# Migration

I walk slowly, soundlessly, to the fence line of the field of stubble from last season's feed crop. How the day begins with whispers of pink and gold to overawe the night! I watch thousands of sandhill crane sway stoically, trilling a happy songsatiated, energized from a night of rest and repast of fallen grain from the harvester. From a mass of soldiers encamped, a single crane begins a quiet walk, spreads her glorious wings and takes flight. Gradually, the regiment of thousands ambulates, lifts slowly into the air with great swooshing wings, covering the sky, singing in the dawn.

### Tall Women

I was walking down a shaded lane in East Texas, flanked by tall, splendid pine trees with nubby, broken arms and deeply scaled bark, trees of my formative lives, thinking about the poem I needed to start— a poem that would be epic and moving and possibly life-changing — and I began to remember incredible heights, prickly pinecones, sticky resin, carpets of needles, needles caught on fence lines, grass blades, car antennas, dog houses, sprinkled across rooftops and down embankments, inches thick in flowerbeds, caught on animal fur, the branches and leaves of other trees, deep on the lawn and underfoot and I visualized very tall women, combing their needle hair into the wind over hundreds of years and I imagined myself towering, filled with conifer-wisdom and grace, scattering knowledge, brown with age.

#### Cow Anthem

I look into my pony's brown eyes and press my hand against his neck before I step into the stirrup and walk the fence line down the caliche road and through the compound gate. Mesquite branches scratch my thighs, thorns hidden in green feathery leaves with long seed pods hanging low, so the cows can feast. Blue quail flush and buffalo grass ripples in waves, as wind plays over flat pasture. We head to the stand of chinaberry trees by the tank of earth and dove fly away startled. Turtles break the surface to see what has come to water. Above, a raptor circles and the pumpjack moves up and down, a red velvet bug hurries over the path passing a dung beetle rolling its prize so busy from the recent rain.

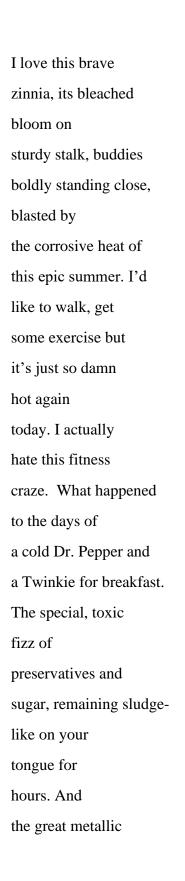
### We move to the draw

cows congregating, heads to the ground and silently join the circle of moaning.

Their fallen sister, the center of their compass, they are a symphony of loss and mourning.

We share in this cow anthem, on the high side of the rise, where coyotes will gather later tonight to tear her hide and muscle and celebrate her gift.

### Without a Wobble



glint to the serving

of canned peas or green

beans. Now it's whole

grains, crisp

fruit, gasping

fresh fish and

kale salad. There

was a time I

could jump straight

up, high, touch

my heels to

my butt

and land

without a

wobble. Life

was secure. Today

is a never-

ending hyper-

vigilance, who's

too close, masks, oh

God did I forget

my hand sanitizer, I

heard a cough, shit,

air droplets. Never

mind, I am

determined, robust.

## Countless Ways

I live life straight as an arrow, not that I care to.

I live life straight as an arrow, and follow the rules though I've made unfortunate alterable choices, alterable choices in countless ways I choose to keep hidden away. It's not all bad, the bad part, though I choose to keep hidden away. I'll not overexpose, once modest, inside. Technically, I could unravel the dark places, but I'll not expose, once modest, inside. Each event unseen cannot be undone. Each act considered, a vein broken. I live life straight as an arrow and events cannot be undone, and for every kindness, a heart is broken though I choose to keep hidden away. I am level, intricate.

I am a tender guide, an invisible thread.