

Art Hodes, When He was Old

He died the same year
as my father. We saw him

at the Mayfair Regent
in Chicago. The wrinkled

summer evening light outside
grew darker and darker.

Hodes hunched over
the piano, as if he were

exploring it intensely
for the first time, almost

by habit. His left hand rumbled
underneath the slow blues;

he knew too much to stay
inside the melody, which became

vulnerable to the thunder
in which he framed it. Soon,

he and the melody would disappear,
weighted with the dark and dying light.