

a queer literary and art e-magazine

**1<sup>st</sup>  
edition**  
**2024**





# CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Editorial Board Members: Michael Conklin, Genesis L. Becerra Navas, Tatianna Pizarro

We would like to thank all the contributors for sending their work to us. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for sharing it with us. Most of all, thank you for allowing us to share it with the rest of the world.

Special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Schmermund, thank you for holding a space that inspired me with this idea. Thank you for all your help. Most of all, thank you for always believing in me and supporting me. There has never been an idea I have had presented to you that is too far out.

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Welcome all to the first ever edition of Project.Elixir! This is a queer literary and art journal/e-magazine. We receive works from LGBTQ+ artists and writers to publish in this space so the world can see. This is a space where we will emphasize queer voices.

We have a nice variety of works for this first edition. Thank you again to the contributors who are supporting our journey. We are honored to have your work fill our pages in this first edition. All your works deserve to be seen, just as you do too.

# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



**Tatianna** (They/Elle)  
Instagram: [@project.elixir](https://www.instagram.com/project.elixir)

I am the creator of this e-mag. I was born and raised in Brooklyn. I love to take pictures of sunsets and bodies of water.

The idea for this e-magazine came to me while doing an internship in college. The internship was a creative art and writing journal/ magazine along with an academic one. So I figured if I could do it, why can't I make my own but for LGBTQ+ people? And that's how project.elixir was born.

In a time where book bans and censorship are happening to authors of color, womxn and LGBTQ+ authors. Now more than ever, we need those voices to be heard. There has to be a space. So I hope, when a person who does not have access to physical queer literature & art, they can find project.elixir.



## Quincy Cain

Instagram: [@Q.caain\\_](https://www.instagram.com/Q.caain_)

A black queer artist and performer born in East Meadows, NY and raised in Paterson, NJ. He has performed in such shows as "Taming of the Shrew" and "Man of La Mancha" as well as partaking as a player in various improv acts. Along with beginning his career as an actor at age 12 in his first production of "Oliver", he was introduced to show choir and his own personal musings through rhyme. Being inspired by artist like Jason Mraz, Sara Barielles and John Legend. All of this culminating in a modus operandi steered by and geared towards youth and peers alike who have been misjudged and

misplaced. With each stage of development came the plight of moving from place to place, whether out of town or out of state, as frequent as the change of seasons. Through such and endeavors as lyric writing and poetry he expresses the turmoil and triumph of living a life resembling that of an army brat. Reconciling with a severed truth discarded for survival. Wide eyed into the reflection he calls home. His aspiration is to curate a room to release common exasperations. Forums, stage readings, concert halls and black boxes. With a taste for the unknown and a knack for defiance he hopes to lead a legacy full of possibility.

Quoting himself:

Subdue the sorcerer seduce  
There's a reason you're the prime example  
Take a step back from the big kids table  
Most are still on the skids  
It couldn't get worse  
Why else would you gamble



**Ejay Battles** (They/Them)

Instagram: [@ejaybattles](https://www.instagram.com/ejaybattles)

I am an illustrator and tattoo artist based in Queens, NY. I delve into the complexities of the human psychology behind interpersonal bonds, the environments we surround ourselves with and how those things shape the queer and human experience with a touch of surreal and dark humor. With a distinctive style that challenges traditional narratives, my work invites viewers to engage with the deeper, often unseen, layers of connection and identity.

**KJ**

KJ is a 25 year old trans and non-binary person based in Brooklyn, NY. He is a recent graduate student from Smith College studying clinical social work and truly loves what he is learning and the work he's doing. KJ loves to write poetry, make collages, drink lots of tea, read at the park, spend time with friends, swim, and watch dumb movies. KJ loves to explore the concepts of grief and transformation in the poetry they write and the art they make. They have made two poetry zines over the last few years with over 60 poems and 20 collages inside – a start to their dream of publishing a poetry book one day. KJ is grateful to be here on this earth and get to exist alongside so many beautiful living things





## Joe Miletta

Instagram: [@itsupsideowntho](#)

I'm an ageless gay pisces living in Washington D.C. hehe. I have written poetry as an outlet my whole life and was first published when I was in 6th grade. My poetry tends to be on the darker side since it's an emotional outlet for me. I work in nonprofits, love animals and have a beautiful pittie who is deaf. My typical weekend involves dancing, movies, overthinking everything, and hiking.



**DeepSpite** a.k.a. Hal  
Instagram: [@deepspite](#)

Going by DeepSpite, Hal is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Powered by spite and love, they have been doing photography and drawing. They just started to delve into zine making and riso printing. Their first riso printed zine about dog photos was completed this past summer. More details could be found on their instagram.

## DONNIE

*Quincy Cain*

Taught me well  
License to kill  
Hard to distinguish the olive branch from the hottentot relinquish  
Delectable like Hansel and Gretel  
“Can I call you rose?”  
As you’re wilting off the petals  
Walking the plank feather heavy  
Asylum I prayed for  
Silence from the waffling bevv  
No matter what was promised  
A cigarette and a coffee stands as the best and final offer  
Half a deck  
Full monty  
Bound to oblige to the common denominator  
Donnie  
You’re my time bomb to ego  
Earth to echo



### 6 Letter Word

*KJ Quick*

I wish I was the rose tattoo on your right arm,  
the one you got in New York that one time when I was dead in your head because it  
stays with you forever  
inside of your skin like a monster  
gets to wake up with you when you’re sick  
gets to shower with you drunk in the dark  
be there when you cry and lie to the next girl  
and one day it’ll die with you  
and I’ll be nowhere  
to be found  
you didn’t want me around  
I know I know I know

## I'm the Bad Guy

*Joe Milette*

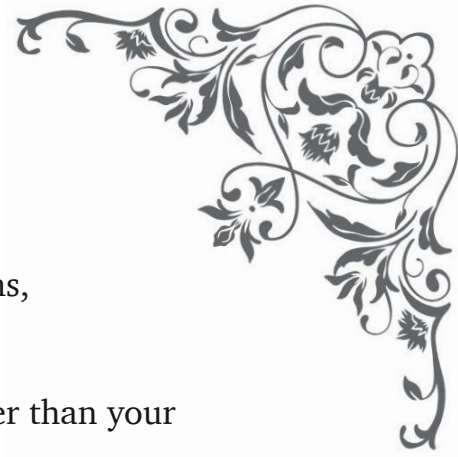
My bloody cuticles stain the bed as I am weary of your intentions,  
fixated on love songs never meant for me.

Your handlers, your interpreters, may consider their profit higher than your  
gospel. They are disguised as historians and preservationists,  
and follow you as far as you allow them to whore you.

But at once I feel resentment,  
guardedness deflecting commonalities as the hoards savagely consume your  
beauty; and you maintain your dignity and purpose as effortlessly as I maintain  
my contempt.

Perhaps it is you who should be weary of me, my paradox;  
depicted in lies until perceptions are grounded in falsities and twined carelessly  
with truths, leaving me unable to distinguish my preferences for a scent, a taste,  
or the size of your cock; but my projections can't be reciprocated by your  
ascended nature.

Do I thank your pimps for this realization,  
or condemn them for perpetuating the falsity of your bounds?  
Before my eyes leave you, I kneel in confusion,  
my buried truths awaiting trial—years passed as scars imprisoned them;  
pride and embarrassment swirling as clicks and flashes envelop us,  
bleached away like the sun.





**deroB gnikcuF oS m'I**

Ejay Battlest



## **Kids**

*KJ Quick*

All I knew was you and running away.  
My city, my loneliness hiding under the Washington Square Park benches and the  
bottles in the shape of absent fathers.  
My friends loved me and my heart lived in every home but mine.  
And I know I could've stayed, but I didn't and now that's everyone else's sadness  
to hold. I didn't know that's how it works.

Do you remember that night I hit my fist against the brick wall? I meant to say I  
love you. but you already know, and I did - I loved you before you existed in my  
bumfuck heart, always looking for a few bucks to get something to eat with my  
family, the chosen one.

And it was enough to know this city and the broken teeth of all my griptape lovers  
and police shovers.

The kids of tragic tales, my youth memorialized on a VHS I never really got to  
touch. And I didn't get to say goodbye to the underground arteries and the  
fountain dried up in the winter, flooding with hope and my friends' grief.  
Ultimately, I couldn't stay and the good felt so far away. I couldn't stay.

## **OCD**

*Joe Miletti*

Crowded obsessions causing clumsy compulsions breeding brain emulsions.  
I'd heal my infection of perceived perfection,  
but I fail without a trail to connect the scattered dots;  
for god's sake please make it stop.  
But you can't save me from my selective serotonin or my endless contradictions.  
Doped and mean, I'm dopa-MEAN, somebody find me dopamine.  
I'm screaming from my frontal lobe your conversations, verbal strobe.  
I'm obsessed with continuing this poem, this thread,  
as unresolved trauma swells my head,  
because once I stop: "hello there, dread."



**Scorcher**  
*Quincy Cain*

Chock-full of apparent wrong turns  
Chalk it up to the chasm churned in the chopped waters  
Prolonging inevitable  
Hermit mode  
High alert  
Jupiter rears a blind eye as paris burns  
Crisis averted  
Think about the cherry pick position for the marksman precision  
Daring to pick up and follow  
We all speak myths to soothe the pyrrhic prevail atop the behemoth  
The power struggle for acceptance or truth  
Icarus and Apollo

**SobRIOTy**

*Joe Miletti*

Authenticity prioritized over moralism at the risk of guilt and contrition.  
Trading one curse for the next, under the guise of freedom and self-empowerment.  
The curse, dutiful to its cause, has come to possess my body,  
like a dejected genie ready to twist my wishes in exchange for their freedom.  
Sobriety has betrayed me, an illusion of fidelity, trading one disease for the next.  
And then I was reminded of you, old friend;  
anxiety flared, eyes widened, I pushed you under water.  
Surprisingly you submitted, but this time I let go,  
as you gasped for air and settled back into me.  
Two versions married, distorted by time and movement,  
widowed by cancer and buried together in smoke.  
Too tangled to decipher a cause and too optimistic to cause concern,  
the tangle winds tight into my face until I feel comfortable as a monster.  
When you abandon me, I shall weave into your subconscious and ripple in  
perpetuity.

## Rose 31

*KJ Quick*

Grief shaped like a car, a hit and run on a highway by the JCPenney.

A mouth too proud to smoke a cigarette, a mouth dumb enough to eat one. A rose in the shape of a number, two cans of hope crushed on the ground. You weren't around to see it.

The woman on the sidewalk had a stroke but I was just looking for you. The alarms made their sounds, the ambulance - a sad, tragic kind of red. I paid no attention. The alarms weren't you.

A movie theater emptied out at 9:00 o'clock, car doors opened and closed but I couldn't bring myself to go.

Lights - big, fluorescent ones - poured out into sinking, sunk eyes.

The heart is too tired to try again. Not now.

In the end, I always stay quiet but I look for you in every room.



**a closeted gay yearning for another  
deepspite**

## Sylvia Plath

*KJ Quick*

She was just a girl, with a weight that couldn't be carried by that big of a wounded heart. A bad start in the world.

She knew ivy well, and books too, but front porches were her heaven and hell. An escape plan gone wrong, her family heard the song of a girl who should've been long gone.

The aches dwindled and dwindled, there was no relief. Not in the western hemisphere, not in the Connecticut river, and never in the valley. The aches became a friend, a teacher, a paycheck. The light left early one day never to return. And the uncertainty, the undeserving-ness, the worry of being a woman who had it all - well, it was a big rush of too much.

Do you know how you'd hold all that heart heaviness? I don't. The burden of being worth something outweighed everything else. The books weren't enough to save her. love almost was, the hand of a young heartbeat almost was, but ultimately still not. The heat took her away, the blaze of the faraway sun welcomed her in. Finally the light, something she'd been searching for as long as her girl-heart started beating - against her will.

A tragedy, without a doubt. a tragedy of triumph too big it tore a Massachusetts marvel down, no sound heard through the door and the soft towels on the floor. A life of living to die.

**Howard**  
*Quincy Cain*

Tracing the crumbs back to clinging on family thumbs  
Lump sum of crabby collaborators  
Irreparable credit  
When my dad and I share an abstract lachrymator  
Licking my wounds  
As they lick their spit  
Lost it at hello  
Hop off the porch  
Just to never leave once you step in it  
Now your simple joy is a so called clairvoyance  
Knock me down a peg  
Ax equipped against robust flamboyance  
Saddest thing is you almost had me convinced  
Wasted talent  
Time honored ineptitude







**daydreaming about egg tarts**  
deepspite



**Peachy**  
deepspite





## **Undergrowth**

Ejay Battlest



## You're the Bad Guy

*Joe Milette*

You live with your secrets, but I died with them too.

You masquerade as levity and freedom,  
an aura covertly present as a chameleon floating through a rainbow.  
Even the neighbors hear the bells gleefully pulsate as you mask my importance with  
your ego, thriving as we meet in symbiosis, my happiness uncorrelated.

I feel weak admitting that time, while faded your abuse, left me alone with your  
chivalry.

My self-restraint relies on my intellect now, an underdog to my blood and pulse.  
If I say I miss you, how long until I need you?

**"I miss you."**

*Buh-bum. Buh-bum. Buh-bum.*

I am brainwashed with no specific recollection of your manipulations.

*Buh-bum. Buh-bum. Buh-bum.*

You, patient and insidious predator, have poisoned me, and I can feel your residue  
on my marbled skin, mixed with the rage I have for your power.

I can conjure your narcissistic ways as they haunt instantly and repeatedly until I  
love you again, and as smoke escapes my smiling mouth, I root for you to validate  
me and pray we are defeated.



**1/4 of my pre existence**  
Tatianna Pizarro



# SUBMISSION INFORMATION

We are looking for all types of writers and artists that are queer. The point of this is to showcase all queer people and make sure their work is seen.

## **Short Stories**

We accept fiction, non-fiction, comedies, drama and magical realism stories. They can be up to 5 pages long, double-spaced.

## **Poems and lyrics**

All types of poetry and lyrics will be accepted. They can be up to 2 pages long, double-spaced.

## **Artwork**

Art such as paintings, photographs, sculptures (photo of it), and digital art will be accepted.

*\*All works have to be original. No A.I. work of any kind will be accepted.*

*\*Hate speech or violence will not be accepted*

You can submit up to 4 works. Be sure that your submissions have never been published before. If you are submitting more than one piece, be sure to include them all in the same email including your name, a few sentences about yourself and your work. Email your work to **projectdotelixir@gmail.com** as .docx or .pdf file.

Visit our website <https://projectdotelixir.com/>

Follow our Instagram [@project.elixir](https://www.instagram.com/project.elixir)

# LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

If you are struggling or know someone who is struggling and need help please, look into the resources below. You are not alone. You are loved and you matter.

Here are some links to resources and support. Whether it may be therapy, community or wanting to know how to support an LGBTQ+ person, there are options in the links. Click them to find what you may need. Some are NYC based.

<https://gaycenter.org/resources/>

<https://glaad.org/resourcelist/>

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/>

<https://pflag.org/find-resources/>

## **HOTLINE PHONE NUMBERS TO CALL**

The Network/La Red (domestic violence)

<https://www.tnlr.org/en/24-hour-hotline/>

24 hour hotline 800-832-1901 (Toll-Free)

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

[https://988lifeline.org/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=onebox](https://988lifeline.org/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=onebox)

24 hour hotline dial 988

RAINN

National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline

<https://rainn.org/resources>

800-656-4673