

Elizabeth Hay / JAZZ POEMS

JAZZ

hot piano
ivory
 in the left eye at
5 o'clock

jazz

birds are on the carpet
brilliant
Persian

they come out of my mouth

the restaurant was very dark
you asked the piano player what he was playing
we walked under the streetlights

jazz

(birds fly through snow

catch in the shutter
a finger
at the waist
in the eye
slammed
by light

in the eye the heart

jazz

NEW ORLEANS / YELLOWKNIFE

I

jazz New Orleans/Yellowknife
 saxophone/raven

 never been to New Orleans
never seen a picture
 of New Orleans

jazz sax
hot instrument
cold bird
same sound
squawk

I hear them on the roof
noises, walking

a saxophone player in New Orleans

here — a little snow
and ravens



II

jazz/Yellowknife

they play Desmond's Take Five
they get it on the second try

jazz makes sense
people want warm weather the music has a longing

light like a saxophone

III

tickle the ivories
hard and cold

geese
are dead and soft

Sophie Football came out of the bar and slid
into a snowbank

and slept
and died

Sophie was soft and hard and cold and dead

and dead

how long before she died

IV

Sophie Football wore red

I imagine they wear red in New Orleans

Sophie sings

they sing in New Orleans

Sophie sang in chiffon

frothy — seafoam

turns to snow

dies in snow

desire

drunk

V

how does Summertime sound

hot

nervous
— New Orleans

a screen door bangs

a

leg
into summer

piano starts here

VI

found
a picture of New Orleans

a body after snow melts
Sophie
untouched by ravens