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Parks Stewardship Forum

Title

Lifeless List

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Journal

Parks Stewardship Forum, 37(3)

Author

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Publication Date

2021

DOI

10.5070/P537354746

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VERSE IN PLACE

J. DREW LANHAM

Lifeless List

Do you know
how hard it is
to admire plumage on a bird?
To separate one warbler chip note
from another?
Or count
the telltale hind wing spots
on a butterfly?
Or remember the name of a wildflower
seen a hundred times?
Or gather the energy to find the
Latin binomial of a beetle in a field guide?
Or even give a fuck what the name
of anything is
beyond the last Black body that
lay still after being murdered
by the police?
I can no longer keep track
of the last hurricane that blew in from the earth's rising heat.
Of the last tweet inciting riot.
The last fire that burned and burned
and burned.
Of the hundreds of thousands of infected and dead.
It is a sad exhausting lifeless list I'd rather not keep,
growing longer by the hour.
There's little room left in my heart these dark days
for listing anything.
Hardest task comes
in not becoming a member
of a litany of dread.

From *Sparrow Envy: Field Guide to Birds and Lesser Beasts*, Hub City Press, 2021. Reprinted by permission of the author.

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VERSE IN PLACE

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CLEMSON UNIVERSITY



The Interdisciplinary Journal of Place-based Conservation

Co-published by the **Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity**, University of California, Berkeley and the **George Wright Society**. ISSN 2688-187X

Berkeley **Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity**



Citation for this article

Lanham, J. Drew. 2021. Lifeless List. *Parks Stewardship Forum* 37(3): 616–617.

Parks Stewardship Forum explores innovative thinking and offers enduring perspectives on critical issues of place-based heritage management and stewardship. Interdisciplinary in nature, the journal gathers insights from all fields related to parks, protected/conserved areas, cultural sites, and other place-based forms of conservation. The scope of the journal is international. It is dedicated to the legacy of **George Meléndez Wright**, a graduate of UC Berkeley and pioneer in conservation of national parks.

Parks Stewardship Forum is published online at <https://escholarship.org/uc/psf> through **eScholarship**, an open-access publishing platform subsidized by the University of California and managed by the California Digital Library. Open-access publishing serves the missions of the IPPB and GWS to share, freely and broadly, research and knowledge produced by and for those who manage parks, protected areas, and cultural sites throughout the world. A version of *Parks Stewardship Forum* designed for online reading is also available at <https://parks.berkeley.edu/psf>. For information about publishing in PSF, write to psf@georgewright.org.

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The journal continues *The George Wright Forum*, published 1981–2018 by the George Wright Society.

PSF is designed by Laurie Frasier • lauriefrasier.com



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