**Younger Sister, Going Swimming**

**(Northern Quebec)**

by Margaret Atwood

1 Beside this lake

where there are no other people

my sister in bathing suit continues

her short desolate

5 parade to the end of the dock;

against the boards

her feet make sad statements

she thinks no one can hear;

(I sit in a deckchair

10 not counting, invisible;

the sun wavers on

this page as on a pool.)

She moves the raft out

past the sandy point;

15 no one comes by in a motor boat.

She would like to fill the lake

with other swimmers, with answers.

She calls her name. The sun encloses

rocks, trees, her feet in the water, the circling

20 bays and hills as before.

She poises, raises her arms

as though signalling, then disappears.

The lake heals itself quietly

of the wound left by the diver.

25 The air quakes and is still.

(Under my hand the paper

closes over these

marks I am making on it.

The words ripple, subside,

30 move outwards toward the shore.)