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