

CHRISTINE MCPHEE

## The Gift of Knowing

there is no return  
from darkness

you breathe  
the cedar-scented  
thirst-quenching air

and the chorus of frogs sings back  
what was lost  
in the heat of the day

a gift of knowing  
    given to the sun  
as the heat pressed  
you deep  
into the wood of the dock  
until your body bore  
    everywhere  
the imprint of its grain

it is this map you carry back now  
    into the forest  
your skin has begun to understand  
the trees you move between

in this slim wilderness  
knowledge returns not  
to the mind  
but along the surface  
of the body  
a few hectares of forgotten land

at the crossroads  
are sung into hugeness  
at dusk

as the roads                    the river  
    even the deer path that brought you here  
all corridors  
stretch thin as the veins  
in the transparent—  
stretched skin  
of the throats of the frogs