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A Bird on the Shoreline

My daughter tells me she doesn't believe in God. Her words pour onto the supper table like milk spilling. In measured silence she waits for what I will say. The evening news mumbles in the background, dog scratching at the door. I look out the window to September sky opening its dark blue skirt of night. I tell her the Piping plovers will be leaving soon, if they haven't already. Asking her, do you remember the first time we saw them through binoculars, on the broad sandbar new McConaughy? You were eight or nine. How you were the first one to spot the bird, its pale sand color, You knew to look for the black tail spot, the whitish romp. How you loved the story of their “broken-wing” act, when Mother Piper, frightened, pretends she's crippled, leading intruders away from the nest. How all the way home we made its sound, peep-lo, peep-lo, laughing at our silliness, happy because we loved a new thing.

This bird, becoming more rare, like this woman-child, eyes gray-blue pools of shiny rain.

--Shelly Clark