

Deborah Paredez

# Lightening

— for Deborah Johnson (Akua Njeri)

*Composed on the 45th anniversary of Fred Hampton's murder, Chicago IL*

you didn't look  
    down or back, spent  
the fractured minutes  
    studying each crease  
and curve of the law-  
    men's faces  
so later you could tell  
    how it happened:  
how you crossed over  
    his body, how you kept  
your hands up  
    how you didn't  
reach for anything  
    not your opened robe—  
nothing—how they said he's good  
    and dead  
how you crossed  
    over the threshold



how you lifted one  
and then the other  
slipperd foot across the ice  
how you kept herself  
from falling—how  
your bared belly bore  
the revolver's burrowing snout—  
how  
how  
—how when the baby starts  
to descend, it's called  
lightening though  
it feels like a weight  
you cannot bear—lightening  
is when you know  
it won't be  
long before it's over

