What a bargain.*

\*

Dreams sometimes didn't make any sense. But they still felt real.

\*

No matter how hard you try, you can't always control your dreams. This was one of my first dreams about a girl. She was my best friend at the time.

*12/09/2014*

*N comes and hugs me from behind. She holds my hand. It's not very serious. I get all soft and nervous. I kiss the back of her hand and tried to keep her around me. My chemistry teacher comes in the room to teach us about solvents and solubility and we have to sit in our normal seats. Before everyone settles down I look back to N and say something big like: you are the solution to everything.*

Until I dreamt about her, I never realised I had a crush on her.

\*

In one dream, I was older and living alone. It has given me direction to how I would want my future to feel.

24/12/2012

*I'm looking over my apartment balcony and the people walking below. There're always people walking somewhere; to work, go out for a jog, or do the grocery shopping. It reminds me that I have places to explore but I'm content with this moment that I'm in now. I sit in my chair on the balcony and take a sip of my tea. I'm not stressed enough to want coffee anymore. I read my book to myself with the city hum in the background. The local stray cat naps on my lap. I feed her sometimes. Other times she's out and about doing her own thing. She purrs while the sun sets.*

\*

I knew that I was interested in my current girlfriend after I had ten consecutive dreams about her.

*D was teasing me about wanting to kiss her. But it felt like I was the one that was doing the teasing.*

*There's a sleepover event with a big bed. D and I sleep on one side. A few other people sleep on the same bed because it's a ginormous bed so they're far away. D starfishes all over the bed and I ask her to move over a little. She smiles and says no. She was being cheeky while making out with me and we kept looking over to the people on the other side of the bed. They were spent after a whole day, so they didn't wake up and notice what we were up to.*

*D brushes her hand accidentally on the side of my leg. My heart is racing.*

It was pretty obvious.

\*

When I was growing up, I was convinced to believe that what other people wanted was what I had to achieve. I was never allowed to choose what I wanted.

Writing my dreams down has really shown me the mess of my subconscious and what my life could be. I don't want to control my dreams anymore. They show parts of my thoughts that I spend an awful amount of time hiding and not acknowledging.

Honestly half the time my dreams are rubbish and I love it.

# PEOPLE PEOPLE PLACES PLACES THINGS THINGS

Eric Qian

mentioned:

*Dungeons & Drag Kweens: go to this now\**  
(\*happens once a month)

*Arq: essential (?) terrible (?) wondrous (?)*

*Uber: you know this one !!*

## 1

First I go to *Dungeons & Drag Kweens*, a night where absolute stunners grace the armchairs onstage and spin up a tale of hilarity and heart. It's part improv, part multimedia experience, part campfire story, part comedy special, and while this sounds like TOO MANY things it all comes together to make just a ridiculously entertaining final product. The story is ongoing, and basically the main draw is the experience of watching these comics blunder their way through a magical world with snark to spare.

Some of them are half-fumbling and endearingly so, like a newborn giraffe, while others are so naturalistic that it's easy to think this is rehearsed final product, instead of them reacting to it on the fly. With distinctive characterisation each is their own flavour of funny, and the humour feels special in that it's grounded in this magical world, with its own aesthetics and logic while also feeling totally organic.

With delightful descriptive flourishes from the Dungeon Master, like "an orchestra made of light", and character design, like ice chickens with human heads (when does the novelisation of this adventure come out you bard??), and mood-setting musical cues, small touches make a big difference in creating the reality of the world to really take us there.

This is a captivating once-a-month treat happening at the Imperial. See [thekweens.com.au](http://thekweens.com.au) for the next show.

## 2

My Uber driver picks me up outside of Arq on Oxford St, and the first thing he asks me if I've gotten with any white girls tonight. As I'm yet to depart this amphetaminic haze of nighttime splendour my would-be reaction of disdain turns to curiosity, and I play with the thought. "No," I say, before I hastily say "I don't think so", to add a splash of ambiguity to the proceedings. He seems to accept my ambiguity and welcomes the untaken implied possibilities as occurred realities, and because I've have known him for at least thirty seconds I have become his confidant and vessel for his wisdom. Before I can brace myself for what I have unleashed he starts with: "You know, you should date a white girl: easy to get, and all my buddies have been very happy". Fuar. He's bolted of the blocks. As I ponder this revelatory statement we turn off Oxford St and my mind turns not to white girls who I am sure are lovely, but different physical spaces of different dimensions, like the interminably long trash alley which I've just left, but have visited for the first time this evening and found it a nice place to be with its resident smokers and gum-chewers and the cold for company. It's there I see someone who seems to recognise me, and I think he looks familiar but maybe everyone is familiar here, or has become familiar by some magical process.

Currently I reside in a space that's probably no more than four cubic metres in volume, yet passing back through the night there have been many different spaces varying in flavour, energy and occupants. Some of them: the aforementioned long trash alley, the high vaulted ceiling of the upper dance floor, which makes the lower level feel compressed, distorted. The interstitial spaces designed for languor. Spaces for moving to other spaces: entrances, exits, mezzanines and staircases.

The entire collection of spaces put together is a messy and chaotic palace for beautiful vampires, and me, a little troll-boy who's accidentally stumbled his way in and is loitering in the constant fear that someone will hand him a mop bucket expressing their gratitude that he's finally arrived to clean up the vodka-infused vomit in aisle three. Fortunately no one

does this for my entire stay so I opt to dance with abandon, who's never had a choice in the matter.

And now as my current space zooms away from the others, my mind snaps back to this car that has now taken its exit off the highway.

I don't want to be rude to my driver, so I now ask him about his own love life, which I instantly regret because clearly he sees this part as the main point of the conversation and everything before now has been a skippable prologue, and I am realising that while this whole app ordeal is a wildly affordable transportational service it is also a wildly overpriced conversational one. At 4:32 in the morning I think this is insightful & deep.

As it turns out what he's saying is half interesting, in that he talks about the parental pressure he has to on who he can marry. Perhaps we are not so different, I think to myself. In order to further connect with him I start to say this before he immediately cuts me off to say he's happy with his current girlfriend, but because of their religious differences he thinks the parents will give him hell for it. Which seems dumb to me but obviously I am not equipped with the upbringing to truly understand the forces at work here.

Regardless, I burst out with an ode to pursuing forbidden love, and as I attempt to embellish and strengthen my point I cite Romeo and Juliet as an example and am halfway recounting the story before realising my terrible mistake, but he seems convinced, so I just tell him the parts before the end and say you don't even need to watch all of it really, they simply end up in a place where they can be together forever, which he seems to accept.

As we pull up next to my house I carefully re-emphasise that the end of the play is inessential, but am not so persistent as to rouse suspicion. Alas, to no avail. "Where do they go then, Romeo and Juliet, at the end?" he asks. But I simply cannot reveal I am a fraud and a scoundrel so I say OK BYE HAVE A GOOD NIGHT, slam the door and give him five stars.

AH

# SMUDGE

They say love is blind,  
I think I'm starting to see it.  
But it might be from the smudges,  
On my lenses you've left behind.



Josh Kirsh

## SETTING UP CAMP

*Queer Eye tells us  
diverse voices are  
here to stay*

The new incarnation of *Queer Eye* has proved a masterstroke for Netflix. Serving up more than just renovation and makeover realness — but also emotional conversations about what it means to be male, to be happy, to be loved, and to be accepted — turned an object of derision into a transformative and heartwarming experience for many of us.

To say that it was an object of derision is not an understatement. “Netflix to Reboot *Queer Eye* for ‘The Straight Guy’”, samesame informed readers, before asking “But Why?” Apparently reviving *Queer Eye* is “disembowelling our diverse gay culture and serving up a plate of glitter for cheap laughs”. “Rebooting ‘*Queer Eye*’...Is A Step Backwards”, Reader proclaimed last year. It’s important to remember that “other segments of the queer community and their allies have voices worth hearing”, we were told.

And that’s very true. But *Queer Eye* as “a thoughtless nod to a cookie-cutter mould our community has long shattered”? That doesn’t only seem a bit much. It seems completely tone deaf, but not out of character with the dismissive attitude towards camp that permeates our culture.

Most telling is the exhortation that “segments of the queer community and their allies have voices worth hearing.” Successive issues of the *Gay Times* or *Attitude* or *DNA* would feature glossy cover shoots of Nick Jonas or Shawn Mendes before an out gay man would get a look in. For the queer press, the voices of camp, queer men will always be less worthy than even allies.

Camp arrived in different forms in the final product. It was, however, almost uniformly praised. It’s almost as though the ability to improve someone’s hair, makeup, clothes, diet, sense of self worth, and home furnishings — almost uniformly coded as female skills — suddenly found a relevance with sections of our community who had allowed themselves to be wilfully blind of said relevance in the preceding years. It’s as though the tacit permission of a few influential voices allowed a stampede of young men (who happen to have perfect hair and teeth and bodies) to acknowledge that such things require perseverance and attention to self.

*Queer Eye* did a great job in its first two seasons of exhorting men for not taking pride in themselves, in having uneven expectations for themselves and for their wives. Maybe it should also be a clarion call for us, as a community, to take a bit more pride in who we are.

# TUNES OF 2006

IT IS 20GAYTEEN (this is a gays only event, go home!) and it's only right that we've been blessed with so many songs and albums by LGBT+ artists this year...

## ALBUMS/EPs:

### *Expectations - Hayley Kiyoko*

Of course, this list has to start with our Lesbian Jesus, who's come a long way since *Girls Like Girls* came out. She just *understands* sapphic angst and emotion so well that you're left wondering if all wlw (women loving women) just live the same life.

Fav tracks: *What I Need* (ft. Kehlani), *Sleepover*, *Wanna Be Missed*

### *Oil Of Every Pearl's Un-Insides - SOPHIE*

SOPHIE is a transgender producer revolutionising electronic and pop music. This album is ridiculously experimental, so I recommend you really buckle up when you give it a spin, but trust me, you'll come out dazed but reborn.

Fav tracks: *Faceshopping*, *Immaterial*, *Whole New World* / *Pretend World*

### *Make My Bed - King Princess*

I don't know what it is about lesbian artists, but fuck, King Princess (a genderqueer lesbian, and my future wife) encapsulates all the feelings of queer love and heartbreak so perfectly your chest will ache.

Fav tracks: *Upper West Side*, *Holy*, *1950*

### *Hive Mind - The Internet*

The Internet is back with their fourth album, and they're as sexy as ever on *Hive Mind*. With her silky vocals, lesbian lead singer Syd elevates the whole soulful and jazzy 'dimmed lights, close bodies' vibe of the album and just makes me melt as she sings about girls.

Fav tracks: *Come Over*, *Stay the Night*, *Wanna Be*

### *When My Heart Felt Volcanic - The Aces*

The Aces, with two queer members, bring beautiful, nostalgic rock to the table with this debut album. Their tunes are incredibly feel good, perfect to blast on a summer road trip with the top down (it's a pity that gays can't drive...).

Fav tracks: *Volcanic Love*, *Lovin' is Bible*, *Waiting For You*

### *Dirty Computer - Janelle Monáe*

*Dirty Computer* is a critique on the political and social state of the US and the world from the view of a pansexual woman of colour, packaged in an album/'emotion picture' of tunes that make you wanna shout and dance.

Fav tracks: *Crazy*, *Classic*, *Life*, *Screwed* (ft. Zoë Kravitz), *Pynk* (ft. Grimes)

### *Palo Santo - Years & Years*

Three years after their debut album, *Communion*, Years & Years return with a fierce new confidence and welcome growth. Olly Alexander, the band's lead singer, is a gay man who brings magic to this seething pop album full of gay life and sensuality.

Fav tracks: *Hallelujah*, *Rendezvous*, *Don't Panic*

### *Please Stop Talking - Ieuan*

Queer singer Ieuan's short but sweet EP is full of pure pop bops (we love a good bit of alliteration and rhyme) about gay boy troubles. Once I bought an ice cream from Aqua S just because it was 'honey lavender' flavoured and Honey Lavender was my obsession of the week.

Fav tracks: *Honey Lavender*

# GAYTEEN

Emily Lu

## SINGLES:

### *Bloom* - *Troye Sivan*

Everyone's favourite gay YouTuber when they were 14 is now making #BopsAboutBottoming, and I'm so here for it. Fresh and shimmering, *Bloom* is a track off Troye's upcoming album of the same title.

### *Kiss The Boy* - *Keiynan Lonsdale*

You probably recognise Keiynan from his role in *Love, Simon* and *Dance Academy*, but he's also a queer Aussie artist releasing bops! *Kiss The Boy* is a track about just loving who you love, and its music video is pure wholesomeness.

### *About You* - *G Flip*

Gay Aussie artist G Flip has said that all her songs are "about girls who have either ruined me, or whom I've fallen head over heels in love with", which is honestly a total mood. *About You* is her debut single, full of bittersweet confusion and longing.

### *Good Guys Go* - *Cub Sport*

Technically, the hazy *Good Guys Go* is on their 2017 album, but I needed an excuse to congratulate the two members of Aussie band Cub Sport, Tim Nelson and Sam Netterfield, who recently got married!

### *Meet Me In Mexico* - *The Drums*

*Meet Me In Mexico* is as much of a 'chilled Sunday morning' indie song as you can get, nostalgically bringing me back to 2014. Lead vocalist Johnny Pierce has also shared his experience of growing up gay in a conservative environment, penning an important piece for arts magazine Talkhouse.

More LGBT+ releases from 20gayteen:

*Sappho* - Zolita  
*Girls* - Girl in Red  
*Saved* - Holy Water  
*gay story* - In Love With A Ghost  
*Doesn't matter* - Christine and the Queens  
*Moon River* - Frank Ocean  
*Lush* - Snail Mail  
*Lone Wolf* - Lowell

Also just leaving this here:  
(buy *E•MO•TION* on iTunes)

# QUEER ZODIAC

Axel-Nathaniel Rose

You lived through the July of six planets being in retrograde, a blue blood supermoon, and you've gotten through the month of chaos and bloodshed that was August, so honestly, good job. You'll be just fine.

## Some overarching advice:

Stretch if you're wearing your binder.

Wear some nice lipstick.

Drink water.

Respect the power of a good, comfortable, flannel shirt.

Stay gay.  
Or, you know, in that realm.





## ARIES

*Elton John, Hayley Kiyoko,  
Jonathan Van Ness, Tan France*

Aries is the first sign in the zodiac, and red is the first colour in the rainbow. Coincidence? Of course not. Your wardrobe should look like a sea of blood which you could part with your sheer will, all the while being eye-catching in eight entirely different shades of red at any given time, eye-sore and trend-setter that you are. Look after your flannels, or they may well be stolen by someone substantially shorter than you, or someone so much taller than you that they'll wear it as a crop top (unless you're into that, I guess). Be nice to yourself, breathe deep.



## TAURUS

*George Takei, Melissa Etheridge,  
Sam Smith*

You can be cautious and incredibly perceptive, and that's incredibly hard when so much is happening in the world. Making decisions is probably something you don't take on lightly, so when you do, make sure to counter that by surrounding yourself with people who don't ask so much of you. Run a bubble bath, go to bed early – use that stubbornness to be the most powerful gay that you can be.



## GEMINI

*Troye Sivan, Laverne Cox,  
Rupert Everett*

Let's be upfront and say that Geminis have a bad reputation. Whether you're deserving of it or not doesn't particularly matter, because the future is imminent! Pick some sunflowers, be sociable, give in to the urge to wear a pride flag as a superhero cape, and you'll be fine. Trust yourself, you know you best. (Steal a flannel, if you get the chance. It will suit you, no matter what you look like.)



## CANCER

*Elliot Fletcher, Patrick Stewart,  
Lana Wachowski*

The sheer amount of feelings in the world is probably weighing you down even before we get to your own life. If you're aware of your own it's easier to manage, so take time for yourself – but don't forget to take part in your community, and be there for those around you.



## LEO

*Mara Wilson, Cara Delevigne,  
Mitch Grassi*

I somehow doubt that you need fashion advice, even in these trying times, so instead I will acknowledge that you may well be royalty, and encourage you to wear the crown you keep under your bed. However, like Lindsay Lohan before you, considering breaking the crown with your bare hands, and scattering it amongst your adoring public. Yes, life can suck, but you and yours don't have to.



## VIRGO

*Stephen Fry, Evan Rachel Wood,  
Bobby Berk*

Virgos are stereotypically cautious, which is so damned valid, but you've got through the hell-month that was August, so you're going to be just fine. Your routine and structure may be very important to you, which contrasts pretty horribly with the world being a bit chaotic sometimes. But you are just where you need to be right now. Wear some glitter, sparkle a bit, you'll be great.



## LIBRA

*Tessa Thompson, Ellie Desautels,  
Ben Whishaw*

Whether solutions present themselves to you or not, know that they exist – any conflict can be mended, but sometimes it's just a matter of the mending to happen without you. Turn away from them, and put your gracious energies into the positive around you – it's there. Wear something that makes you feel powerful in your own skin, pick flowers, be proud.



## SCORPIO

*Amandla Stenberg, k.d. Lang,  
Karamo Brown*

The universe is lawless, life has no *meaning*, exams are *always* close, and you know all of this! You probably also know that you're passionate and talented, and you can get through whatever you need to, but a reminder doesn't hurt. Like the Aries, keep an eye on your flannels. They're vulnerable.



## SAGITTARIUS

*Janelle Monae, Lilly Wachowski,  
Margaret Cho*

Take a deep breath –scream a little bit into the void if you need to. Whether big or small, utilise the freedoms you have to their full extent – absorb yourself in the world around you and the experiences you can have, even if it's just in daydreams (dreams → reality is always an option). Be patient, though, as impatience won't help in your struggles. Wear some horribly clashing prints, and you'll be just fine.



## CAPRICORN

*Jamie Clayton, Mj Rodriguez,  
Ricky Martin*

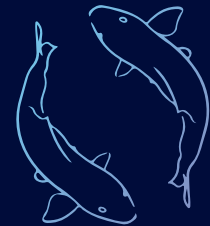
You are responsible, grounded, and somewhat in control – even if it doesn't feel like it right now. Fear, anger, and stubbornness are part of life, but put that responsibility to good use and be aware of it, for your sake and the sake of others. You can take on whatever you need to, because you're awfully impressive in that way. I would recommend some artfully smudged eyeliner, just to say 'I know what I'm doing, but also don't fuck with me'.



## AQUARIUS

*Ellen, Alan Cumming, Billie-Joe  
Armstrong*

Strike a balance between being kind to others and giving yourself over to their needs, and time alone. Even the most mundane of days needs your thought and focus – never think you're wasting time if you're using it to sort shit out. Honesty and integrity can carry through to everything you do, including talking about your feelings (which yes, you do need to do). Crop tops and short-shorts are an outfit you should consider looking into.



## PISCES

*Janet Mock, John Barrowman,  
Antoni Porowski, Reuben Challis,  
Roisin McGee*

Let's be upfront: we all have a lot of feelings, but you have a lot of feelings. Look after them, and ask others to look after them, too. As the queer community has always done, build yourself up – make yourself a pillar of support in your own life, and don't let anyone get in the way of that. You may be gentle, but that doesn't mean vulnerable. You're another one to be careful and watch out for your flannels, but galaxy prints are always an option.



