# Dedication

The red canoe slaps forward slowly through muddy-gold water. I let my eyes idle down its side. Althea is almost asleep—I'll need to hold her the rest of the way home. All four of us are calmer as we turn, pushed deeper into our own thoughts by bending light and gathering shadow. I settle in. My eyes slip over the water. Over and down through the water; then it comes. The sounds fall into place with a thud. *Green,* I feel it like a door clicking open. *Green, after.* Here I am. *Green, after all.* Suddenly inhabited by her, it, them, me, the old new open feeling in my body. *Green, after all, is*—an open dark feeling this time, like the peaceful breath of a stone cellar. It's a real one. *The*—a sense of panic in my stomach—not now—the kids might talk—but it is relentless; *green, after all, is the touch*—there is no time for thoughts—*of the water*—each quick heavy word comes independently; it doesn't feel like they share a pace, perfect as their pace is—*after all*—without gaps, independent, heedless—*after all, violet is only its skin*—I waver a moment from the effort of hearing her—the canoe wavers a bit as we get into more open water—I see the mountains in the reddish light—a mosquito in my ear—yes, it's still there—here it comes again—*under the edge hangs*—*the tongue of the water*—the kids are talking—I'm afraid I'll forget the first of the earlier words now—as long as I don't have to talk. It's still coming, like the labor when I birthed Althea, so strong, there was nothing to do but get ready and let her come—*green is the color*—is there more, I wonder—*that I travel in*—then not sure for a moment—a little waver—it was a pattern so definite—I had better try—better put a line down and see—yes—more of it—I hold the next four lines too—make a face at them all please not to talk to me—Julian recognizes the symptoms by now—and Glen, wonderfully, understands—I am able to carry the brimming cup of words until we beach the canoe, come inside, write it down, say "thank you"; turn to them, say: "thank you." Thank you.