

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.

