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## For Steve Kirchen

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## For Steve Kirchen

Raymond Ziemer

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.