

*A poem for Russ and Katie Moncrief. Each kayak shape represents the actual position on the Lower Wekiva where I encountered a rosary of wildlife; so grab a paddle and just follow the numbers weaving down and back.*

8/13/99

## **Katie's Landing**

1

"Did you see what  
they're building down  
there?" Russ asks  
saying hello from  
his new van

2

Kayaks unloaded  
Bill waits on the bulwark  
nautical map spread wide  
a new channel to find  
Chub Slough

3

five hops up  
the boat-ramp ~ brown  
head high ~ a grackle from  
across the stream makes  
her landing at  
Katie's

4

*moments of river  
rainbows of flowing  
floating together*

5

long stretching  
young doe at water's  
edge ~ necks down and  
tugs up on fresh greens  
without minding

57

at the first  
mooring a jetski  
idle under tarp: its  
nightmare a cypress  
log ~ just below the  
face of dancing  
mirrors

56

a single  
wild turkey  
pecks among  
roots in a hydric  
hammock by the  
first house

6

facing  
a thousand  
palm-Sunday  
fronds with arches  
lilts and glances of  
glee running up  
each shaft

7

irridescence at  
both ends ~ bluetie my  
damselfly ~ alights gently  
just hitching a ride on  
my knuckle

58

red wings  
in the rushes and  
grackles by the dozens  
at every angle  
and pitch

8

float

without motion  
to a curlew toeing  
the mud ~ a sudden  
whumpy lift ~ bold  
the blur of white ~  
red-orange ahead  
orange aft

55

great blue  
tight behind a bank of  
spatterdock ~ white-  
feathered  
throat-pouch throttling  
in the late sunlight  
all the time  
we pass

9

up-  
streaming  
school of six-inch  
silvers ~ only one has  
a triangle of fire  
for tail

10

around the  
bend of sight a  
commotion of black  
feathers ~ later one primary  
a footlong black kayak  
with thin white  
shutters

11

look down

straight ~ large fat-  
faced fish ~ head like  
an owl ~ gliding in  
silence over  
sandbeds

54

bullet-formed  
little blue or green  
speeds downstream  
flying without  
wings

53

a-

head a

hundred yards  
upstream ~ the double  
knobbed snout with  
a fifteen-foot trail  
draws a line  
thin

12

high banks  
of brush ~ swamp  
palms fronting taller  
stands of riverine  
roses ~ waiting for  
the star rush to  
bloom

13

a young tree  
just split at the knees  
still ~ never quite lost touch  
the toppled trunk lies not  
balanced across a narrow  
point ~ a top-  
heavy

T

14

behind a  
bend ~ without  
a notice ~ a large black-  
bird repeatedly pounds  
a root with a white  
object the size of  
my thumb-  
top

52

five and  
forty skimmers  
spreading out from  
bow to summer in  
all directions  
of light

**15**

***"Beauty  
is momentary  
in the mind...in the  
flesh it is immortal"***  
***Wallace Stevens***

16

no fish  
beclawed  
silent and sleek  
as an owl ~ a black soft-  
ness moves ahead of us a  
white underbelly and  
striped face ~ down  
winging the  
river

51

along the  
bottom a four-pound  
turtle rumbles downstream  
from the bed of a  
“stingaree” Bill  
pursues

18

sing the  
purple-red anthers  
of three string lilies  
beside a young  
hickory be-  
daubed in  
lichen

49

at a rest  
stop ~ large  
green leaves sun-  
bathing ~ casual  
reflections of  
river turning  
yellow

19

without  
a rattle in long  
sweeping slights  
kingfisher swoops  
out of sight  
yielding  
perch

17

sneaking up on a  
sleeping gator ~ six feet  
of leather ridges ~ Bill  
readies my under-  
water camera

50

in my  
right ear a  
distant pileated  
calls down  
the day's  
end

20

far back  
left in a sun-  
patch clearing  
scarlet hibiscus  
abides taller than  
all the under-  
story

48

*“poetry  
is a verbal  
means to a  
non-verbal  
source”*

*A. R. Ammons*

21

we stop  
ashore amid  
squawks from black  
vultures ~ in the tree  
across ~ they drop  
down from  
branch to  
branch

22

we walk  
only on roots  
every step beside  
a purple spiral  
uplifting a  
pickerel-  
weed

23

campin out  
on the high bend  
above Blackwater a  
young couple has brought  
fire to the river  
and cooks

47

in a log  
lying flat over  
water a hollow the  
shape of a football  
once an arm-socket  
now a well of  
plenty

24

baby gator  
head ~ frog-sized  
moves slowly out of shore-  
muck ~ back feet churn-  
ing like a duck  
no tail

46

to the east  
Buddha Thor  
grumbles and growls  
in the joys of his  
airborne river  
above

25

boy-again  
Bill ~ papparazzi  
paddling into the brush  
wary gatorling pinned  
a moment ~ by  
a Rascal  
kayak

26

*"the joy  
of all the be-  
ings is in be-  
ing"*  
*Gary Snyder*

45

wide banks  
of dollarweed and  
spatterdock jostling for  
sunbright in a snake  
of wavelets

27

after  
patches of  
breeze ~ the cool  
of shade ~ then of  
a sudden a heavy  
sauna sweat



28

giving  
himself away  
with a loud raucous  
calling ~ deep in the  
brush ~ a solitary  
limpkin

29

at  
the point  
of return of an  
offstream jaunt  
the raucous per-  
fume of the  
dead end  
swamp

30

below the en-  
trance of Blackwater  
Creek ~ schools of mullet  
cross sand patches in  
a tea-brown  
world

44

three  
retired couples  
lunching under a red roof  
pontoons slurping  
natives not  
quite

31

we land for  
lunch ~ Bill finds  
an empty apple snail  
light as a limpkin feather  
it curls ~ filling my fingers  
browns and blacks  
like muck

32

a second snail  
a perfect shirt button  
tightly spiraled in a  
hundred cells ~ many  
now transparent

43

up-  
ended  
wider than high  
a wall of oak-roots  
is unsoiled ~ like a  
cannerman's skirt  
showing river  
rump

33

two  
grand  
cypresses in the  
making ~ eight inches  
out of root-muck ~ even  
now stronger  
than fire

34

startling  
bellywhopper  
splash ~ a long wake  
sinks ~ then heavy breath-  
ing in the brush ~ hunt  
the woods for bear  
guess not

35

a pair  
of fishers  
"Not much. Jus'  
throwin' 'em back  
back, ya know."  
bright wishes  
no regrets

42

catching  
a Lower Wekiva  
rhythm ~ a single  
snag bops up  
and down in-  
cessantly

41

leaving  
 the slough a  
 giant blue startles up  
 in slow motion taking  
 the highest possible  
 opposite  
 perch

40

look straight  
 into a long hollow  
 log-face ~ cradle for a  
 bromeliad spray  
 as big as my  
 basketball

37

*the weak*  
*the strong*  
*the electric*  
*the grave*  
*the free*  
*a string*

38

palm tree  
 blocking our way  
 small arch to go under  
 arms and head out over  
 the bow ~ gritty bark  
 scrapes my  
 back raw

36

looking  
 up Chub Slough  
 a narrow meander  
 of watercress and  
 other graces ~ a  
 sculptured  
 riverscape

39

easing out of  
 Chub a dozen eely  
 gars gambol and wrestle  
 twitching in combos  
 in a black-brown  
 soup

## Enough Chub Slough

(time to return)