

Masculinities

Dominic Symes

when he hugs his opponent
really he is grasping at himself
the sweat & blood co-mingles
to mask the tears that swell like bitten lips
his head at rest on his shoulder
out to kill the mess of pronouns
which in the hard relief of this moment
are as indiscernible
as clothes shed on a bedroom floor
like a waterfall in slow motion
acknowledging the body's limit
a cascade of limbs burning
seeing the dust lift itself
off the canvas that pit of fire
spitting embers
while he should be keeping well away
instead he steps
behind the sheet of water
& into the cavern of noise
reverberating through the still air
as the referee steps in
pulling them apart

Dominic Symes lives and writes in Naarm (Melbourne). His poetry and criticism have appeared in *Overland*, *Cordite*, *Australian Book Review*, *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Axon: Creative Explorations* amongst others. He is the editor for reviews at *TEXT Journal* and a PhD graduate from the University of Adelaide.