What the River Knows

it has learned in the whispered
confidences of water
over rock and sand
and in a close continuing intimacy
with earth and air

it has gathered in half-heard rumors
from the wind
speaking in tongues
singing the music of storm
in harmony with thunder

it has inherited from the sun
passing through oak and alamo
through overhanging willow
to leave its secrets caught
in the confusion of light and shadow

it has comprehended through a lack of roots
in the deep curves of backwater pools
their boundaries banked and grass-grown,
seeming solid, offering respite, yet
belying the tenuousness of their existence

belongs to its mutable currents
to white water circumstance
to the lean years and the fulsome
the snow melt’s prologue
to the summer’s inevitable drought

is gleaned lightly
from the more than occasional traveler
rock or leaf, log or man
riding the inexorable wave
until their journey’s end

is the story never ends
its epilogue continually is written
and erased—what the river knows
exists deeper than bones
or roots or the telling of earth’s tales