

4166 Cambridge
Kansas City, KS 66103
24 February 1977

Laura Gilpin
409 Camino del Monte Sol
Santa Fe
New Mexico 87501

Dear Laura:

A few months ago I was smitten by one of your photographs in a traveling exhibition at the Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City.

It was entitled "The Rio Grande: River of Destiny" (1947). As one who finds deep meaning in water moving toward the sea (eventually to be taken up again), your work touched me. The absolute simplicity of the land's darkness, the Rio Grande's resistance, and the shimmering sea.

Exquisite. I told my friends I had found the work to hang above my coffin.

I would, however, like to enjoy this magnificence daily before then. Would you kindly let me know the most appropriate way?

Best wishes,

David Redmon
David Redmon

P.S. I'm enclosing a copy of my poem "Riverine" for you. I think it expresses much of my feeling about rivers. DR

RIVERINE

One day in autumn I allow my canoe
To drift behind the others
While tracing a clear Ozark stream.
The sky is thick and my breath visible,
But the woods seem more apparent than ever.

Images flow slowly around me as the current
Sweeps me gently onward.
My eyes reach through the gray-purple maze of
Dormant branches to the green of hardy cedars.

Limestone bluffs, black-streaked by oozing moisture
And mottled with lichens, invite a climb.
A lanky blue heron, spying my advance,
Skims slightly out of range to resume fishing.

Absorbing stillness, I am at one with all
And in no particular hurry to rejoin my species
Around a gravelbar fire for lunch.

Reluctantly I break the silence to correct
My passage into a bend in the waterway.
It is after settling back that I see it,
Just ahead on the left, along the river's edge.

Water gurgling under its slender trunk
First gives me notice.
Bent parallel to the stream's surface,
The springy steel of the young sycamore
Could mean danger in higher, faster water.
But not today.

Four limbs rise sharply along its short length,
And as I draw nearer, I see that seven
Rust-dusty leaves, large as human palms, await
The uncertainty of certain detachment.
My gaze is locked now upon them
As my canoe, knowing the curved path below,
Slips soundlessly closer.

A single leaf chooses then to quiver.
With seeming deliberateness
It bobs in expanding circles,
A crenulated hand, waving at me.

(Reason interjects here its own version:
A slippet of wind perhaps, reaching through the
Crinkled growths to shake a random, dying member.)

Vigorously now the leaf dances
In a most unabashed way,
Engaging me wholly,
melting my doubt.

A pause, and then remembrance.
"Hello," I whisper fondly as I glide past.
"I've missed you."

David Redmon
December
1976