Elegy for Thelonious*
Yusef Komunyakaa

Damn the snow.

Damn February.
Let's go to Minton's
& play "modern malice"
till daybreak. Lord,
there's Thelonious

wearing that old funky hat pulled down over his eyes.

Its senseless beauty pours a hard light through the hemlock. Thelonious is dead. Winter drifts in the hourglass; notes pour from the brain cup. damn the alley cat wailing a muted dirge off Lenox Ave. Thelonious is dead. Tonight's a lazy rhapsody of shadows swaying to blue vertigo & metaphysical funk. Black trees in the wind. Crepuscule with Nellie** plays inside the bowed head. "Dig the Man Ray of piano!" O Satisfaction, hot fingers blur on those white rib keys. Coming on the Hudson. Monk's Dream. The ghost of bebop from 52nd Street, footprints in the snow.

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^{*}Thelonious Monk (1917-1982) was an American jazz pianist and composer.

^{**}A song written to Monk's wife, the title translates "moonlight for Nellie"

^{***}Coming on the Hudson and Monk's Dream are songs written by Monk