

June Jordan

MID-YEAR REPORT: FOR HARUKO

By this time
20,000 Tutsi had been slaughtered
by Hutus using machetes
and I could not remember exactly the last time
I held you in my arms

By this time
it was hot where you live
and foggy and cool where I
sat working away on songs
about romance more daily
than fat free
cappucino

By this time
100% cotton tee shirts for O.J. Simpson sold
really well at twelve dollars
a pop and
his swell new girl friend
swore
he never
ever
hit her

By this time
you were farming trees
for Christmas
in the middle of July
while I was taking flowers
out of the garden
and putting in stones
and rocks
and boulders

By this time
O.J. Simpson hired ten attorneys
each of them a flat fee candidate
for half a million dollars
and
by this time
nobody could name the children
of Nicole

By this time
200,000 Tutsi had been slaughtered
by Hutu homicidal maniacs
and not one European
and not one African
and not one Asian
and not one U.S. of A. anybody
had done
one
single thing
to intervene

By this time
American Armed Force Commanders argued
about whether or not
the U.N. owed them money
for parts to helicopters
that (anyway) left the States
too late
to mitigate the magnitude
to mitigate the gross
indignities
and terror
of Rwandan genocide

By this time
O.J. Simpson walked
“thumbs up” into court
and congress passed a 30 billion dollar
crime bill
irrelevant to female loneliness
inside the legal violence
of in-house
abuse

By this time
I couldn't look
anymore
at old photographs of your body
soft against the trees
about to fall
and
I couldn't look
anymore
at new photographs of babies
pulling at the arms
of dead mothers and dead brothers
nobody in Africa
nobody in Europe
nobody in Asia
nobody in these United States
gave a shit
about

By this time
I was reading your letters
all by myself
again
and I could not remember exactly the last time
I held you in my arms

Oh my love

The extinction of a people

The extinction of a life

The extinction of a love

is

like I cannot

remember what

exactly