

## **AFTER LEARNING THAT THE SPELL IS IRREVERSIBLE**

In the fresco of you telling me the dream  
all over again—one dog killing another,  
the larger one taking the smaller one's  
head in its mouth, and biting down, waiting  
for that stillness that,

sometimes, I don't  
feel anymore like waiting for—how cold  
it is; how windless. Did you know there  
are animals that will spend their entire  
lives in silence, if they don't get killed

by something more violent, more alive  
somehow? I used to think it was as if fear,  
or panic, had brought into voice, finally,  
whatever scrap of sound they'd always  
held inside them,

but lately I wonder:  
Was it there from the start, or does it come  
from elsewhere, gift-like,

like a kind of  
song to at least go down singing? Hard  
to believe there was nothing I wouldn't  
have done for you—harder still, that I ever

said so. In the dream, the surviving dog  
keeps changing colors—courage and shame,  
rage,

—devotion—as he disappears into  
a field that, in turn, keeps changing: now a field;  
now life as it might have been; now the sea,  
whose history—like its signature—is ruin.