

ALICIA JADE LOCHARD

Untitled

Tallahatchie County Courthouse
Sumner, Mississippi
September 23, 1955

as if the cap guns pointed
at her breast as she entered
weren't enough
to conclude then and there;

as if the unmutilated mouths
of Dixie's precocious sons
in chorus, chanting
BANG! BANG! BANG!

while balanced and bouncing
on their daddy's knees, laughing
weren't evidence enough
of the Not Guilty to come,

they asked Mamie Bradley to stay,
to wait all sixty-seven minutes

til the verdict was decided
by Bryant and Milam's
drinking buddies
made official

in defiance
of a mother's wishes:

for justice, due
process, open casket

for her baby
not to be another black boy razed

in Mississippi.

ALICIA JADE LOCHARD is a writer and doctoral student living in Los Angeles..