

The Killdeer

Working at my home office thinking about
Covid and when I learned to ask for help.

I am of the age where people I know
Are becoming ill, disabled,
Body unable to function, life-threatening sick,
Not to mention the risk of Covid,
Causing reflection on my own ability to avoid
Disabling disease, at least so far,
Remembering I was once disabled by my habits.

The memory of the rehab center art class
Is as stark and harsh today as it was then,
The leader asking us to sketch our self-image
And me drawing a bird sitting on a nest,
Broken wing hanging limp at its side,
Unable to protect home and family,
Reminding me of the killdeer pretending
To be injured to distract the predators,
Faking that the wing is broken,
Luring predators away with easy prey,
But my broken wing was no ruse,
And the pain was real – very real.

And as I reflect upon that wounded bird,
I look back with humility, with gratitude

That I found a path, a way forward,
A way that required me to ask for help,
A way that included the love of my girl,
A way that included my church - the Earth -
For I was lost and then was found,
Helping myself with the help of others,
The wounded bird wounded no more,
Transitioning like the killdeer to fly again,
Whole, alive, and safe,
Filled with gratitude and humility.

And today walking on the grass at Rice,
Seeing the killdeer trying to lure me away,
Pretending that which I was,
I smile knowing the church of the Earth
And the killdeer are there to help me.