# ✱✱ DEAR FRIEND,

I've been missing you. This morning I woke up before the sun, thinking about you. I knew that I had to write. I miss running into you. I miss meeting you for the first time, seeing you up close, walking beside you, catching up, hanging out, eating breakfast together, seeing your studio, meeting your friends, hearing your voice in the room. In the absence of these things, I listen, and do time travel. It's a way to keep going. I do it here in the library, finding things and bringing them into the present, so I've been thinking about how to share some of that with you. This letter is a small gesture, a gift, a signal, something to send out, something to do when bodies stay home, when we miss it all, and we wish for more.

June Jordan wrote about the library as *a sanctuary from the spectacle*. I found those words online and printed them out and put them here in the library, a small collection of zines and physical books and objects that we take care of at Queer. Archive.Work, across the street from Club Fantasies in Providence. Please come by and visit. We have Open Library Hours on Sundays, usually 12–3pm and the exact address is 400 Harris Avenue. The space changes every day, depending on who's here and what's happening. It's also a print and publishing studio, with Binch Press, so there's a lot of work going on too. It's a queer place for about 50 residents, members, and organizers, without many of the pressures that you'd expect in academia or traditional art world spaces, or even in some alternative art spaces. It's been such a sanctuary for us. Yes, it's *far from spectacle*, but it's not a hiding place. We gather, hang out, browse, read, write, and rest, in porous presence with each other. But we're also building something, support structures for living and working in crisis and thriving in community. We organize, learn, teach, practice, print, make, nourish, laugh together.
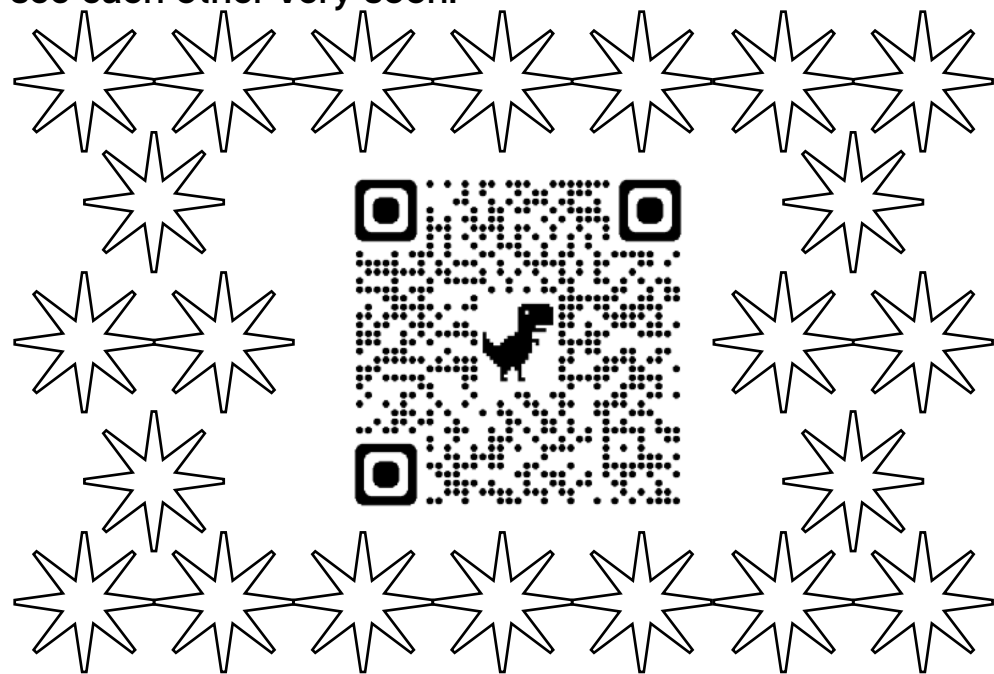
This is new work for me. I grew up in the US in the 70s and 80s, raised to believe in the individual, the empowered artist or designer or business person, the lonely figure of exceptional success. Trust no one, protect yourself, be ambitious, *rise to the top*. Ugh, I'm really trying to shift this now, from *me* to *we*. No rising, just reaching around and stretching with others. Things aren't going so well in the world, and we're not going to make it better with a land grab and a tiny house. Collective work is hard, but it's happening. I'm learning about communal power. I don't think there's any real way to do it except to do it. It's queer work, because each time we gather together without guarantees or predictable results or a hero leading the way forward, we push up against heteropatriarchy and refuse to play by those old rules.

Another thing we do in the library is publish. There's an SF9450 Risograph printer right there next to the shelves, a duplicator that I purchased a few years ago. We've got fluorescent pink, black, yellow, kelly green, burgundy, scarlet, purple, and aqua inks. It's connected to a computer so we can send PDFs to print but I really like to scan things directly on the flatbed. No InDesign, no grids, not much design at all, just using the riso printer as a camera that sees whatever I bring to the glass. It's such a beautiful machine, and I can use it to scan the library, one page at a time. This seeing-printer is how I made our most recent book, *resting reader*. I took all of its pages from our library shelves and printed 100 copies, and bound them on our Horizon BQ-140 perfect binder. The texts came together quickly while Omicron was spreading in December 2021. We had to stay isolated at a moment when I really wanted to engage, so I found ways to connect in the sanctuary. Gathered together in *resting reader* are these partners in time travel: Kendrick Daye, Kevin Quashie, Barbara Smith, June Jordan, 3rd World Gay Revolution, Dean Spade, The Care Collective, be oakley, Lin Marie Tonstad, adrienne maree brown, Thista Minai, Demian DinéYazhi', Alok Vaid-Menon, Sylvia Rivera, Dr. Erwin Lichtenegger and Dr. Lore Kutschera, The Spore Liberation Front, Eli Nixon, David Griffiths, noraa neither kaplan, Sara Ahmed, bell hooks & K Laster, Danielle Aubert, and the gay graphics collective. This book is some evidence of a moment, an ongoing moment. It's time travel because it contains the past, but it's about the future. Welcome to its future.

I decided to put "survival by sharing" on the cover of *resting reader*. It's a phrase I found in the QAW library in Danielle Aubert's book *The Detroit Printing Co-op* (2019), first used by Come!Unity Press, a "24-hour open access print shop run by a gay anarchist collective" in NYC in the 70s. I'm planning to visit their archives at NYU soon to see what else I can learn. We humbly revive their *survival by sharing* ethos now, fifty years later, in work like *resting reader* and in everything we do at the Binch/QAW studio. I sent 50 copies out in the mail, and the rest will be distributed here in person, when it's safe to do so.

I invite you to download a PDF version of *resting reader* right now, scanned from a printed copy. There's no real theme to this book, just some language that you may notice: rest, quiet, care, queer, sanctuary, reflection, collective, contamination, labor, joy, generosity. It's a reflective response to the *Urgency Readers* that we published over the last few years, and the focus on speed, crisis, and refusal in those volumes. The urgency isn't over and it didn't go anywhere; it's right here in this letter. But this reader comes after that. Take your time. I hope you enjoy it, and that we'll see each other very soon.

# WITH YOU, PAUL SOULELLIS