

# Peter Hammill, Shell

Turn a card, turn a page,  
the action sure to start,  
second-stage reaction  
to illogical thoughts on random lines  
in a Borges dream we move toward  
the writing of lives.

Leave it out, leave it in, no edits  
with a shout, with a grin I said  
it was a certainty that I'd arrive  
in an Escher sketch  
we walk around the drawing of lines.

The character uncertainty  
as he contemplates his lot  
and tries to move with urgency  
though he's rooted to the spot.

On the brink, on the edge,  
but lately what I think,  
what I said escapes me  
in a flash, a tiger burning bright  
does the visionary trance obscure  
the burgeoning night?

And she said "What are you doing?"  
And he said "What do you think?"  
Oh, no, what on earth are we doing?

The characters procrastinate  
on the threshold of the door;  
there's something here that fascinates,  
though the meaning's still unsure  
and the plot so thick.  
Is it some kind of history?  
Sketch the thumbnail to the quick.  
Oh, even though it's full of contradiction,  
though it's flawed in the design  
this is no fiction,  
it's a lifeline.

Here we are, there we went, full circle,  
shooting stars, heaven-sent,  
turned turtle on the beach  
our shells are left behind  
life a library, like a memory  
of our ghost-written lives.