

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/3

Luanne Castle

Playing Word with Adrienne Rich

In the wordy first line she asks,
what kind of beast would turn its life into words?
A wordsmith, Wordsworth himself, a lawyer for sure,
the poet mourning freedom as a lost world art.
It's not merely translation of life to words;
it's how one word can hold an encyclopedia of meaning
as when my great-grandmother got word about her soldier
and, wordless, she sat for a night and a day.
You gave your word of honor you wouldn't lie again.
In repayment I gave my word I would still trust your lies.
The wording of our contract with each other bound us,
although, my word, you are so difficult.
All you said was this communication stuff is tough to learn.
Word, I said.