

*The Yampa Valley Summer of Greater Sandhill Cranes: A Collection of Poems.*

*The Beginning--The Breeding Dance.*

Having two backwards knobby knees Does not stop these glorious, noble birds from dancing. Leaping towards the sky, Hearts soaring, They throw their graceful wings out and twirl, Daintily as a ballerina.

In search of his forever mate, The bachelor flings his head back, Caring not for anything but his lover's attention. "Dance with me" he urges In a flittering, flirtatious coo.

Apprehensive, the female is coaxed into the enticing, instinctive dance, Soon, she is jumping Matching the vigor and excitement of her beau.

With this dance, they have become one, Entwined, enchanted, entranced No one can tear them apart.

This summer romance will last a

lifetime.

*The Middle--A Nestling Hatches, Grows, and Learns.*

And now I am here. In a pale brown  
yellow egg. My life is held within the  
fragile shell.

30 days later I emerge from my slippery  
soupy cocoon. Covered in downy copper  
feathers, Ready to walk, Ready to swim.

Protective, careful parents watch my every  
move, Watch as I grow and change. Teach me  
how to fly, How to dance, How to forage, How  
to kar-r-r-roo.

As the season changes, so do I. I  
lose my downy feathers; my legs  
grow longer. I am a gangly, grey,  
graceful colt; Able to play and  
dance, Ready to fly.

As the air grows cooler and the leaves  
change, I grow restless. The time comes. The  
time to soar.

*The End--A Local Laments the  
Migration.*

The bright, busy Colorado sun streams into my eyes I  
turn my head away from the blazing destructive beam.  
Suddenly, I catch sight of the large slate grey birds

Awe of the large, noble birds washes over me Red crowns, princely  
postures, and beautiful grey feathers inform me Of something I  
already know. I am in the presence of royalty.

These cranes, they have a  
purpose; A place in the world.  
They cannot be here forever; They  
are just passing through. Here to  
dance, not to stay, I mourn the  
bittersweet departure.

Gentle murmurs arise from the colorful fall field, A soft  
cacophony of sound surrounds me I am bathed in the subtle  
ambiances of Nature's natural orchestra.

As I watch them lift into the  
air. Graceful. Weightless.  
Restless. Ready. I know I will  
see them again.