

Out in the Country of My Country – June Jordan

Peterborough, New Hampshire

Filling my eyes with flowers of no name
that I can call aloud: This northernmost retreat
of white pine or aching birch
of meadow mouth opening the body of a perfect land
that throws away birdsong on the rushes
if hard rain

Testing my heart with precipice and crest
accumulating timber trails or fern
beside the mica sparkling road that peaks
at mountain heights of granite situated
next to purple lilac feeling out the light
of short cold days

Choosing my mind between mosquitos and the moon
that dominates a darkness larger than the stars
close by: I (what do you suppose)
I battle with the spirits of a winterkill
that spoils the summer berries: Blunts the nipple points
of love

Chasing my face among displacements of a stream
I behold the Indian: I become the slave
again I am hunting/I am hunted in these snowy woods
again I am eagle/I am scrambling on the summit rocks
I slip I scream I soar I seek the dancing of the spirits
from the grave