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Thinking About Emerson

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THINKING ABOUT EMERSON
Judith Harris

for Catherine

I remember the place
behind my mother's ear
always a little sunburned,
smelling of sweat, or lilac,
waxy as an apple's skin.

That was the place,
I first breathed, and whispered
the way gulls must fly inside the cove,
when the sea is rough,
when the wind shakes out of its bones.

"Tell me a secret," she said,
and I watched it tangle in her hair.