

# 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.