A Song without Words, or with

The Singing River (the Pascagoula) produces a mysterious music. Legend says that the sound is connected with the mysterious disappearance of the Pascagoula tribe of Indians. It is said that, lifting a song, they entered the water rather than submit to oppression.

Federal Writers Project. Mississippi; a guide

By water too indifferent to part,
A fateful exodus is set to start.

As stiff as gods processing down a stair
The Nation meet the river, well aware

Their Promised Land is here and not ahead.
And so they raise a chant. Of hope? Of dread?

As ethnocentric as a music is,
We cannot know. Its alien mysteries

Become the simple program we infer,
In which the tribe may not or may concur.

What was the sound of one side of the split
Waves of the Red Sea slapping? Did it fit

Pronouncements of the prophets or conform
To some unknown tsunamic sonic norm?

A legend is just that. It meets a need
Most truth does not, and on it comes to feed

Such expiation or such urge to guilt
As can be gathered from a singing silt.

So unto whom the tribe's forced end ascribe?
De Soto? No, another local tribe,

Which is the truth of it, if not the song:
The tone deaf fact our mythic programs wrong.