

# Lives and their rivers

*by* strannikov

Tears flowed once beside  
the rivers of Babylon  
that flow to this day.

The Nile's crocodiles  
gnashed conical teeth where barge  
and basket floated.

The Yangtze helps fill  
the Pacific and helps the  
Indus drain Tibet.

The Ganges swallows  
the sins of its bathers and,  
later, their ashes.

The Jordan borders  
wilderness and promise both,  
Christ and Baptist taught.

The Tiber's troubled  
no one as much as those perched  
on Rome's many hills.

Firenze is fine  
so long as the mad Arno  
slides through unprovoked.

Oui oui oui, Paris—  
unless the Seine flows berserk  
like mad Parisians.

London's lifeguards stand  
soaked to their stiff upper lips  
whene'er the Thames swims.

The Scots' Spey, they say,  
has been distilled to barrel  
potable water!

Conrad piloted  
Kurtz's unsounded Congo  
but only by night.

Fishermen, take note:  
the Amazon's piranhas  
can match your hunger.

The Rio is grand,  
most as a moat permitting  
escape from within.

Huck and Jim steered down  
their own Mississipp without  
paddlewheel astern.

The pristine Hudson's  
waters dance in the dark of  
the East River's rinse.

By all accounts our  
Potomac's placid currents  
remain treacherous.

Defying water's  
gravity, we crawled ashore  
to carry water.

