

1971

# What Lasts

Marvin Bell

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## Recommended Citation

Bell, Marvin. "What Lasts." *The Iowa Review* 2.3 (1971): 33-33. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1242>

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## WHAT LASTS

So help me, Love, you and I.  
Paper into pulp, and our words last  
as ashes to cool the sun.  
The pen lasts in stories by the fire,  
the ink bubbles, the word is cremated  
and spreads dumbly as in our lungs.

I wanted to speak it now. And how  
the explosive sound of the lungs,  
collapsing as they give back air—  
we have had that energy, burning.  
We have been at the throat of the world.  
We have had a lifetime.

I concede to that blue flower, the sky,  
a more than passing moral guidance.  
Because light flashes, dies, flashes,  
some sing the rhapsody of the liver.  
Yet what the symbol is to the flower  
the flower itself is to something or other.