

one full Black lily
luminescent
in a homemade field

June Jordan

Consequences of the laws of thermodynamics

When Albert Murray said
the second law adds up to
the blues that in other words
ain't nothing nothing he meant it

not quite the way my pops says
nomads don't show emotions
but more how my grandmother
warned that men like women

with soft hands blood red
nails like how Mingus meant
truth if you had time for it
facts if you got no time that

years pass. Zero
one two three and
the man you used

to flirt with you
no longer flirt with
thank goodness.

He's now a man
you can't wear
your jaw out on

about weather
news or work

a perfect
strawberry

buried
beneath

a peck.

Paleontology

I step from the airplane. My hair melts dead air. I walk quickly: click-clunk, click-clunk, click-clunk. Barbara Jordan, bronze and sober, glasses poised, the last me I'll see for three more days and three more days forever. Outside I slow the click-clunk to a three-sound crawl: click-clickclunk &etc. I am a woolly mammoth waiting at the cab stand. I am a woolly mammoth stuffed into a cab. I bear the long silence of my own extinction through the rear view. My head on the back seat: horns akimbo: I melt dead air. Blame humans for the loss of large mammals like myself, a new study suggests. My cousin tuktuks my husk to a dry diorama. The radio blares: "The tide is high." The radio sings: "I'm gonna be your number one."

Synchronous rotation

After Dizzy rolled Bags Jackson
and his vibes outta Detroit

Bags wrote his love songs in
the minor keys. Said the minor

registers the heart. The magnet
of us: iron filings thrown up

the greedy gullet of space
before one turn humbles

another slow as hours plucked
through catgut blue. Please,

the old song goes, send me
someone to love. Me? Who

am I kidding? Every day I meet
some minor love or two.

Hey you:

let's toss our tarantellas
across the tracks. Let's

reveal one another
bit by puckered bit. Let's

emit this fit of heat
before we burn.

Or let's burn.

Notions of temperature

bold as gonzo bumming our smokes two grackles top an aspen branch

again : again

to suffer

from the vulgar latin original meaning undergo meaning endure

fulcanelli

cold-hearted fuck

transmogrify

this bastard luck

cassini-huygens

we need some tit-

ian water for our thirst

to suffer

compare old french sofrir meaning accept

meaning tolerate meaning breathless meaning

breathless our grackles drip ash : drip

feed them our yew trees someone says

swat them their flies someone won't stop saying

Blackbody curve

Stairs: a rushed flight down thirty-eight; French doors unlocked always.

Always: a lie; an argument.

Argument: two buck hunters circle a meadow's edge.

Edge: one of us outside bleeding.

Bleeding: shards of glass; doors locked.

Locked: carpet awash with blood.

Blood: lift and drop; a sudden breeze.

Breeze: its whistle though bone.

Bone: the other was looking at —

Bone: cradled to catch drips.

Drips: quiet as a meadow fawn.

Fawn: faces down each hunter each gun.

Gun: again.

Again: somebody call someone.

Someone: almost always prefers forgetting.

Forgetting: an argument; a lie.

Lie: a meadow; a casement; a stair.