

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

