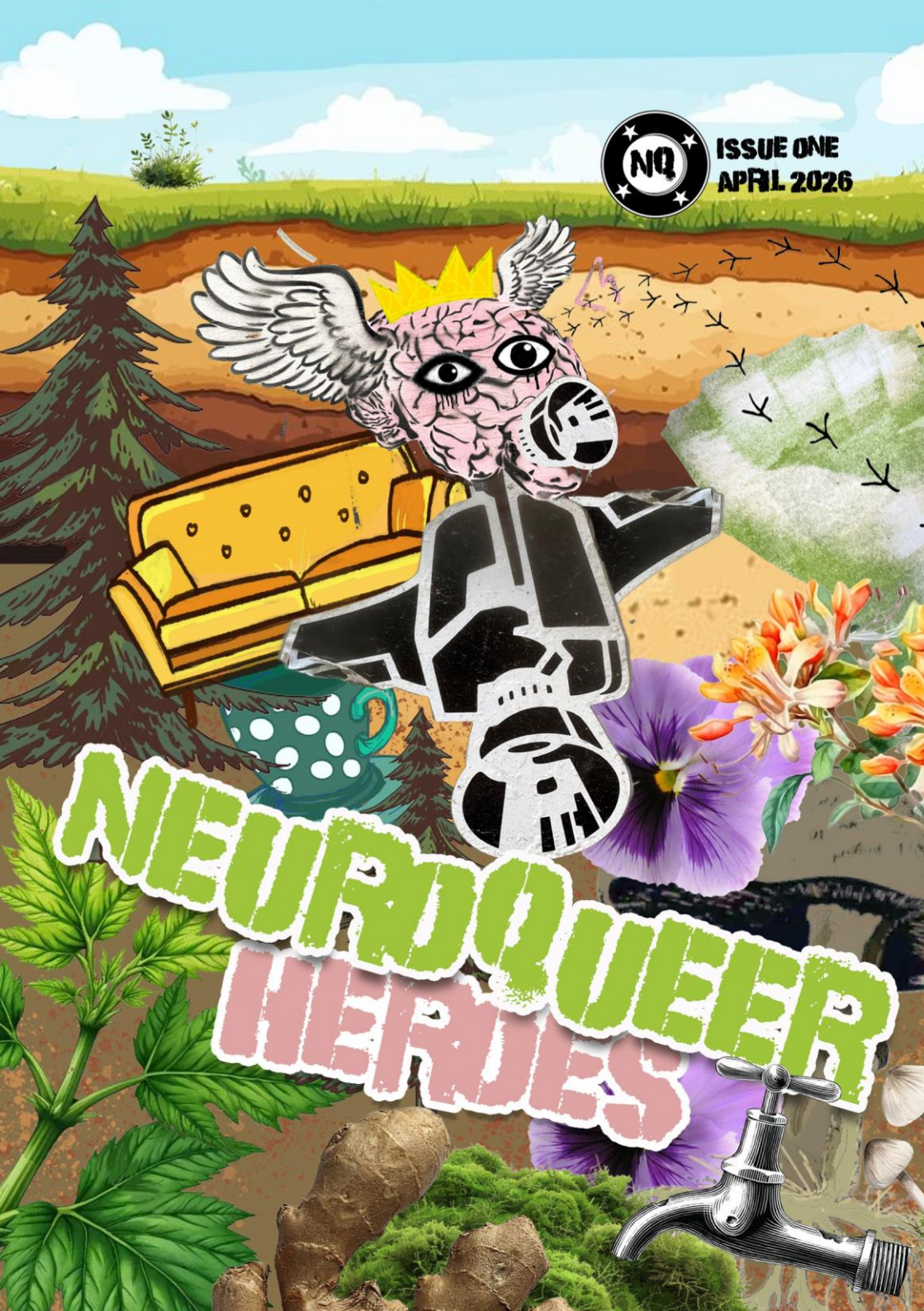




ISSUE ONE
APRIL 2026



NEWIRADO WEER HEROES

Neuroqueer Heroes Poetry Zine

Image ID Front Cover: The front cover of the zine, it is a colourful collage of images. The background is a natural image of the sky, grass and then the stratigraphic profile of layers of mud and rocks below. In the centre of the image is a cartoon brain with eyes, wings and a crown. They are holding a megaphone and a film camera. they are surrounded by a mixture of natural and manmade imagery. They are surrounded by a pine tree, pansy, nettle, ginger, moss, and other flowers. They are also surrounded by a tap, a sofa, and a spotty mug.

Contents

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Some other poems and images

How the Crown was created

The Crown of Sonnets

Neuroqueerness, nature and queer ecology

The Film

Acknowledgements

Forward

Welcome to our Neuroqueer Heroes zine. The poems, images and film you are about to see were created during a series of poetry workshops held at Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool. They were part of Jay Farley's Writer in Residence funded by Creative Future.

Who are the NEUROQUEER HEROES responsible for this work?

Kaitlin Schaal, Emyr Bamford, Sam Prior, Sam Keall, Jay Farley, Amanda Ralph, Carrie Habb, Alixir Turnbull-Crane, Marie Hanafin, Garnett 'Ratte' Frost, Alfie Beacall, Moon Rice, Meave Devine, Tom Mouldsdale

What is Neuroqueering

Coined by Dr. Nick Walker in 2008, Neuroqueering is a multi-layered concept that combines neurodivergence with queer identity and activism.

As an Identity: It describes the inseparable intersection of being neurodivergent (e.g., Autistic or ADHD) and LGBTQIA+. It highlights how a brain that processes "social rules" differently often naturally rejects traditional norms of gender and sexuality.

As a Verb (Action): To "neuroqueer" is to actively subvert "neuronormativity." This involves unmasking (rejecting the pressure to act "normal"), challenging the idea of a "right" way for a brain to function, and intentionally designing spaces to accommodate diverse communication and sensory needs.

As a Political & Creative Tool: It views "non-normal" thinking as a vital strength for solving global issues like climate change. It is rooted in intersectionality,

positioning itself as a form of resistance against capitalism, racism, and colonialism by advocating for a culture where everyone's unique needs are met.

Ultimately, neuroqueering is about embracing cognitive and stylistic diversity to create a more inclusive, collaborative, and resilient society.

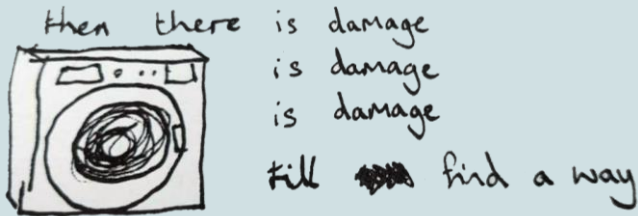
FOR MORE DETAILED VERSION OF THIS EXPLANATION AND AN ACCESSIBLE VERSION OF THE ZINE SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO SEE THE ZINE WEBSITE.



OR FOLLOW THIS LINK: <https://jayfarley.info/nqzine>

Other Poems

There is damage



Sam Keall

Image Description:

A short poem written in scrawling handwriting, it says

There is damage then there is damage

is damage

is damage

Fill find a way

Sam Keall

The writing is written around a quick, scribbly drawing of a washing machine.

Neuroqueer Born Acrostic

By Marie Hanafin

Need like dying embers thirsty for flickers of fuel

Ending to begin

Unrelenting, unbreaking, unfeeling

Run, your time is almost

Out - the gazelle's eyes wrinkle

Quiet, frost deafens

Understand?

Exhume the feeling

Enter the unknown

Run, you're just

Beginning to find the flame

Open the doors

Reinhabit your carcass skin,

Necromancer.

Block Schedule By Kaitlin Schaal

School day: gym class: free play. \ I am \ the rat
seeing \ the labrador. \ I have no \ friends here.
Who do \ I talk to? My people \ where are my
people? /// I hold my hand \ down in class \ my
words will tumble \ storm-swollen river gorge \
over a landscape of thought. \ I would love to share
\ but \ I cannot gather \ sheaves of sentences \ in
time. \ My people \ what words do \ they reap? ///
New school: new class: new \ friends? I sit next to
\ a boy and \ he hops one \ chair over \ “have to
leave \ a gap” \ he is talking to \ another boy. \ My
people \ he is not my \ people. /// Band class
nerds: lunchtime library hall passes: reading
together. \ Birthday party and \ two hours watching
\ her friends \ they ask me \ to play but \
“no”isthefastest \ answer. \ I have too many \
questions and \ ... \ *brain thick* \ *thoughts*
stiff honey and \ ... \ I don’t believe in their
patience. \ There is a \ snake
in \ my blood. \ I breathe with \
twenty percent of \ my lungs.

Image Description

The poem is in one block and broken up by many slashes and back slashes, there are gaps and ellipses to create pauses and rhythm in the poem.

A plain text version is below -

School day: gym class: free play. I am the rat seeing the labrador. I have no friends here. Who do I talk to? My people where are my people?

I hold my hand down in class my words will tumble storm-swollen river gorge over a landscape of thought. I would love to share but I cannot gather sheaves of sentences in time. My people what words do they reap? New school: new class: new friends? I sit next to a boy and he hops one chair over "have to leave a gap" he is talking to another boy. My people he is not my people. Band class nerds: lunchtime library hall passes: reading together. Birthday party and two hours watching her friends they ask me to play but "no" is the fastest answer. I have too many questions and ... brain thick thoughts stiff honey and ...

I don't believe in their patience.
There is a snake in my blood.

I breathe with twenty percent of my lungs.

How the NEUROQUEER HEROES Crown was created.

A *crown of sonnets*, is composed of 15 sonnets using Iambic pentameter and 14 lines. They are linked by the repetition of the final line of one sonnet repeated as the initial line of the next. The last (master) sonnet consists of all the repeated lines of the previous 14 sonnets, in the same order in which they appeared.

Ours is a collaborative crown, working with 14 neuroqueer people with distinctly different neuroqueer experiences each creating their own sonnet.

This form is perfect to be really personal and specific in each sonnet. Whilst the joining of the sonnets in the repeating/connecting lines and the master sonnet links them, overlaps, and weaves them together. So all together it was a great way of unifying them and describing a joint experience whilst still being true to the multitudes of our experience.

Did we stick strictly to the rules of the Crown? No, we're Neuroqueers! We couldn't even if we tried. Instead we leaned into our different ways of working and let a natural flow guide us. We evolved the Crown and this poem is the result. You'll also notice our anthotypes sit behind our poems.

NEUROQUEER HEROES CROWN OF SONNETS

melted sunlight / turmeric couch.
your legs / my back. your book / my scalp.
your hand / my arm - resting.
noon's raindrops - mardi gras beads on -
the windows - overlook the horse field.
eyes closed, i smell you,
the same as your hair pillowed out in the morning.
i never find you where i left you, but
you are still there.
Love won't vanish if I look away.
and you are here, in this cabin, in this moment of peace that
we fought for. (you don't get to your thirties without scars.)
now, your hand on my arm squeezes -
true as forest breath, leaves shaking

The forest breathes, leaves shaking
Roots stretching out under earth
Soil grounding, growing
Mycelium synapses speeding beneath our feet
Connecting us invisibly,
Crossing borders,
Above the trees starlings soar
Swooping, shifting, morphing,
Shedding unnatural uprootings struggle and strain
(lighter now, moss underfoot, cushioned)
Moving to a land where we're all free
When they reach it they will celebrate word
And tell the mushrooms to spread the word
Murmurations begin the journey

Image Description

The sonnet text twists and turns and flows around similar to the roots of mycelium, the words grow bigger and smaller, warp and shift up and down like

they are reaching out for nutrients or other
mycelium to connect to. The text of the sonnet
reads

The forest breathes, leaves shaking
Roots stretching out under earth
Soil grounding, growing
Mycelium synapses speeding
Connecting us invisibly, beneath our feet
Crossing borders,
Above the trees starlings soar
Swooping, shifting, morphing,
Shedding unnatural uprootings struggle and strain
(lighter now, moss underfoot, cushioned)
Moving to a land where we're all free
When they reach it they will celebrate
And tell the mushrooms to spread the word
Murmurations begin the journey.

My journey first began in cloisters new
Where expectation bent to gods unknown,
Illus'ry 'common sense' was held as true,
And followed unwrit rules like sacred tome.

My natural ways rejected, deemed as wyrd.
Opinions others hold became my guide,
But learning led to revelations queered
And destinies unclear as roads divide.

I walk in new horizons for myself
And call to find the deities within.
Reconnect with my own nature's wealth,
And bare compassion t'wards my stranger kin.

For 'there, but for the grace of gods, go I'
'Till Ragnarok renew or Fates defy.

Beat up at the bus, Gay trope

One to live out /Talk about

At 28 though?

Pain = rage, nothing's changed

has it ?? new horizons

felt the shame, first blow landed

felt their fear, humiliated, neutered, abandoned

baby boy, more lost than love, living it out, same as us

felt them rush into body, force into bones, with all his might

And never have i been as big as the understanding rushing back through his arm

Consuming, unyielding, alien / familiar, terrifying, effortless truly calm

gather our bleeding children, take us home.

Vultures and victims

How strong we are, How strong we are.

Image Description

The poem descends downwards in sharp lines, the words are sideways and the poem is at a 90 degree angle reaching down towards the bottom of the page. The poem reads

Beat up at the bus, Gay trope

One to live out /Talk about

At 28 though?

Pain = rage, nothing's changed

has it ?? new horizons

felt the shame, first blow landed

felt their fear, humiliated, neutered, abandoned

baby boy, more lost than love, living it out, same as us

felt them rush into body, force into bones, with all his
might

And never have i been as big as the understanding
rushing back through his arm

Consuming, unyielding, alien / familiar, terrifying,
effortless truly calm

gather our bleeding children, take us home.

Vultures and victims

How strong we are, How strong we are.

How strong

we are\ *Are we strong?*

We are /seedy\ weeded, worried and woke

Self medicated multi tasking ticking meltdowns

Pattern recognition\ Peado\ groomer\ toilet looming\

harmless loser\click bait\access requirement anti

heroes/ or

Gender fucking time travelers blown on the wind/ landing

decades after we were ~~assigned~~ wronged born

Up at dandelion with the sparrows/ pollinating

freedom/ one binder at a time/ rewilding our

Bones /We are nettles rising/ We are

daisy chained back to earth/We are

horsetail rising/ We are nature

defending itself

Image Description

The poem descends down in short, fiery sentences and is in the shape of a seed. Multiple slashes break up the poem and add to the quick snappy rhythm. The phrase “assigned wronged” is crossed through and silent.

The poem reads

How strong we are. Are we strong?

We are seedy, weeded, worried and woke

Self medicated multi tasking ticking meltdowns

Pattern recognition Peado groomer toilet looming

harmless looser

click bait access requirement anti heroes or

Gender fucking time travelers blown on the wind

Landing decades after we were assigned wronged born

Up at dandelion with the sparrows

Pollinating freedom one binder at a time

rewilding our bones

We are nettles rising

We are daisy chained back to earth

We are horsetail rising

We Are nature defending itself

Nature defending inflammatory propetry guru
Undercover agency- you know how to spice things up
Gnarly exterior- cut-vibtant/stringy interior specialist
You are a contradiction-my fiery antioxidant friend
Secretly Spreading undetected/hardy perennial...
Ninja style
A constant unearthing
You roam curiously subterranean-but all above board
Horizontal yet adventurous -covering new ground... always reaching
Brave even though your armour is wafer thin
Sometimes you stem upwards to the light-even flowering
What an unexpected but magnificent sight -Retreat
Wrapped tight so as not to let the spicy aroma out-
Like a crystallied pupa waiting for the fiesta

always reaching
for parts
unknown

Image Description

The poem is in one constant sonnet of 14 lines, on the 9th line the words at the end of the line begin to warp and float and stretch into a circle reaching down and around stretching out to the last line of the sonnet.

The poem reads

Nature defending inflammatory property guru
Undercover agency- you know how to spice things up
Gnarly exterior- cut-vibrant/stringy interior specialist
You are a contradiction-my fiery antioxidant friend

Secretly Spreading undetected/hardy perennial...

Ninja style

A constant unearthing

You roam curiously subterranean-but all above board

Horizontal yet adventurous -covering new ground...

always reaching for parts unknown

Brave even though your armour is wafer thin

Sometimes you stem upwards to the light-even

flowering

What an unexpected but magnificent sight -Retreat

Wrapped tight so as not to let the spicy aroma out-

Like a crystallised pupa waiting for the fiesta

Like a crystallised pupa waiting for the fiesta
I am the grassy path,
scented flowers
I am fragrance of honeysuckle
I am bees buzzing in coloured blossoms
I am squirrels running
leaping from one tree to another
fighting for nuts
I'm dark green ivy,
stretching up walls
across the roof, entwined I am
a small bird flying towards my mini forest
landing on my swaying branches
I am Pine Trees Growing

Pine trees growing
Bent from Adam's side
Mahogany brittlewood's bark
Seeds press hard underground
When rain comes
Or clouds fall down from the sky
Needles catch life droplets
Sewn into hostile soil
Time flows through
Rings on branching years
Sands too quick
To hear axes swing
Earth thicker than paper
Paper thicker than water

Thick water - Clog ged Spig got
I sputter, spettle, sprain-
ing tidal tongue crashes
In gulfs, words that rip
Caustic like teeth shirted in bile.
'You're a little odd aren't you?'
Language is languish - please
Dig/ the shivered boot/ out of my hoarse/ mouth
Chronically set on devil's advocacy.
All paper entrails and oiled hoards
This carrion library reeks
Of shortcut wood.
But there's hope the ink can read me
Paint worlds from scattered thoughts and set them
free.

Image Description: the sonnet is laid out in centred lines, it has gaps and slashes between letters in words that create a unique rhythm when read and slashes that break up the text to add pauses to the poem.

Plain text version

Thick water – Clogged Spiggot

I sputter, spettle, sprain
ing tidal tongue crashes
In gulfs, words that rip
Caustic like teeth shirted in bile.
'You're a little odd aren't you?'
Language is languish - please
Dig. the shivered boot. out of my hoarse. mouth
Chronically set on devil's advocacy.
All paper entrails and oiled hoards
This carrion library reeks
Of shortcut wood.
But there's hope the ink can read me
Paint worlds from scattered thoughts and set them free.

You paint new worlds onto your eyes
Sharing dinosaurs and snow angels across the glass
Rewilding the street with seasonal surprises
Acrylic creatures sneaking through tall grass
When storms flood the darker corners of my mind
The concrete path, cracks, its strength leeches by pain
It can be difficult to see the world as safe, beautiful or kind
Yesterday your eyes were closed and plain
Waiting, watching, no blooms in sight
Beige curtains smother your creative soul
Have you moved, changed your mind, or had a fight?
Without your stories the street isn't whole
Then lavender, daffodils, pansies begin to peek up
Blooming out of smiling rainbow pots, and a polka dot
teacup

Blooming like smiling rainbow polka dots
The flowers are set to bloom again and again...
The pretty purple pansies say I know how you feel.
But to compare our blooms is impossible,
The little red flowers sparkle on the streets
like the blood pooling in my mouth.
Punch purple blooms, set to flower across your face in a few days.
Now just a painful stab in your eye and a hillbilly broken glass smile.
How people around me enjoy the colour show,
broke to yellow to green to painful purple
With each pansy planted a bruise alike
A hate crime greeted with flowers
Pansies for pansies.
I spot you near the bridge and fear the cars passing

Image Description

The poem grows upwards, and with each line the words descend up, with the poem at a 90 degree angle.

The poem reads
Blooming like smiling rainbow polka dots
The flowers are set to bloom again and again..
The pretty purple pansies say I know how you feel.
But to compare our blooms is impossible,
The little red flowers sparkle on the streets
like the blood pooling in my mouth.
Punch purple blooms, set to flower across your face in a
few days.
Now just a painful stab in your eye and a hillbilly broken
glass smile.
How people around me enjoy the colour show,
broke to yellow to green to painful purple
With each pansy planted a bruise alike
A hate crime greeted with flowers
Pansies for pansies.
I spot you near the bridge and fear the cars passing

I see you watch the cars pass by
Near the bridge where folks come to die
I have my own bridge I left to stand¹
When loss led me by the hand
I see you grow slant out the wall
How your green leaves fold and fall
I bow to a new way to feel
Step out of the death reel
I see you claim brick for loam
No deep roots have you for home
I no need for walls but doors
Breathe in my bloom once more
I see you turn to ghost in light²
My dead weed fixed love in sight

¹I left to stand - ²an anothotype

If you have weed sight
Would you liken me to lichen?
Symbiotic rock clinging concrete coverage
At the end of long dirt road
Sandy carpark by the sea
Or maybe more mossy, soft water soaked
Oak lingerer, shady grove lover
A bed for pixies in the fairy glade
Press your face into me
Much maligned and overlooked pigment
Hardy and frail
Sustained on sunlight and dew droplets
You can find me wherever you care to look
From the gutter to the mountain tops

let me be mountaintop moss or Estuarine mud please?
 So Little Egrets can tattoo me with their feet,
 I can be that beige algal foam
 So that happy-fast dogs can bound through me
 and fling me to the wind for my flakey distractedness
 Then please I can be a Flounder conventionally
 Sucking up fat Lugs, please? not being adult
 And for my pasty-slicing-Gull-beak of
 Let me cop out into a raft of Blue-Grey Springtails,
 My naivety dancing the dreams of a rock pool.
 Just please throw me Into the dynamics of a Coast,
 shifting in sand and shell and silt,
 degrading sea walls with my laziness.
 Let me be anywhere at once, and never gone

Image Description

The poem is one block paragraph, in the 8th line the words begin to get turned in all different directions, forming a sort of rectangle of words. Until the 9th line when the poem returns to a block paragraph.

The poem reads

let me be mountaintop moss or Estuarine mud please?
 So Little Egrets can tattoo me with their feet,
 I can be that beige algal foam
 So that happy-fast dogs can bound through me

and fling me to the wind for my flakey distractedness
Then please I can be a Flounder
sucking up fat Lugs, please?
And for my pasty-slicing-Gull-beak of not being
conventionally adult.
Let me cop out into a raft of Blue-Grey Springtails,
My naivety dancing the dreams of a rock pool.
Just please throw me Into the dynamics of a Coast,
shifting in sand and shell and silt,
degrading sea walls with my laziness.
Let me be anywhere at once, and never gone

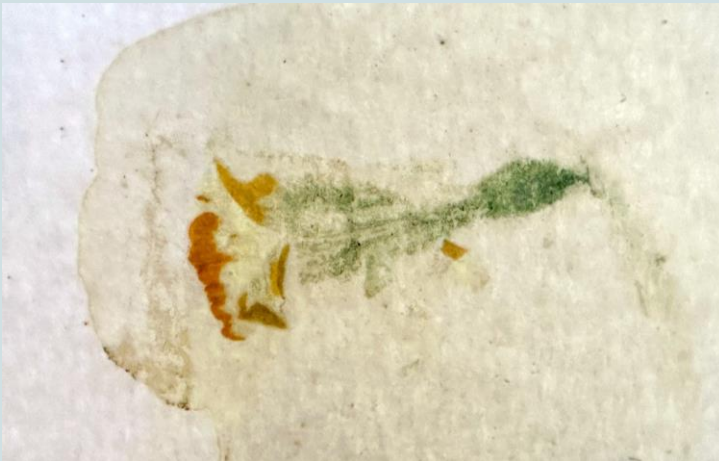
Love won't vanish if we look away.
Roots stretch out under earth
walk in new horizons
How strong we are, How strong we are.
Nature defending itself
crystallised pupa waiting for the fiesta
We are the grassy path,
Sewn into hostile soil
But there's hope the ink can read us
paint new worlds onto eyes
flowers set to bloom again and again...
I see us grow slant
From the gutter to the mountain tops
Let us be anywhere at once, and never gone

Credits to the Crown

The writers of the sonnets in sonnet order:

Kaitlin Schaal, Emyr Bamford, Sam Prior, Sam Keall, Jay Farley, Amanda Ralph, Carrie Habb, Alixir Turnbull-Crane, Marie Hanafin, Garnett 'Ratte' Frost, Alfie Beacall, Moon Rice, Meave Devine, Tom Mouldsdale

WE CREATED ANTHOTYPES



Top: Tom Mouldsdaile Anthotype in progress

Image Description – a White hand holds a glass pane with two dark green leafy plants resting on the glass, through the glass thick white paper with small green and orange squares painted on it can be seen. On the green squares a sun print of the same leafy plant has been made.

Bottom: Daffodil Anthotype by Moon Rice

Image Description – a sun anthotype print of a daffodil on white textured paper, orange petals and a deep orange centre have been printed on the paper with a light textured green stem dangling gently off from the centre. The daffodil has been printed on a very pale green wash of spinach dye.

NEUROQUEERNESS AND NATURE

Neuroqueerness exists everywhere in nature including spinach, penguins, mushrooms, clownfish, elephants and bees! In fact when we look for it, it exists in all of nature. It's just that we have previously been presented with a picture of nature often shaped by privileged, white, public school-educated men, which have historically distorted our understanding of nature and reinforced their own beliefs and systems. When we look at nature free of

a capitalism lens, it teaches us that everything is interconnected like a web and although it has elements of hierarchy and competitiveness, they often sit within collaborative systems. For example symbiosis and mutualism, like bees pollinating flowers while collecting nectar, where both species benefit. Or Mycelium and Funga keeping forests alive and forests keeping the planet alive. We are part of that web of life and we need to treat it, and ourselves with respect and equity.

Neurodiversity and queerness represent what scientists call “variance,” a natural and beneficial diversity found in all walks of life. Variance strengthens species and ecosystems by enabling adaptation and resilience. We need us.

Neuroqueering allows us to decolonise, decoding our bodies and minds, and through the lens of queer ecology it is like rewilding.

WE ARE HOPE: Our existence (Neuroqueer(ing) People) is nature defending itself.

The beauty of Neuroqueering is we can do it NOW in our everyday lives, shoulder to shoulder. We don't

have to wait to elect anyone or overthrow capitalism, we can just start TODAY :)



Anthotype by Garnett 'Ratte' Frost

Image Description - An anotype print, on a wash of pale brown background there is a large green plant. It has three large leaves artistically placed

around a thick stem leading up to four big yellow petals and two small darker petals. The plant is striking and central to the page, there are swirls of green and orange in the background from the spinach and turmeric in the wash.

WE ALSO MADE A FILM:

The film and the poem is a ritual. Using a spell circle created at our local nature reserve of Bidston Hill, under the beautiful full moon of March the poem and the film formed a powerful spell. A ritual dedicated to reconnect with nature, rewild our minds, bodies and souls and break the curse of capitalism. We planted the poem in the rich red earth alongside Sonnet Sigils; seeds ready to grow into an enriched and brighter future.

Alixir Turnbull-Crane

Sigil - a symbolic representation of the witches' or practitioners' desired outcome.



QR code for the film.

Link Here: <https://vimeo.com/firsttake/nqcrown>

Acknowledgements

I'd like to give a special thanks to Creative Future and in particular Matt Freidman who is just an amazing person. Creative Future support and champion underrepresented voices and are one of the best cultural organisations in the country. They funded my residency and have given me the confidence to grow as a writer, THANK YOU. Secondly, Open Eye Gallery who provided the location and local support in Liverpool. Sarah Fisher, Susannah Fletcher, Sorcha Boyle and Maria Gullina for being awesome. Open Eye is platforming, curating, programming, and supporting amazing artists and art. Challenging what a gallery space is and can do in the best inclusive and radical ways. Check them out! Thanks to First Take who supported the making of the film. They make

amazing social good/justice films and digital art with underrepresented communities.

Finally thanks to Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding First Take to explore and bring Neuroqueering to a wider community.

Jay Farley

This accessible zine was made by Emyr who would like to acknowledge that it was made with the limited tools available to them and that while they are disabled themselves and made every effort to make this zine as accessible as they could they are aware that there will be gaps in their knowledge when it comes to accessibility and welcomes feedback on how to make this zine more accessible to more people!

Image ID Back cover – a papier mâché mask of a face is in the middle of the image. Their eyes are closed and from the bottom of the page a tree grows up and over their face, the branches cover their lower face and nose and obscure parts of their face. The branches are filled with red and green leaves which fall down and line the bottom of the page. The sky is a light blue and also covers the top half of the papier mâché face as well as the rest of the sky

