## #20 <u>i sing with the sandhills</u>

oh, you globe with all your lines of all the pathways the birds unwind after the wintertime after the wintertime high in the sky

she was eighteen... when she first heard the cranes... standing on the runner of a dogsled eighty miles above the arctic plane.

every morning in the spring the cranes rise pair by pair from the fields and the marshes where they rest look north and take to the air.

trilling and honking on the wing filling the flyways of the west sometime late in springtime they hit the Pacific Ocean terminus

the land we call Beringia the Seward and Chukchi peninsulas Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers in North America Anadyr and Kolyma Rivers in Russia

50 miles of ocean in between

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fawm XX

oh, you birds with all your songs and all the miles you fly so long before the wintertime before the wintertime in the sky so high



i was fifty when i heard the cranes again standing on the edge of the river valley thousands of miles from where we've been

every morning in the fall the flocks know what to do southbound now for the hungry season the Vs take to the blue

trilling and honking on the wing filling the flyways of the west sometime late in autumn they find any southern place that's wet

the wide Rio Grande Valley the Bosque del Apache El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro La Jornada del Muerto

fifteen hundred miles of river to the sea

oh, you world you talk so tough but i cannot hold thee close enough through the wintertime through the wintertime under your big big sky

## Floating Coast – An environmental history of the Bering Strait by Bathsheba Demuth

## prologue – the migration north

Each morning in spring, the sandhill cranes rise pair by pair from the fields and marshes where they rest and turn their bodies north. They trill and honk on the wing, the sound filling the flyways of NA. By late April or May, they approach the Pacific Ocean's terminus where the Seward and Chukchi Peninsulas reach toward each other across the Bering Strait. Twenty thousand years ago, during the last ice age, the water passing beneath them was land. People hunted mammoths and caribou across a corridor of earth. Now, cleaved by just 50 miles of ocean, a geological and ecological unity remains in the territory Encircled by the Mackenzie and Yukon rivers in North America, the Anadyr and Kolyma rivers in Russia, and the oceans north of St. Lawrence Island and south of Wrangel Island. From river to river and sea to sea, geographers call this country Beringia.

I was 18 when i first heard the cranes, standing on the runner of a dogsled eighty miles north of the Arctic Circle. on Beringia's edge.

It is the 91st largest island in the world, roughly the size of Crete. Native name: О́стров Вра́нгеля (Russian) Умкилир (Chukot)