PROJECT 16
You, the Migrant

Two hundred years ago the author's Hertzel ancestors were south German people who emigrated from Switzerland. In the eighteenth century, some of that family migrated to the Ukraine to a Lutheran town where the family remained for less than a century. To avoid persecutions by the Russian government, they migrated to the United States, where they met immigrants from Ireland, and individuals from the two families married. One of their children married into a family descended from Norwegians and Austrians, and that family moved from Missouri to Illinois then Minnesota. The author then moved to Seattle to work and study, to Oregon to study, and eventually to Oklahoma to teach. The author is also the descendant of Indo-European and Germanic people, as well as migrations from Africa thousands of years ago.

Almost any person could describe similar events from the past. Some better-known American migrations include Native American "removals," forced and voluntary migrations across the Atlantic from Africa, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century migrations from Europe and Asia, and more recent migrations from Mexico into Texas and the southwest, from Southeast Asia to the Midwest, between Pacific Islands, and so on. Furthermore, each one of us has ancestors who migrated out of Africa, across Asia, or who participated in other migrations. And this is not unique to the people of North America; it has been going on as long as humans have been human.

In one paragraph, outline your own migrant heritage. What migrations brought you here?