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DOUGLAS GOETSCH

No Homo

The boys in the jail say it like an insurance policy,
as in *Yo son no homo but that nigga was big!*
because if one forgets no homo the others pounce—
Aw that's that homo shit!—which happens
sometimes when we're reading aloud and get
to the word *love* or *body* or *swallow* or *bend*.
When they think my pants are too tight I hear
fuckin faggot under their breath, or *Yo I think*
we got a fuGAYzi here. So I go down to the gym
and hit a few shots from downtown to shut
down that homo shit, you might say; let them
debate instead if a *nigga* can braid another
nigga's hair or does it have to be a *bitch*?

When I congratulate Luís on his execution
of the two-no homo sentence—*No homo B.*
but your test was long and it was no homo hard—
he cocks his head and looks at me funny.
I don't know what Patrick is thinking when he says
No homo Goetsch but that's a nice radio, but I do know
the small kids say it more than the big ones, and no amount
of no homo will help where some of them are going
to get initiated by someone who's also not a homo—
as if that mattered. Sometimes they come for a kid
in the middle of class: *C'mon Deshawn you goin'*
upstate, and little Deshawn gets a ritual pound
and half a hug from every boy in the room.