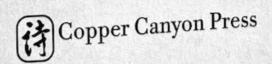
## Directed by Desire

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF

## June Jordan

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They sleep who know a regulated place or pulse or tide or changing sky according to some universal stage direction obvious like shorewashed shells

we share an afternoon of mourning in between no next predictable except for wild reversal hearse rehearsal bleach the blacklong lunging ritual of fright insanity and more deplorable abortion more and more

## If You Saw a Negro Lady

If you saw a Negro lady sitting on a Tuesday near the whirl-sludge doors of Horn & Hardart on the main drag of downtown Brooklyn

solitary and conspicuous as plain and neat as walls impossible to fresco and you watched her selfconscious features shape about a Horn & Hardart teaspoon with a pucker from a cartoon

she would not understand with spine as straight and solid as her years of bending over floors allowed

skin cleared of interest by a ruthless nails square and yellowclean from metal files

sitting in a forty-year-old flush of solitude and prickling from the new white cotton blouse concealing nothing she had ever noticed even when she bathed and never hummed a bathtub tune nor knew one

If you saw her square above the dirty mopped-on antiseptic floors before the rag-wiped table tops

little finger broad and stiff in heavy emulation of a cockney

mannerism would you turn her treat into surprise observing

happy birthday

## For Somebody to Start Singing

Song in Memory of Newark, New Jersey

He's a man on the roof on the run with a gun he's a man

Boys and little girls they were bad and they were good now they're dead