

For Steve Kirchen

They think you cannot lose your way
just floating downstream with the current,
but we know how channels
split and weave and
slow sometimes to steaming backwaters
thick with duckweed.
So mired in sluggish oxbows of indecision
I remember all the times
you paddled through.
From blue-spring deeps
your memory will lift me out
and carry me for one mile more,
replenish me for one more hopeful after.
As a paddle slips below
sculling smoothly with the flow,
liquid as a dream,
your voice will whisper
riffles in the river
when I hesitate to draw.
Your kindly spirit will come to me
with cries of conscience
chirping on the verges of my soul.
And I count on you to
always keep me honest with the earth.

- R. G. Ziemer
6/23/17