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## A Voice in the Wilderness

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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