



QUEER COMPASS

Poet Andrea Gibson speaks their truth

Coming out is a second puberty. If you're lucky, you have a support network and a warm home to drink tea in at the end of the day. For a chunk of queer folks, however, we're left to draw our own map of a world that we've finally pulled back the curtain on.

Spoken word poet **Andrea Gibson** is one of dozens of queer pioneers who use their art as a compass — a creative harbinger to carve a path for the greater queer community.

Gibson grew up in the woods of Maine, was raised Baptist and attended a Catholic college. Their (the gender-neutral pronoun Gibson prefers) queerness was evident at a young age, as Gibson explains in their piece "Andrew": "Barbies suck, Lynette / and for that matter, Tommy, so does G.I. Joe!"

As soon as Gibson graduated, they threw themselves into their queer identity. Angry, angsty and curious, Gibson joined multi-media performance group Vox Feminista. Vox was a stepping stone for Gibson, who found their voice through writing and performing poetry.

Six books and albums later, Gibson has sculpted an identity through story telling. Their words are the tide, tumultuous and then quiet, which creates an experience as bumpy as growing into oneself. Gibson's most recent album, *HEY GALAXY* (2017), takes a deep dive into the forest of queer rights, experience and stories.

Throughout the album, Gibson cries out in anger, swoons over lovers and writes an open letter to their dog, Squash, about the weird, two-legged creatures that insist on pooping indoors. At the end of every trail Gibson carves with their words, it's irresistible for the listener to take a deep, cathartic breath.

Embrace your own queer path with Andrea Gibson and powerhouse folk artist Chastity Brown 7 pm Wednesday, April 11, at WOW Hall; tickets \$13 in advance, \$16 day of. \$1 for each ticket sold will be donated to Black Lives Matter.

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