When the Language Was Young
— for When The Language Was Young, 2010 (lithograph on yupo) by James Nares

James Nares’ lithograph print immediately evoked a youthful energy, and when I stepped closer to discover that the title of this 2010 piece was: When The Language Was Young, I jotted this title as the first line of my poem. From there images of childhood activities matching the expressive markings in this piece followed, as I considered the wordless language of children. I also swapped “the” for “our” in the borrowed line throughout the poem. This was an instinctual choice, and I wondered why I felt so strongly about using the word “our.”

Looking back, I see that it’s a subtle reminder of our shared capacity for openhearted community, which we seem more inclined to recognize as children.