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MINIATURE

Couch's Kingbird 2

The boat putters gently up Chiltipin Creek,
Through dark brown water we slowly creep,
The terrain is changing – slowly, but surely,
Oysters and marshes disappearing prematurely.

We move into low banks covered with shrubs
That constrain the water except when it floods,
The watercourse taking shape before our eyes,
A more beautiful setting one could not devise.

We're experiencing the melding of creek and estuary,
The trip from the coast up covers exciting territory,
We can see the transition into fresher terrain
Where green herons play and kingfishers reign.

We glide up beyond the reach of the tide
That moves further in with the sea's rise,
The rising level coming with climate change,
But don't let me get started on that harangue.

The banks get steeper and the trees taller,
Then I hear the guide let out a holler,
And point to a bird out in the sunlight,
Atop the tallest tree to our delight.

A yellow beacon radiates from its breast,
A lighthouse in the treetops says it best,
Couch's by color, kingbird by shape,
A yellow ornament on the green landscape.

This is a bird many have never seen,
An indelible painting on my mind-screen,
We murmur and question and discuss the bird,
But the guide's call is the final word.

The difference is stark of I'm making the i.d.,
Doubt and dissension often accompany,
I long for faith – they could if they would,
But I smile and chuckle for it's all good.

So, welcome to Earth Church
Pull yourself up a pew
Pray that your bird sightings
Bring a smile to you.