

FORESTS,
TEMPLES,
GLACIAL RIVERS

Andrew Schelling

Poems

TREES HAVE LIFE

1.

Katsumahtauta says to Jaime de Angulo,

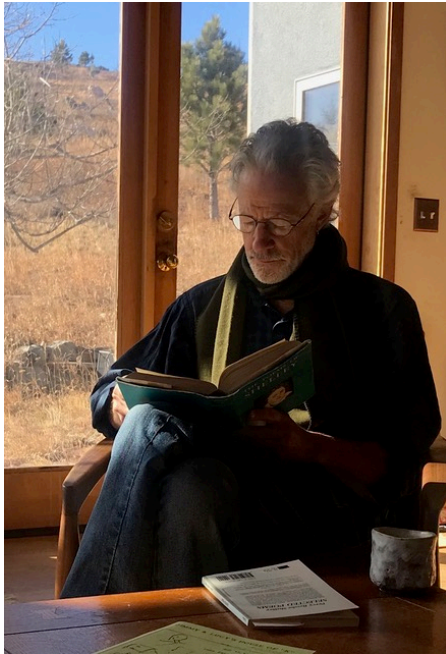
“Trees have life, rocks have life, mountains, water... The stones talk to each other just as we do, and the trees, the mountains talk to each other. You can hear them sometimes if you pay close attention, especially at night, outside.”

This is not an idea to study. It is not an idea at all. You live in a world where trees, rocks, animals, creeks and springs, craggy mountains speak; or you don't. When the mountains talk to one another, is it that they too have a heart for mystery? At night go to them. Go to the winter hills. Crouch in a stand of pines. The wind has gone quiet. The life force of plants withdraws inwards for winter. The needles, the branches, the cones. They breathe. They gesture. Each pine bristles with intelligence.

Not thinking, not dreaming...
intelligence...

2.

What's the botany book say
of trees at night?
They exhale oxygen.
We stand without words in the North Woods
awake as they sleep
The great bear rotates above.
Moon, my love, breathing
we breathe to each other,
a forest of words: moonlight stirring the air
27 degrees the air has not stirred
The pines move
they move in a great
council
around us.



Andrew Schelling, born 14 January 1953 at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Washington D.C. The 1970s and ‘80s he spent in Northern California: studied ecology of mind with Gregory Bateson & poetry with Norman O. Brown. Took up Sanskrit language, translation, and developed wilderness skills in Sierra Nevada and Coast Range mountains. In 1990 moved to Colorado to teach poetry and Sanskrit at The Naropa Institute (now University). Among twenty-odd titles are poetry, *From the Arapaho Songbook* and *The Facts at Dog Tank Spring*, as well as eight books of translation from India’s old lyrics. Another book, *Tracks Along the Left Coast: Jaime de Angulo & Pacific Coast Culture*, is an ideogram of linguistics, folklore, old time stories, poets, and cattle rustling in California. This book has become something of an underground classic, used by readers as a history & handbook of bioregional thought. Schelling lives in the “middle mountains,” between the high plains and Colorado’s Indian Peaks Wilderness.