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## Artist's Statement: Recognizing the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* Taking Flight

Stephen Nesser

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**ARTIST'S STATEMENT:**

**RECOGNIZING THE *INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF PARTNERSHIP STUDIES* TAKING FLIGHT**

Stephen Nesser MFA

***Life Partners at Twilight***

***Watercolor on paper (2015)***

It was winter's twilight. The highlights deepened to turquoise and the shadows to ultramarine blue. Two southbound tundra swans banked northward into the chill wind and glided silently over an open stretch of the Mississippi River. With their wing tips nearly touching, they stopped flapping simultaneously, turned at the same instant, touched down, and settled into the night side by side.

Common things touch me. What could be more common than a bird in flight? Yet the swans' flight in perfect unison bespoke trust, practice, skill, and intimacy all in a silent few seconds. Side-by-side they were perfect partners, each heeding the other. Their complex flight appeared effortless, so perfect was their partnership. I was awestruck.

I am a student of the Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi-sabi* recognizes that all things corrode, crumble, or die. It reveres authenticity and honors all things imperfect and incomplete. Or, to say it another way, it cherishes the beauty of things modest and humble.

This watercolor painting tries to capture the "witching light" of sunset to honor the common and perfect flight of mated-for-life tundra swans. Their steadfast partnership at the end of the day and the year is worthy of being honored. I hope my painting says: I witnessed you and I offer this painting as a small tribute to your common perfection. I will remember the profound teaching of your ordinary life.

