

DANIEL SWAIN

Personal Essay

Every sentence could be more specific—he said, his hand on my leg. I protest but I also take notes, edit. This paragraph didn't make the draft, but it is still material. I say: the requisite specificity would take my entire life; it would include this moment, a paragraph that we're authoring now. That's poetry, he says, his hand moving upwards. Now, I am raising awareness, ghosts, a glass. Every sentence is a report issued from the moment before, merely language but also something more.

I hope I don't worry you. I don't think about you, he says, with his fingers in my mouth, we're at his favourite bar and he presses my flushed face on a table. His fingers flip vertical and I don't bite. Jaw-wide: I tighten and loosen the back of my throat as if to say, *that's* poetry. I'm thematising, arcing, coiling.

Post-therapy a body becomes shareable/content. I hold the counter-weight of a sentence. Trauma splits time, takes time. Rape delays, arrests the victim, and the event—unprocessed—proceeds. But isn't heterosexuality an event? (Whiteness? Maleness?) Time laid end-to-end: just comfortless infinities, prone. The section on my most recent violation, will it date? It's updatable, he reminds me. There are post-submission revisions.

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You enter a clearing. Teal-cream gum trees, and a car parked. The driver door ajar and howling for two. You find me cooling my cheek against a blood-smearred window and authoring a memory that includes you, and not him, and the unfastening of a different belt; I feel my weight in your arms. In this scene of rescue, I turn to you and whisper its theme.

Daniel Swain is a Sydney based writer, currently completing a doctorate on contemporary queer politics. His work has appeared in *Rabbit*, *Cordite* and *Archer* and his

chapbook of prose-poems will be published by Slow Loris/Puncher & Wattman later this year.