

# Camas

t h e   b i g   s k y

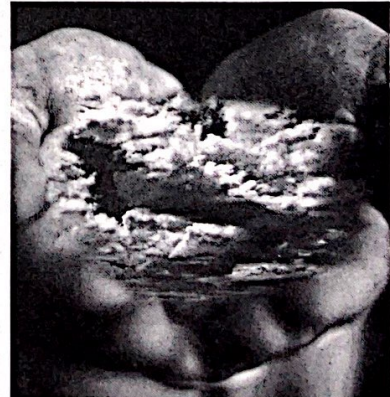
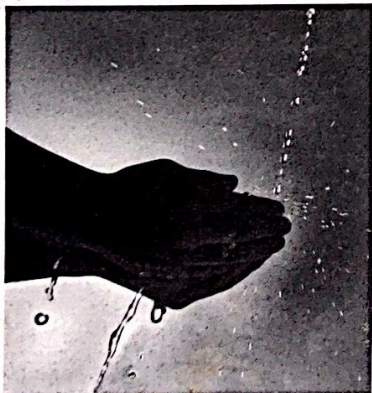


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## The Messengers

My window bisects them in the autumn field,  
but they move in one vision, from blurred to real.  
Grace in a meadow:  
two sandhill cranes in a crowd of steer grazing dry grass.  
Eyeblink.  
Only the fence rolls past.  
Wheel flickering beneath your fingers, and I have lost them to distraction.  
They fade into the scowling pasture  
as we are driving faster  
away from a moment like music played on radiowaves flaring farther gone  
away into fragments of a final silence.  
I have fathomed this for all the days since,  
dreaming of birds and butchery.

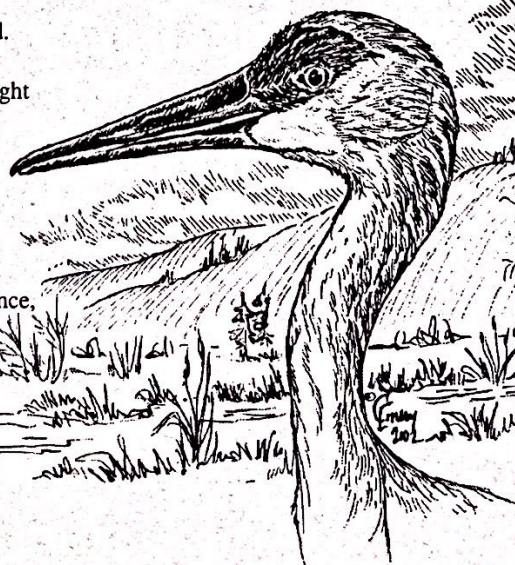
On this day of light, the sun  
crashes through pines with hooved feet and pointed horns,  
but I dwell only on that range of brittle grass  
trampled by roving bovines somnambulantlly ambling  
each around the sloping rump of the others  
while deliberately, softly, those two gentle dancers weave their long legs  
among the swaying fronds,  
sidestepping, I am sure, the piles of manure.

In the muddy birth meeting of lake and plain,  
shorebound souls in limbo hunger for paradise.  
The cranes descend to wetlands and prairies from wide wounds behind the clouds  
while blind eyes, sewn shut, cannot find heaven.

We have shot the messengers:  
migrating words flocking in a delicate congruency of birds  
bugling loud to the horizons, to life on the wing,  
primary, primal, feathered and unfettered.  
Warriors whistle in wingbones ancient summons of home.  
No pause for rest, carrying the stones,  
wakeful, watchful, radar angels lowfly across the grid.  
They seek refuge,  
carving a glimpse of light, of silhouettes in haloed flight  
over herd like a rushing of wind  
overheard before the rains begin.

Then the feet of cranes again  
touch the earth like water splashing,  
crowns geranium red fire flashing,  
burning in the twilight air, one and one conjoin in dance,  
two lives contained in a single mated glance.

Carrie Naughton



Claire Emery