

**photographs**  
FADWA AHMED

*I AM NOT GOING TO RUN*

The sky is not purple, but it  
used to be  
a moment  
only localized  
by angles between these branches,  
minus their direction:  
that is, everything would be flat  
if we were to attempt such a  
vivisection, and then it is  
dissecting. The field of vision  
we are working with here is  
not large. Most of what you see is getting here,  
forgetting to hear here, and when  
you were wearing your glasses.  
Mother is worrying about you  
doing this exact thing right now: not taking  
this photograph, but remembering  
how to keep track by realizing  
you know how tobacco tastes now  
it is old and the sky is not  
purple.

*All footsteps are the same speed except if you are wearing high heels.*

For three days  
I've been waiting for the sinking to  
ask me to come to the bar  
Monday night  
so I can say No. While I wait,  
two men sit side by side. One becomes  
old when I sit down across from him.  
The young one has been taking  
a series of photographs of me  
taking photographs of if  
my divorcee was here which he is

sometimes and will be forever: staring and  
typing at me. Tension is tricking  
us into thinking it is vulnerability.  
Footsteps are three and a half floors away  
even when they are not  
and so is the piano.

*Contrary to common intuition, everything is bigger in a big room.*

Humming keeps things from being  
all the way exposed. I hum back  
at the big room that hums at me  
and I drop my jaw. I do a dance  
on the big stage and everyone  
watches, scouts and  
skunks and the trees,  
if they are moving today.  
If I blink, there will be a blink  
that makes the big room a  
dark room, and I don't have time  
for sinking into a dark room right now,  
so I let leaving take a picture  
of the lawful humming that doesn't let anything begin  
or end all the way.

*My lower back, when I learn to use it, won't be so becoming. 19 LAPS*

is the name of this photograph. It is  
the name of everything in this hallway in this  
photograph when it scratches the wall. It's the name of stealing  
bulbous whispers.  
The girl omitted from the photograph  
was already a photograph. I either haven't even finished one lap or  
am one away from nineteen when I see  
her stare at me a second time.  
It is a photograph of  
writing *I* backwards and showing you  
that it spells *sinking*.