

LITHOGRAPH

You never admitted that you were wrong and I
that I no longer loved you even then. We're outside the cave
of the forty thieves and now we can't remember that magic
word. We try out words like "*llicorella*."
No good. Nor "*llucareta*," the greenish grey bird
that the more timid gangs of kids try to chase in the school
playground. Where are the crossroads where you said we *didn't*
get lost? You have to pull out a tooth
with two stones. The revenge of the spider
you killed that afternoon frightens you and you wonder why
you can't make the plush squirrel smile.
We're outside the cave of the forty thieves or in the kingdom
that's cursed because of the stolen harp, or in the misty land
of the beast who was once an unkind prince, and
you don't know how to pronounce the "*ll*." To be able to do this,
you've come too late. Why didn't you stick with "*linotip*"?
Or else with "*litòfag*," a mollusc that eats stones?
A word that surely existed on my grandfather's lips and
which you now repeat to your seven-year-old son, as though
this dictionary were a book of fairy tales.
And he, as well as being unenthusiastic, would like to be off playing.
Maybe molluscs too have conflicting desires.
The accent, I tell him, faces backwards.

Notes:

llicorella: slate

llucareta: siskin

linotip: linotype

litòfag: lithophage