

First Thing to Mind Is Death

Derek Sheffield

and/or dying when a friend passes me
in a white hall, pleading, Write me
something that makes me want to write.
Go big, I think, and for keeps.
Whip up the latest version of the looming bluff

with a granitic whiff on the wind.
But death is over and done, and done
again like spokes on a wheel
(twinkle, twinkle) and the boy
(call him Jack) pedals robotically on

as if ending coordinates conjunction,
the semi-final finale of And or So.
More fun might be coming into being.
Beyond the vaginal vestibule and that
first ropy breath, across the river

where born-again come spluttering up
with the tale of a snake on their tongues,
Baby, I mean getting it in the fingers
where every scribble gleams,
as it happens, being no longer nothing.