

Oriole

The curtain shrouds my room my heart my lungs from Sahara's fine and dangerous dust  
Your hesitant scales cut the air I am silent at the window with my phone  
to catch your voice. Through my world's veil I capture your life's art, or try

It is one of five tunes you play, the one where you test the air  
You can hear my heart beating, I am sure though I think I am absolutely still  
just as I hear you shift on the branch. I know when you glide from soursop  
to guava I long to lay eyes on your careless vigilant beauty  
but you will be gone if the curtain shifts, if you hear my heart change, my weight fall

The curtain lifts lightly air whispers on my bare belly  
I let my arm fall to 90° so the blood fills my fingertips, four minutes in.

I delude myself I have captured you you are there, gone.

Are you here, singing this rare song, to celebrate  
yesterday's first rains, come too soon? Are you here to mourn the two lost weeks?

You have moved, and from the carambola I hear your other song, and then I know,  
what you sing, what we do, you on the branch, I in the house, listening invisible  
to each other's hearts, your need to keep moving, my jitter  
after a night without sleep, my hand suspended in the air your voice splits, your head  
on the curtained stage, bobbing as you listen to me  
the insects teeming at the root the quick wings of the next threat  
what I know now after years of inhaling the dust of my ancestors  
my heart's quiver is your song.