

LISA SAINSBURY

Rimbaud

There have always been hyenas in Harrar.
They come at night to clear the streets of the dead.
In his youth he was drawn here, so fleet
we could not catch up with him.
The soles of his feet were fashioned from the wind.

This empty house at the top of the street
tells you how far he had to come
to find the end of his journey.
His search was flight, his flight, quest,
and this is his last resting place.
It is one of the few places, perhaps the only one,
that he called home.

On his return to France he wrote to the shipping line,
“I am almost completely paralyzed.
Please tell me when you will carry me on to the boat.”
In the frigid house of the mother,
he could not unwrite himself.
The scrupulous words refused oblivion,
and on his death certificate,
in ink that bled blue
from a nib of unflinching steel,
words rallied to maintain his honour,
declaring him
to be
“In transit.”