



Black-bellied Plover

The prairie is soggy – water ponded atop clay,
It's a dreary day and more rain's on the way,
I'm looking for geese, and they're hard to find,
That I'll not see them today I'm becoming resigned.

I turn down a road that is made of gravel,
My plans for the day seeming to unravel,
When suddenly my shaman bird appears up ahead,
And hops on an armadillo that's definitely dead.

As I drive up to the caracara, it cocks its red beak,
And opens it up and commences to speak,
Telling me to forget about those silly geese,
“There's a better bird over on the next piece.”

The caracara leads me to the pothole pond
Where birds with black bellies stood just beyond
The wetland sedges at the edge of the water
Where several are resting, and one is the spotter.

They're large for plovers, looking smart in spring fashion,
The black and white males are really dashing,
It's a bird of the coast up here during migration,
It's a new bird to see and fills me with elation.

The shaman looks over and offers some advice
“Few geese are around 'cause there's not much rice,
So now you birdwatchers must get more creative,
And start learning to work the prairies that are native.”

“These local ecosystems are full of prairie plants,

It's the same habitat where the prairie chickens dance,
But it takes more work to find various species,
And maybe a guide working on a master's thesis."

I thanked my shaman, and said I'm working to restore,
A hundred thousand acres of prairie or more,
To take the carbon from the sky to the soil,
To address climate change and global turmoil.

My shaman held his wing out for a feathered high five
And thanked me for actions to keep him alive
I explained that it was a part of the Church of the Earth
And I drove back to Houston with restored self worth.

So welcome to Earth church
Pull yourself up a pew
And pray that a friendly shaman
Will help you too.