

Jane Huffman

There Is No Blue Without Yellow and Orange

I invented a sign language for a silent generation
of fingerspellers and waterdwellers who canoe

down the straits of open palms, mining for orange
rinds and methamphetamine and bricks of sulfur.



fig. 118: the western passage of forefinger and thumb

A people who burn their tea trees to watch the cicadas
suffocate because they despise anything that sings.

I invented a sign language for the color makers, the
fingerpainters, who keep gardens of cerulean and



fig. 201: one dead cicada (see fig. 202 for plural)

champagne and atomic tangerine. They catalog it
precisely (winter is approaching, and with it, yields of

bluebonnet blue). They'll harvest it in wicker bags
and clean shoes. I taught them how to whistle.



Jane Huffman



fig. 234: the whistled melody of “lavender’s blue”

I invented a sign language for a woman with
cicada wings on her eyelashes who showed me how

periwinkle comes from horse sweat and radio static
and a sprig of early April and something else secret.



fig. 380: the secret ingredient in the recipe for periwinkle.

Once I asked an old man how to make the perfect shade
of yellow. He laughed and raised a pinky finger to the clouds.

