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The Blue Goose 2

Driving down toward the coast
In Jackson County in the fall years ago.

The lines of geese fly toward me,
Drawn to the rice field by the side of the road,
A huge magnet of new growth pulling them in,
Some with wings set, feet down, gliding in,
Some up higher tumbling down from the sky
Only to open their wings at the last moment
To join the thousands of their brethren
That march across the field like an army,
Pulling fresh green shoots as they go,
Continually moving from the back to the front,
Creating a low murmur, hailing the new arrivals,
Enjoying the fruits of their migration south.

And amongst the snows I see the blue ones
That my uncle called the eagle-head,
A goose that goes back to my youth,
Hunting with my uncle in Gueydan in South Louisiana,
Camping in an old school bus named "Heartbreak Hotel"
After the Elvis Presley hit that had taken the nation,
A very different time,
A time when I first saw a blue goose,
The eagle head looking straight at me
From within a refuge,

One that knew it was safe,
A goose that looked straight into my soul
And gave me one of my first tastes
Of experiencing another living spirit,
A taste I can recall by closing my eyes
And replaying that scene on my eyelids.

Today, geese are not as abundant
Here on the Texas coast,
Less rice, more places to stop coming south,
And I am drawn to drive across the prairie,
Searching for that eagle head
That tumbles down from the heights
To greet my soul in the rice fields
Of this coast that is my church.

BLUE GOOSE 4

The memory remains solid, clear –
A day back in the 1970s,
Lying on my back on the bank of the Brazos,
Gazing up at the geese coming down the River,
Navigating as they have for centuries,
One flight turning east to the Katy Prairie,
The next flight going southwest to Altair.

Ah-ooof. Ah-ooof. Ah-ooof.
The call permeates the bottomlands -
The sound of greeting, of hailing -
The sound of joy of arrival,
The sound of anticipation,
The sound of completing the long trek
From Hudson Bay to the Texas Coast,
Ecosystems linked one to another,
Paired through the life cycle
Of snows and blues.

Lying on my back,
I am sucked into the migration,
This movement of geese like some potion
That causes my brain to delve somewhere deep,
Leading me to the role of the river
That guides these big birds down to Texas
And back north again in the spring,
Rivers that are corridors,
Rivers that are the spiritual spine
Of the linked ecosystems,
Rivers that are essential,
Rivers that are life itself.

Whew – now that was a good day
On the banks of the Brazos
Watching geese.