

THE LAST BARRIER

OUYANG YU

there is no racism in australia
only the language

the language of a people
rightly selected from the beginning

who closely embrace all the migrants
within the language

of departments dominated
by oxbridge

who know how to maintain
the purity of a language

of government officials
whose duty it is to be

linguistically correct
so that asian must sound like asiatic

and celebrate multifacets of an ism
with this single language

of hard, and subtle, examiners
who know how to monitor the progress

of an examination
that started as early as the birth

of this nation
down to the last word:

oh
straight
liar

Author Note

Ouyang Yu is a leading Chinese-Australian poet whose poetry has appeared in magazines and literary journals around the world. His poem "The Last Barrier" was published in *Foreign Matter* (2003) by Otherland Publishing. It is also a self-publication by Yu who won the Fast Books Prize for Best Poetry in the self-published category

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