

# On How to Become a Sandhill Crane

I need to leave.

I can't take anything with me,

Watch out for danger,

especially in my bedroom.

I am not safe, I am alone,

even with hundreds around me.

Sometimes the other's dance

With someone who understands, but

There will not be a dance for me,

I can't dance.

There's no one to dance with me

and I need to catch my breath.

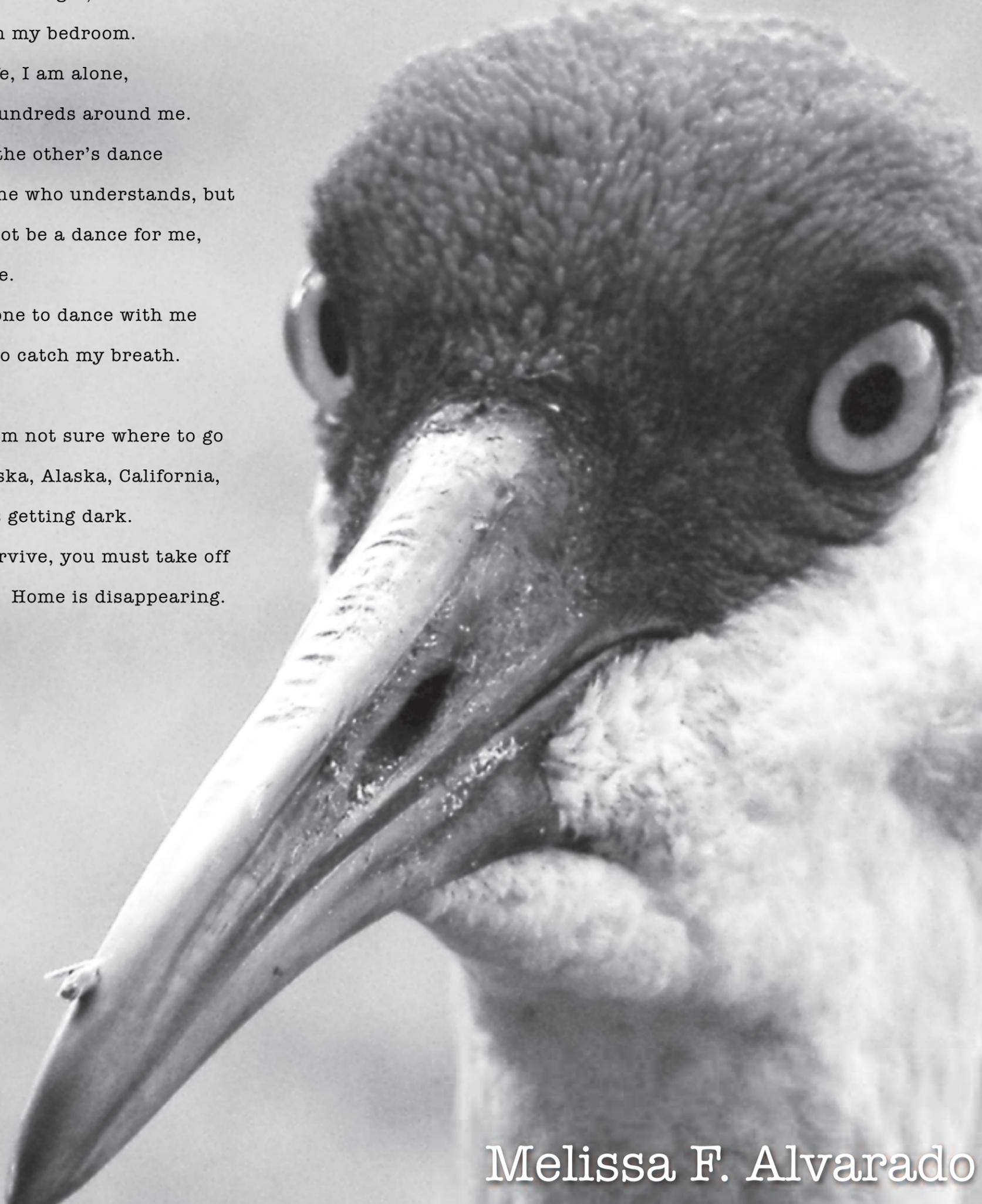
I'm tired. I'm not sure where to go

after Nebraska, Alaska, California,

Where? It's getting dark.

If I don't survive, you must take off

without me. Home is disappearing.



Melissa F. Alvarado

Melissa grew up in Nebraska (barefoot with chickens in the yard and everything.) She first started writing in the fifth grade, where she got in trouble for writing a "scary" story about a girl drowning in a lake...in high school she received the "Spindrift Poet's Award" as a Junior. At the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) she graduated with her Bachelor's in English and Biology, but for some reason was told to "pick one or the other," which never made sense to her. While at UNK, Melissa received the "Christine Pappas" award for best Nebraska undergraduate writing which was awarded to her by William Kloefkorn, the Nebraska state poet. After UNK she applied to only one Pharmacy school, Creighton University. She says she completed her Doctorate's of Pharmacy in 2006 to "punish" herself because she didn't get in to the writing school of her choice. She considers herself a non-fiction narrative poet. Publications include poems published in Chum, Suisun Valley Review, The Toronto Quarterly, The Poetry Warrior, Secret Press USA, Plains Song Review, "The World According to Goldfish - Looking Past," by Goldfish Press, "Times of Sorrow, Times of Grace," by Backwaters Press, and a few more. She is also a Nebraska Center for Writer's author. Recently, Melissa realized that she traveled from coast to coast within six months (including Hawaii and Alaska), but continues to focus her writing on her experiences in Nebraska.

