

Article 13

by Dionne Brand, City of Toronto Poet Laureate

The passenger pigeons once traveled here,
here once they furrowed the sky,
raked wide the full moon's face,
to drink the lakes' inclined and pristine surfaces,
who crossed the languorous cold river first
and saw the ceiling of birds,
then wandered the mouth of this intimate lake,
skanadario, who needed maps and homing devices,
compasses, the featherless arms,
who came here driven on the muscular spasms
of guesses, and hard bargains and wars and lack,
this river, Tanaovate, at the east, has washed
its large share of loneliness and industry
it has collected time and more, much more
than its salt and black and rainbow creeks,
fugitive, its tributaries of migrants
inalienable nomads, global citizens
unfettered limbs, we are heartsick for the true world,
compelled to place we search for place,
there in the growths of black wild alders,
how many sojourns, the gathered feet, the flight of horses,
the vein of railway, the stray of airplanes,
we brace our transience on the hurtling planet,
this 13th note, its opening sound, articulates,
unbinds our migratory bones, reascent
here our common ownership of the earth