

# The Susquehanna

*Upon you my fellow servants,  
in the name of Messiah I confer  
the Priesthood of Aaron.*

*—Doctrine and Covenants 13*

This river makes a fine memorial.  
John, who specialized in rivers,  
Must have loved it.  
He must have marveled  
At the greenness of it all.

He would have walked the island first  
To let his bones record  
The mutual straightening of the river and the land.  
He would have faced the island's wake  
To feel the weight of water at his left,  
The island's brown integrity  
Extended by the central stream.  
As he moved through water to the shore,  
He'd see his toes, his white robe carried West.

His gift ionized the air around his hands;  
The covenant relaxed commitment to the flesh.

Afterwards, the light would make it hard  
To concentrate on water.  
It never settles in one place  
But breathes across a surface  
Cupped to catch the words.

—Kathryn Ashworth