

W-A-T-E-R

The stage of your life when you are taught
all things have names comes back once more:
this is Mama, this is Daddy, this is a ball,
that's a bowl, that's *un tazón*, that's a noun,
an amphibian, a membrane, a mitochondrion,
enthymeme, metaphor, and scansion.

Then forget all of that, close your eyes and ears
forever, and start from the beginning again.

You can't distinguish
Mama from Daddy,
English from Spanish,
or even noun from verb.
You can't picture
the miniscule,
the astronomic,
or the abstract.

Then imagine your hands outstretched,
one held by another's, the other under a constant stream
of something cool and wonderful and flowing,
the hand in your other hand tracing five symbols
over and over until you light up, finally understanding
the tracing peaks and lines—W-A-T-E-R—water!