

Sam Kerson

Multi-Media Artist

Goose Banners

November 2004

Immigrants, Nomads, Migratory Species,

They are lifting off, following their old inherited routes searching for sustenance and habitat. Always moving, staying at the edge of the elemental forces, smelling the ice to the north, the harvest to the south.

Living day-to-day, living off the fat of the land. Traveling in flocks, or herds grouping up to take advantage of the safety in numbers. Drafting on the leaders air stream. Traveling together for the community the shared experience. Their V formations in the sky have been a source of inspiration for those of us who live a more fixed life, struggling with the seasons year after year. Heating our houses, slipping and sliding on the ice, fortifying and armoring our bodies and our lives.

Imagine, there are people who live like that too, Immigrants, Nomads, and migratory workers. Following the seasons and the harvest. Following the old inherited routes, living off the fat of the land, working the harvest, sending the excess back to the home grounds. Traveling north when there is work, returning to the south when the harvest season is over. Along the same paths as their father and grandfathers traveled. Do we find the flight of the Canada Geese inspiring because we to have that path in our oldest memories, because we heard our old people describe such travels, or because sometimes we made those trips ourselves and recognize them again in the flight of the goose?



Or maybe the nostalgia we feel is because the goose flies so high, all of our security and borders our laws and nations, come and go, not nearly as note worthy as the fruiting of the blueberry bushes or the running of the herring. All of our great bluster and hubbub, our buildings and roads our machines and doomsday contraptions, come and go, while the nomads and migratory creatures continue their search, their quest, their march and flight, their creation and re-creation.

The travelers pay no attention to us, they walk around our border stations, ignore our authority, fly over our fences and gates and walls. They live their lives on their own terms, they don't ask our permission, they don't submit to our systems of identification.

There are those among us who disguise themselves and wade out into the water with their blunderbusses and blast away at the migratory ones. Species have become extinct. There are still millions though. There are places where you can see them along the St- Lawrence, coming in just after dark, for a nights rest in the tens of thousands!

The migratory ones do their best to avoid us. Are they waiting us out? Will they inherit the earth? We lift our eyes when we hear them calling. We look up into the heavens. Last year in Escondido we met a walker, a man who led a party of seventy people for three days from El Paso to Albuquerque. He told his flock, which he had gathered spontaneously, as people pooled up just south of the border, "Have faith in Jesus Christ our savior, have faith and he will guide us through the border, through the night and through the dessert". They kneeled and prayed together before they set out and at every critical juncture throughout their adventure together. They meditated, they counted on their intuition, and their ancient memory to guide them, and their good luck. They had faith that they were doing the right thing, they smelled the harvest ripening, the snow melting. They had faith and crossed the dessert together.

Let these geese stand for all the migratory creatures, big and small, traveling north or south, east or west. Animals, fish, birds, insects, humans. In posting these banners we salute all the nomads all the immigrants all the migratory species, and wish them luck in their travels, fruit for their trouble, and generations to follow the paths they know.

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