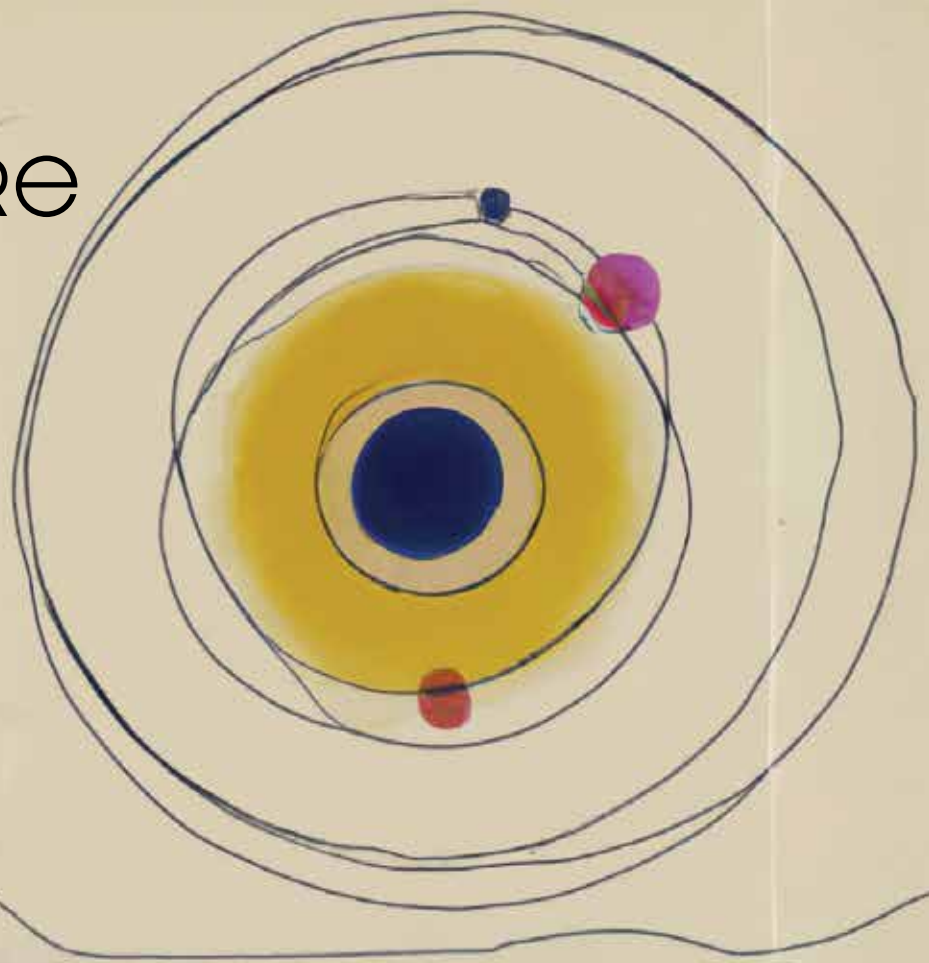




SOMEWHERE IN SUMMER

JORY MICKELSON



We got drunk in the tub and called
it ambition. Bought a polygraph and retold
the stories of our lives until they almost
sounded true. All summer, we kept sending
up rockets for the pleasure of their afterburn.
Squash vines crawled the neighbor's fence,
flowering pale accusations. The crows grew
listless as the sprinkler's lock-bent circles in the yard.
Everyone's uncle came to visit, smelling of cigarettes
and juniper. We only read books that were free,
their yellowed pages buckled and bled thru.
Every afternoon, a thunderstorm. Never rain.
The old town hall went up for sale. The kids
in the cul-de-sac stopped riding their bikes
to ask you a question. You answered, *only
the dark horse knows for sure*. From somewhere
a radio's songs hang in the air, split open
like tomatoes left too long on the vine. We almost
got the brokedown car to run. I wanted to
be foolish and beautiful like a boxer
warming up in the ring. You wanted nothing
except to ring the steel bell, the one that means begin.