

SARAH PERRIER

LISTLESS

Let the lioness lie, sleepy, in the shade of one bare tree
and dream of small puddles, so the drought may seem less
long. And a dream, too, for the baboon, who doesn't see
the lion slip her tongue in one dry loop across her teeth. A flight

of featherless wings, wasps and bats like nightmares diving
from rooftops to the open spaces below, streaks the sunset
with a thousand reasons to panic at the sky's unlined
lanes of traffic. Every set of wings strong-arms the evening

into pairs of hungers, pairs of thirsts. Closer, one hand draws,
in solitude, to the one body it knows best. The moon
is inconvenient, it reeks like a stale tooth—the root's gone
rotten, there's nothing to be done. All that heavenly ether

only helps the ache burn brighter. Now here, a candle,
here a window, a warped wood door that won't close true.
A wick that smolders, a book unread, and that breath—
almost a word—when the hungry world at last lies quiet.