

Straight lines
DANIEL NOUR

Are you sure you're gay?

Change the measuring stick and you'll have to find a new way
to apply for a visa, to a promised land, to visibility, dignified,
proudly queer or here or whatever it takes to swing your hips
and lilt your voice and be more than just a square,
stickler in the mud, in the closet:
a place for storage, not for living
a place unfit for human habitation.

What is a queer anyway?

Rulers also measure bent lines:
but straight ones sometimes bend, don't they?

Gay boy with the dolls in his gidoo's shed,
queer boy with the funny walk,
nerdy fag with the funny way of en-un-ci-at-ing, every vowel.
'Rabena yeshfee,' teta says, 'May God heal.'

Hated soccer, all that edgy competition, tedious brinkmanship.
Don't you know how to kick the goal or shoot your shot?
Again and again to Bel Ami boys, European twinks, British hunks,

American spunk: groaning, fuck me harder, spitting,
cumming to a finish but still...
missing the mark.

In Greek, sin translates 'not quite enough'.
Penal substitutionary atonement, penis, in church,
out of my mind, then in my hand.

Sunday morning is for praying, for redemption, or validation,
or, just someone *else* to crucify.
Crosses too are made of straight lines.

Like my parents' steps, from an immigration office at Cairo Airport,
to a red brick apartment somewhere in the Inner West,
so like the inner place where I, still further West of centre,
moan:

'Call me daddy,'
to the temporary visa holder,
who is tonight,
staring up at me,
with bent back.
Neither of us gay,
but not quite straight either.

Ecstasy knows no measure.