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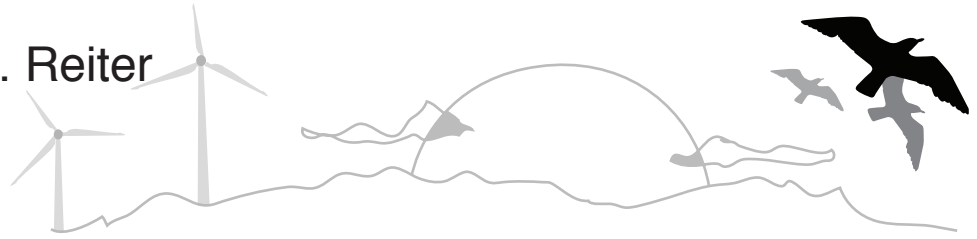
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The logo for Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), featuring the letters "SWOSU" in a bold, blue, serif font. A stylized, curved line passes through the "O" and "S" characters.

Sea Gulls and Wind Farms

by Lora K. Reiter



Cruising west on 70,
Around a smoky hill in March,
I see a field of daisies where none should be.
It's the south side of a cattle lot sloping toward a pond.
But daisies by the hundreds, maybe thousands,
Cluster on the side hill, weaving, dancing,
Clean against the winter black and rust.
Some are sinking, lowering to the ground,
Losing themselves within the teeming white.
Others are rising, blowing upwards.
I see them organize, take shape, and sail and sweep,
Hulls made for racing on salt waves,
Wings like scimitars to cut blue slices from the sky,
Sea gulls riding high on Kansas winds.
I wonder if gulls flew here
When oceans moved upon these hills.
I used to wonder
Why seashells decorated stones of our old house.
Why sharks' teeth lay among our cattle's tracks.
What predator a huge and ancient turtle met,
Halved in one bite like a beetle in a beak,
Now a fossil in our creek bank.
In two more miles, I see a wind farm rise above the hills,
Wind mills white as gulls,
Their blades shimmering like knives
That cut a different pattern in the blue.
Magnificent and clean,
Silent from this distance,
They signify a future as far from me
As the ocean and its shells.

Caught between those stretches
Of time I cannot measure,
I think of gulls behind my father's tractor in the spring.
They dived and hopped for worms and grubs
While I, stretched in the long straight track
The plow's disk etched,
Watched them over fortresses turned out by shares,
Silver blades that cut deep in the soil,
Carving shining curves for me to kneel behind,
Calm with the smell of earth still cool below the sun,
Pleased by its purple, green, and blue,
Certain that my father soon would make another round,
Create for me a new sweet place to lie and think,
Not yet aware that that dear earth
Was itself quickly turning under all of us,
Me, my father, and the birds.



Illustration by SWOSU Design Studio