

## **a forgotten spell**

**i**

there is something I wish to say  
but I do not yet know  
what it is

it has shape form solidity  
that resist discovery

I try nutcrackers  
it slips between them  
unbroken

I will use my thumb nail  
I will peel it like an orange  
or pare it — this thought-apple

perhaps words will do  
I suspect it is itself made  
of words  
mine are too ordinary  
the magic formula  
evades the normal

all I need is a name  
that should be power enough

ii

the merest bubble on an infant's tongue  
the first trial lispings that are speech  
fix and diminish that which is  
or recreate it fresh as the first song

this three-year-old now trusting takes my hand  
she's not yet learned the words that spell  
her sickness out for all to read —  
the mediterranean disease —

yet

she knows how to hold her arm out straight  
smile and call the doctor by his name  
as all her blood's let out then re-transfused  
each five weeks that she lives

and she's alive

to loving looks and knows some colors well—  
yellow grey pink yellow grey  
and she can say nine numbers  
twelve months seven days

tries phrases

that complete one sentence short

iii

take back your tongues of fire  
your unspeakable spirit  
the sky's our cave wall  
we'll use picture-writing

the world's wrapped tight in layers  
of printed paper  
poor golf-ball

what lies what lies at bottom  
is a way of learning

I never did trust talk

let go your ropes of restraining  
your solemn gravity  
as  
night bandages our eyes  
things are known without labels

before morning comes stepping  
we shall recognize the guttural  
**clack clack** of her sabots  
on the cobblestones of day

**paddy webb**