

# In Serried Ranks

© Alan Stuart  
October 2013

Plovers standing in serried ranks  
In the swale between the sand banks  
Fixedly staring down the wind  
Stoic, resolute, determined.

They returned here a month ago  
For their lengthy austral furlough.  
The journey took more than a week;  
They flee the tundra's winter bleak.

Breeding plumage is almost gone  
Hints of black belly linger on.  
Their once-golden flecks have faded  
For a blander plumage traded.

Do they think of the arctic sun?  
As they hunker down one by one  
Born into cool damp northern heath  
Yet now it is hot sand beneath.

