

New Poetry by Matthew Hummer: “Amortization”



JUST SAY IT / image by Amalie Flynn

AMORTIZATION

Carl showed me the chart
years ago, when we first
thought to buy a house.
But we wouldn't write
a note saying she'd go back
to work the same hours
after birth. The under-
writer, in fluorescent office
by the two lane road
between golf course
and condo, wanted a wink-
wink. "Just say it." A lie
worth a sixty thousand
dollar house, brick
row home with sagging

window frames and tilted
doors. A loan unto
death. Camus, I think,
pointed that out. *Mort,*
en francais.

Dianoia: How
you've led me astray.
Res publica. Fasces.
Words and phrases we use
without knowing the root.
Character in the play. "History.
History!" Dag Nasty said
at the end of a song: *Now*
that it's gone just admit
it to yourself. Now that it's gone
just admit it to yourself.
Drum rapid as the rumble
of a gasoline engine—leaded.
Army green paint.
Nova; V-eight.
From stop to start, shifting
up from floor to top.
Another typical youth...

Thirty years to pay
it off. The life of the loan,
more than two dog lives.
Not the lifetime guarantee
of a washing machine—the expected
lifetime of the appliance. Five
years? Seven? Fifteen
before nineteen
eighty. The green fridge
next to the coffee pot
kept milk for decades.
Vietnam to Iraq, outlasting
the man smoking cigarettes
on the concrete patio, feeding
peanuts to squirrels and telling
a child about the Battle

of the Bulge, the tank driver
who fell back in headless,
the German soldiers who "tried
to get away in the snow,"
the aristocrat's sword the post
office stole from the box
he sent home.

 The guarantee
spans the projected lifespan.
Lottery ticket, Camels,
Dominoes, V.A.,
Life insurance. Actuarial
predictions with cosign charts—
bodies in the morgue. Dead
reckoning. Except the Black
swan, clot-shot.
Dead cat bounce.
Bank-breaker. Mid-
life degeneration.
A rogue wave rises
and swallows the bobbing tanker.