

**ANDREW SCHELLING**

**FROM TENTH SONG OF THE MEADOWLARK**

*One question*

One question  
where does a book begin  
does it begin the last 1000 years  
paper parchment  
sheep's hide palm-leaf bamboo  
it changes what you think of the petroglyph  
to see frog as a clan sign  
horned figure pecked into  
desert varnish  
it was cold the night Jack Collom died  
we had a dream  
we were chipping acrostics  
into rock

*The hand that shapes*

The hand that shapes the mind  
clay or written word  
is subject to accident & time  
finding it is the meander  
they say purity  
or straight lines  
let troublesome spirits arrive  
the good teacup has a flaw  
it wobbles  
the avant-garde continues  
an exotic not very hardy species,  
survives in greenhouse environments  
academia the so-called  
art world  
the gallery ghettos  
once outside it tends to shrivel and die  
sheer irrelevance  
on the phone a message  
nearly a year old  
I intend to keep it my dead father's voice  
it may help me imagine a new Kuksu  
a bird mask to cover  
or is it sheepishly disclose  
a lifetime of error  
accidental design in the imprint

*In his visions*

In his visions he's  
composing acrostics  
the dying enter a sphere of visions  
this is a no shooting zone  
the binding is Japanese, sewn,  
he inscribes it for me in running grass script  
black ink jotting left to right  
unseen electric currents  
grief preys on the living but  
not the dead I hear  
footfall darjeeling flute blade sunlight day  
can you give your name away?  
that's from a friend  
a poet whose name I withhold  
we all might have been going to have lived  
a long, long time ahead  
but on this continent  
outlaws & anarchists by the fire  
listen to Kishori Amonkar sing the  
rain-season song  
she regulates the monsoon  
here the Southern Rockies  
skirts of rain  
go trailing down valley

*In my tradition*

In my tradition we don't tell  
coyote stories,  
said James in Cañoncito—  
until the first hard frost.  
I marveled as the three hard syllables  
fell like three  
raven feathers, no, like kernels  
from a raven's open beak  
Next morning blue corn *atole*, crisp  
ice on the windshield when I took  
the sleeping bag out  
to the car  
A pinch of corn pollen  
rubbed on the hands for the drive north  
I came through Blackhawk  
canyon blasted into a furious gorge  
dynamite & heavy  
equipment Clear Creek's seen it all  
a thousand yards casino glass & cement  
bigger than Mesa Verde  
crow    crow    crow  
rip up a wild place for thrills        crow        crow  
How different is walking?  
what's it to you gambler dog-face?  
If your heart don't know  
that walking is different than gambling  
no one can tell you  
          crow    crow

*tomfoolery*

Four Mile Creek  
its bramblebush of dialects—  
They kept manhandling  
Algonkian words—last century's Scottish miners—  
& we all enjoy bunkum, flimflam,  
moonshine  
the jazz language North America

Up here's pettifog & taradiddle  
(sleety rain fog cloud  
spits down-ridge)  
tomfoolery makes me think  
of King Lear  
I bet that's where it comes from  
moor thrashed with night wind, lightning  
(white quartz in blocks  
on the far hill add  
bedlam ghost hulks to storm)  
Denver or DC this land of beguile, swindle, bilk, defraud  
rock & each pine needle clump  
sways its own careful pace  
gypsy cant, bog Latin,  
jackhammer sound in the distance, a truck  
hauling Amazon boxes

(night ponderosa shagged juniper really  
snowing now  
you can hear deer hooves  
scrape the hillside

*Dog Tank Spring*

Not a light  
between here and Blanding  
way past Comb Ridge  
a swarm of dreams into the wintry  
tent

it was Freud's old book  
a handbook for seeing  
& symbols I can't read under sandstone cliffs  
balance it with Teton Sioux  
dream songs  
looked up in the library

How-to-do-it  
excavating the strange things  
come out of slickrock  
Dog Tank Spring  
bear paw  
                    bear paw  
crumbled droppings  
whole juniper berries  
in the mash

Here it goes again  
one more treaty broken—  
solitary older Navajo man  
in a pickup  
watches the sunset  
wavering cliffs of the Bears Ears Buttes  
reddening behind him

*Winter Solstice 2017*