

# New Poetry from Sam Ambler: “Gnats” and “Made Him Strong”



OUR STRUGGLING LIMBS / *image by*  
*Amalie Flynn*

## **GNATS**

Evening fire sparking over Sutro's rim,  
igniting cirrus dragons drifting away from the sun.  
Jules and I, enthralled.  
Sitting placid on the stoop outside our home.  
Cuddling.

They swarm out of the alley from behind.  
Catching us. Latching hold onto each  
of our struggling limbs.

Like gnats they buzz: *"Faggots!"*

Stuff socks in our mouths.

Drag us to dark playgrounds, the depth of sandboxes.

Fists in our faces. Cleats. Blood. Pipes.

Bone splinters under their boots.

Cold chains gird my torso. Handcuffs biting wrists.

One yanks my hair back:

*"Look what happens to motherfucking queers!"*

They rip Jules' pants apart. Jules' teeth buried in cotton.

Fingers splayed, broken. Knees popped out of sockets.

Ass opened.

Laughing. Noses dripping.

One forces my eyelids like a glassless monocle.

Jagged bottle crammed past Jules' sphincter.

Jules passing out.

Leather circling around. Beating shafts of meat.

Ejaculating on Jules. Laughing.

Jules coughing. Crawling.

As they flit past his sod-bed,

Jules swats at gnats.

## **MADE HIM STRONG**

From an early age, he knew he was not, could not be,

like other boys. He was fine with that. It made him strong.