

ANDREW SCHELLING

**from the *Arapaho Songbook***

White owls  
northern bodies  
learning all you can about language—  
the hammer mountain range  
willows, willows  
the many things done  
with a verb  
can you speak one that pierces the heart?  
*wox noho'kuhnee-t*  
'where the mule deer sings'

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Awake in the green forest  
the red berries a man's dream  
one moon-bent lifetime  
violet veins run the root of it  
with a morning hard-on to piss, noting  
the sap, the *soma*  
three basic intimations rise up  
moon-words in Sanskrit  
three separate moons  
into the leathery bearberry

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Down in Albuquerque  
JB has refurbished a  
saxophone from the '20s  
I angle my foot on the bucket-bass  
there are songs of the Arapaho drainage  
before roads, gasoline, came out West  
fork-tail swallow flashes over

the beaver pond  
the saxophone, he calls it a conduit,  
blue notes of the heart

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Solitude clear talk  
no one seen  
*Nadia Liu rehearses the poem with gestures*  
moon pauwlonia dangle yellow remorse  
*give me an eagle wand* to inquire  
where's the old man  
gone says the boy the ravines  
hills forests the mist rolling  
gone looking for poisons  
clouds too thick to see where

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Death is not  
coyote's fault  
people ought to just go and  
return he says,  
four days answers hummingbird  
four days the smell gets too awful  
okay have it like that I'm going away  
oh killing is easy, the Pomo basketmaker  
observed, killing is easy it is  
life that's hard to keep

\*

Taking the owl's tooth  
taking the six roads of changing & passing  
beyond the far western pinnacles  
it is dark to go back to the  
notebook & read

the clues to a friend's suicide  
WE'LL NEVER SOLVE THE RIDDLES  
ALL IN ONE LIFETIME  
not I said the fox  
not I the wise woman

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I'm wondering what a lithium  
mine does in the Chilean Andes  
batteries for hybrid cars—  
red hair sweeps across your face  
that's one way to say it  
he-enters-the-tent-lookingly  
or enteringly-he-looks  
our watershed sharpens with animal cries  
when we enter they know it  
they, the words themselves

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Armstrong Doolittle's Notched Diamond  
Boone's Top-slot Visible Guard  
Connelly's Knife-edge T-Bar  
Devore's Wire Lock  
Edenborn's Offset Barb  
Gregg's Barbed Snake Wire  
Harbaugh's Torn Ribbon  
Mann's Semifluted Ribbon  
Page's Half Hitch & Loop  
Nadelhoffer's Flat-wire Gull Wing

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A smoke-blue tool cache  
each scalloped edge  
holds the scrapings of ghost horse & bear

recollect the loves the many  
sorts of love the predator lost track of,  
the family members, women,  
flaked edges I thought at Jemez after three  
four hours the drum beat came  
from the earth itself  
flaked in the hooves of the buffalo