

Dominant orientation lights a corridor wide as Mexico's northern
border

Upon return everything left was
unopened, consumed by humans,
destroyed by humans, or animalized.

One hopes the bees, hiving,
dying in foul-smelling clumps
are not *Africanized*.

The increasing aftermath of invasion.

The wounds, amber-overtaken
near-lovely in the morning.

The first recorded dead
remained unidentifiable to the officers. Lost to exposure.

What to do with a Negro in the desert. Or all of them after.

In dry orchards out of season.

Among cotton.

Saguaro picked by wrens.

Exposure precedes the realization
of an identity or fact.

State of being exposed
to contact with something else.

Even when making very little noise.

The soldiers.

Pissing behind creosote. Or elegant
on their horses lined to enter the corral.

Entering each morning before the mountain
silhouettes. A cold hand to unlace the erroneous
and unfortunately pussing stitch.

The hand incorporated along
emotional fields of decay.

The chain cholla fruit then fall. Soil
in Sonora softens according to the rain.

Offering every explanation in full.
Without saying shit. Without gentleness
or stepping back from the officers' science.

Or from how white supremacist they really are.

At the center of the explanation
sits a small box. And to this box
the beetle larvae arrive to feed.

Among legal understandings
of Natural Life in the United States is
the sentence.

As in, for the length of one's natural life.

(There, standing. The distance
of their body to a door cracked
alone in the desert. Irrefutable music.)

The sentence of Natural Life, unlike the sentence of Life, doesn't allow for the possibility of parole.

Which was anyway discontinued in Arizona in 1993 when the possibility of parole was replaced with that of release. A process that remains judicially vague.

Among peoples in the United States
Indigenous peoples are incarcerated
at the highest rates per capita.

Among Blacks the carceral industry
(regardless the branching of orchards and
centuries of trees)
finds its critical mass.

Every sentence harbors a unique end. That is its gift.
Night opens a jagged scar.

Soft purple signals the end
of night in Southern Arizona.

Tree frogs retreat in the depths of winter.
Their bodies appear lifeless. As do certain
moths

that avoid internal freezing by purging
their guts.

After the last music.

A man, then unidentified
found FULLY FLESHED; CONDITION CODE 1.

From which water flows north.
PROBABLE ELECTROCUTION
located in a database of migrant deaths.

His coordinates crossed by desert jaguars reliant
on streams.

His coordinates are passed through the beetle's
gentle bowels.

And those of the Bell's vireo.

Identified by a two-part structure.
His definitive response and water
down his slender, grayed breast.

Beneath the cottonwood's
gold-filtered crown.

Where the lowland leopard frog remains moist.

The large cat's paw print remains fresh in the soil.

After the last music.

Tubman and Whitney hike Brown Canyon. They spot a rare beardless-tyrannulet (did she appear from nowhere?) hugging parched northern boundaries of her species range.

A Mexican jaguar treads backward to observe her melancholic refrain.

It's without their interest that the
Department of Interior studies
effects of stress and fire on vegetation via high-rise
high-res satellite phenomics.

No two droughts are alike.

The earliest Negro recorded dead in Arizona was unidentified.

Having not survived probable hypothermia.

Exposure. Blunt force.

Force accumulates behind the skull
to bear centuries of afterlife and pulp.

The afterlife of being chatteled. Of being made
a glorified mercenary or buffoon.

Hanging naked in the moon's light. Where there is no substitute for the
adjunct feeling.
Coerced into foul-smelling clumps.

Let's say the force requires a hand.
Or an industry. At whatever temperature.
More land.

Let's say some records
are not good.

Or, the pulp is blooming.

And the hands they return
not destroyed exactly
but smelling lonely and of death.