

The Disappointment of Dreams

By Mags Webster

*como cesan lost sueños
cuando sabemos que soñamos¹*

Jose Luis Borges, 'Afterglow' (2010)

Late afternoon: the long slow yawn
of day, the heat becomes narcotic.
Beside my chair, the dog lies still,
her eyes half-closed, her heart beneath
my hand a patient clock, which ticks the blood
from paw to pleated ear. Her breathing
slows, she's treacled in the sealant of
her sleep, all functions at a simmer. She's
a skiff that lilt on delta waves, a temple bell
that nodded song and now holds close
its silence. I too fall dumb, washed into sleep,
just about to blur from my body's shores
when the dog is gripped in a palsied fit,
paws twitch, legs flinch, her throat-deep
noises nip and sob, lips pluck at teeth,
and her seizure builds and spasms till
she shudders to her feet. Has dreaming tripped
a switch and fired her body into motion?
Her muscles cramp like phantom limbs,
so real is the chase. Such dreams are cruel,
they cheat us, on their edge we overreach,
we want to fall, but are denied the short
clean grace of flight. Instead we arc back
into life and, waking, short the circuits
of our minds, burn memory away.

¹ *as dreams end/when it dawns on us we're dreaming.*