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A Voice in the Wilderness

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A Voice in the Wilderness

Some implied
his was a secondhand role,
a job for any walk-on.
But intent from the start,
he studied all the parts
under a stern paternal eye.
He observed the rites, said the prayers
and one day slipped out of town
with a walking stick and no change of shirt.
What happened next no one knows,
years re-forming him
from the inside out,
emptying the chambers of his heart
for visions even he feared.

When he returned to the world,
his squareness was at odds
with its roundness and its love
of simple, clever answers.
He was a fright to see,
a nest for hair, a buckskin shift,
feet hard as stone.
Thin as a reed, his voice thundered
yielding no compromise.
People listened, then squirmed.
Some turned his way, most not.
Many hoped he would eventually find
steady work.

Victor Klimoski