

A new term for sleeplessness

by Tesia Wieprecht

Sleep should be a witch's curse.
Coiling words, trapping vines.
Sleep should stumble into you,
a purposeful accident.
A proven theory.
Instead, it flits around
just out of reach— an adamantine bird that
slashes your net with each graze of her wings.

There is no word for a bird that never sleeps.
Even swifts and swallows yield eventually.
As must all things with a brain.
But perhaps they're the closest we can get.
Nocturnal, diurnal
night owl, early bird.

Sleepless swallow.
Cathemeral.

You get tired at the wrong moments
and live in a focused delirium
where your mind never stops
and it feels like bees,
bees building a hive where your brain

is supposed to be
and buzzing, always buzzing,
angry to have so little space to grow,
angry to be caught in the honey they produce

your eyes are dry
you know your bedroom better in the dark
you live outside of time
you forget.

You are tired.
People forget that.

You are tired.

You are Tired.

You Are Tired.

Always and forever.

Sometimes, you catch that bird
and she nestles into your palms
and sheathes her feathers in your skin.
She's yours for a while
and you're grateful
but mostly it just stings.