

Olango Island

By Marjorie Evasco



Such distress over the story of mist nets,
Strung 120 meters wide to catch the birds
Visiting the wetlands of Olango in April.

It is time for plovers to breed in the Arctic.
And this island feeds and rests them
On their northward flight to Siberia.

The scientists call this bird-banding season,
Rare chance to lure each curve of flight
And measure wingspan, winglength, weight.

Then slip the footring through for tracking
As far as Australia or back again. The procedure
Has many uses, for birds' sake. But there's

A catch: sometimes there are sudden storms
In summer and the trackers
Have to stand in lightning's way

To free the birds
Stranded in mist that wouldn't give
Fair and easy passage to wings.