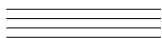


# T H E B O O K O F B E G I N N I N G S



W I L L S C H U T T

It thins and fattens, like a study of  
moody youth, astonished by his being,  
mythologizing his pith, his thick cock,  
his tufty hair, the future always spilling  
from his mouth, before retreating to a room  
where he is shocked to find himself  
too ashamed to face the mirror or to turn  
back to the first page of the book of beginnings,  
to mites and midges, to creatures screwing  
their heads out of their armor and hearing the water  
riff and buck, opening their eyes to see  
the sun's disc wheel between the rooftops  
of the city. But the book of beginnings begins  
all on its own, like a species, lean and bored,  
that meets and mates in the seedy leaves,  
and afterward, gorged, heavy-eyed,  
sighs a sigh that must have been the first sound,  
thin spit on the face of its beloved,  
a mutter that meant, "Before I was this, I was that."