COOP

chickens of our poetry

An art and poetry zine

COOP

chickens of our poetry

Edition #4

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For submission and publication inquiries please contact us at coopzine@gmail.com or visit us on our website, coopzine.wordpress.com

When finished, please pass on or recycle!

Content Warning: Some poems portray animal death.

Cover art: "Hen at High Noon"
by Sorin Sukumaran
archaeopterxyz.wixsite.com/portfolio
Graphite, digital

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My Lovely Neighbors

Ray
clorofolle on Tumblr
Pen, watercolor pencil

the chicken who dreamed

Sanjana Shankar
@infinitesmals on Twitter

somewhere in alabama is an
old english game hen in the dark.
it is not yet midnight, the stars
twinkle like polished steel
and she wonders how it would feel
to be in the sky, glowing with
no children to feed, no husband
whose screams signal the dawn of
a new day, no obligation to be
anything but herself. to look down
at the world under you, that is
more than fences and manicured lawns
or mouths to feed and hay to lay on.
she does not know a life outside this,
but she looks up at the sky and sees
a shooting star. and she thinks
if the stars can move on,
so can she.

Momma's Prized Silkies

E . H Wesson
@EHWesson on Instagram and Tumblr
Digital

Doomed Chickens

Thomas Dunne

A shout out to every chicken rendered
Fit for breeding, feeding and slaughter
A hearty thanks for your life surrendered
To feed ma and pa, and son and daughter

A sea of bobbing heads in frantic squawk
Nameless, faceless and billions in number
Blood-weary workers, numb and beyond fault
Shock, stick and scald - then cut asunder

Meanwhile the marketers devise their smarm
As if selling widgets that never once lived
Packaged with pictures of a tranquil farm
Chicken and parts portioned and sieved

No sweet sound ever issued from thy throat
Only piercing, pitched cries that rise from the ruck
O! to steal you free and build you a cote
Where I could hear your cackle, coo and cluck

I'd make death far distant from your harborous hutch
You can sing to the welkin your cacophonous song
Or rest and nest and be broody with clutch
And never be slaughtered for doing no wrong

O! "choicest of birds", over whom we lord
Without your death we'd be pressed to survive
Would you step from under Damocles' sword
For a chance to live, though we be deprived?

Know this, all critters of the sea and sod
Though your flesh be fated to earth-bound course
Your soul is beaconed toward the gods and God
And the light therein draws home to its Source

So chicken, no words of consolation
For your life and death so darkly immured
Only deficient appreciation
And vague hope 'twas not in vain endured

Chicks at the Store

NeoAsh

Little chickens at the store
For twenty dollars and no more,
Sweet little cheeps
With sweet little peeps
Little baby chickens galore.

I wish I could take one home with me,
You'd be in my yard running free
So much space
For your cute little face,
If only such a thing could be.

Alas, the store has a trick
That makes me a bit heartsick,
To buy little chickens
With which you are smitten,
You must get at least six.

Haiku for a New Mother

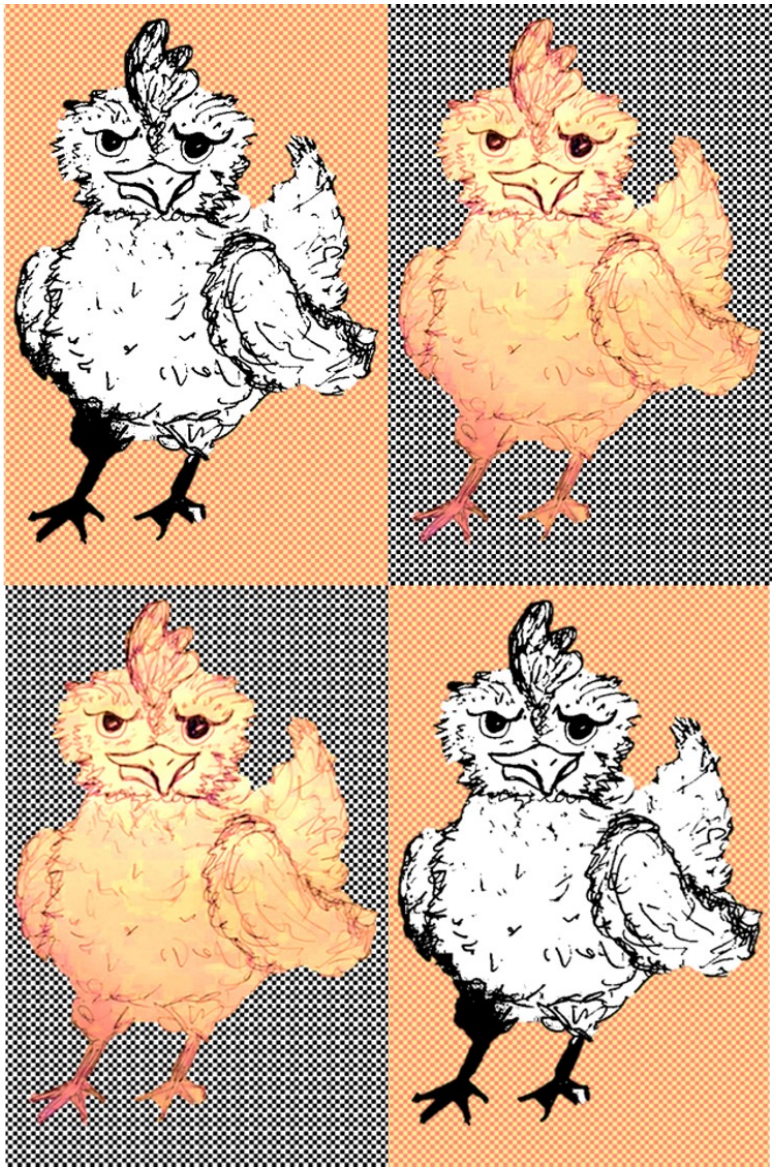
Melanie Figg
www.melaniefigg.net

for Whitney

New mom is tired,
Baby needs some comforting.
Chickens in the crib!

Soft chicken feathers
flutter on her cheek. She coos
while her baby sleeps.

Time to sleep, baby,
mama sings her lullaby:
bock bock bock bock bock.



sunny side up

alliyah
youngwriterssociety.com
Ink, digital

Verisimilitude

Thomas Jackson
@jtommyj on Instagram, @tommybbyboy on Twitter

chickens pause in the run. their
prowl for bugs stopped abrupt
-ly frozen in time. i turn to
look behind, hoping to catch
a glimpse of what's scared them
into stillness, a pause that
could elongate into death if
special care isn't taken. i expect
to see there, behind us, a man
these birds have never met. &
for a second i do, i see him as
i hear clucking & rustling of
feathered yellow tripod feet
ripping up dirt, digging tap of
corn-colored beaks scraping clay. i
drag my hesitant gaze back forward
feeling a twinge in my sleep-sore
neck. when my eyes reach the flock
i ask, expecting an answer, was it him
that scared you? did you see him too?
my mothercluckers don't pay me any
mind walking about the run.

Vincent

Thomas Jackson
@jtommyj on Instagram, @tommybbyboy on Twitter

feathers black
my little egg hen
in sun
emerald luster
in shade
obsidian
i walk out to the run
you're not there to greet me
it's been months of nothing to do
except falter under the weight of
never saying goodbye to you
held firmly in my arms while
fox wounds bleed into my shirt
taking pain from your body
holding it in fibers as my own
providing comfort
as i did when you fit
in the palm of my hand
there's just a void behind the hens who remain
where i used to direct my smile & a warm hello
i can't pick 'n choose how deeply i mourn i lose
sources of joy daily it's purgatory it's
hell, i'd grieve the silence before the word i just spoke
if given enough time to think; feel
your nail tips tapping on my shoes, yet their

white leather is bare when i reach down to pat ya
ventricles palpitate, you weren't just a bird to me
you're a void now, why scrounge the emptiness for peace?
felt better with you when my liver wasn't working properly
smiled at you when i had no reason to i
hope when you shut your eyes the final time
you felt me crying in my sleep across state lines
& didn't wonder
where did you go
why did you leave?

Chicken Sketch #1

Ray
clorofolle on Tumblr
Pen

Riddle

Paul Hostovsky

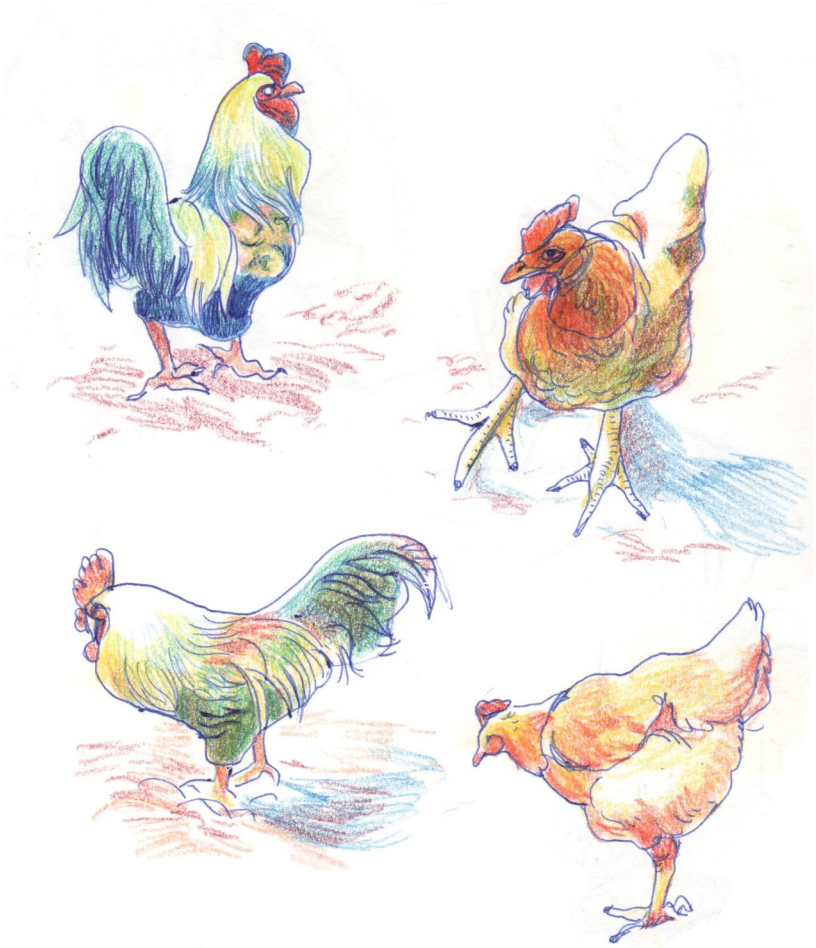
Why is why the chicken crossed
the road the only question ever
asked? We know nothing of
the chicken herself, or the road,
or the nature of the crossing, only
the reason for the crossing and that
it was successful. Can you remember
the first time you heard of this chicken?
It was probably in grade school,
on the schoolyard maybe, or waiting
for the crossing guard, a friend
putting the question to you apropos
of crossing a road. Do you recall
getting it right? No, of course not, no one
did. It's so manifest we missed it, then
fell in love with it forever. It became
the whole story. It's an American
story. It erased its own history, all trace
of the farmhouse by the road in need
of repairs, early spring, the forsythia bush
yellowing in back of the peeling hen house,
the ax sticking up out of the tree stump, blood
all around, the dark blood everywhere,
and one spring chicken running across
a road for its life. Now here's a question:
This chicken that crossed the road to get
to the other side, this white chicken that got
to the green other side, is she alive or
is she dead and just doesn't know it yet,
having crossed a road with her head cut off,
a head that thinks it got to another side?

Chicken Sketch #2

Ray
clorofolle on Tumblr
Pen

Chicken Quartet

Ray
chlorofolle on Tumblr
Pen, watercolor pencil



We're not afraid

Selena Langner
@selenalangner on Twitter

"Coyotes gonna get you," I say, in a low, soft voice.

The ground sinks around me, prairie dog tunnels turned soft with rain. Thick red mud sticks to my clogs, climbs my bare feet, stains my ankles.

The Big Dipper reels on its handle overhead, like it's been kicked up by a bull and is still falling through the air, about to clatter onto the silver-white prairie floor. Rabbitbrush and fescue gleam.

"You can't go camping out here in the rain," I tell the chickens, watching them rearrange themselves. They're perched on the cinderblocks again, determined to sleep under the stars. I pick each one off with my bare hands, press each soggy hen to my chest and haul them indoors, chuckle to myself about how silly they are.

They never mind when I pick them up, just spread their wings low and flat, bent at the knees, pressed wide against the muddy ground, like they're telling me "we're not afraid of no coyotes."

They hoot and shuffle in their coop. No other sounds besides the clatter of the rain, barely there any more.

Far away, lightning flickers. There's no need to be scared. It's too wet for a fire to start now.

But when I brought the pup home, it was a whole 'nother story. He was just a little thing, had about as much muscle tone as a tube sock, but that didn't stop the hens from squawking all over the pasture, 'till they summited the compost pile in a huff.

The pup just sat there, barely able to move on his still-limp legs. Eight weeks old, and just trying to make new friends. Made me think of my dad, back when I was just a kid. Story goes that back when I was a baby, I was in the car, and wouldn't stop screaming, crying, wailing, and Pops had nearly had enough of it. He was driving us up the dirt roads, and I just kept at it. Finally, the man broke. Grabbed my binky right out of my mouth and threw it out the window.

"There," he said, "that'll give you something to cry about." Didn't stop me from crying, but at least I had a reason after that.

So now I push drenched chickens into their houses, trying to keep them alive for one more night. After, I close their door and latch it with a worn-out dirty old brown hairband, wrap it three times tight around the nail I'd driven through the wood, and skitter back down the path toward the house.

It's dark, the moon new, just an idea really, nothing but the Milky Way carved into the sky above.

Coyotes gonna get you, I whisper to myself, remembering nights as a child huddled next to the smoldering embers of a fire. I pad up the path, peeling away the darkness with my lantern, slipping under the Ponderosas, peering into the branches, trying to discern what's there.

I can tell the pack's far away, because when the howling starts, it ricochets through the hills.

I scamper the last few feet to the house, a double-wide just perched on the land, crunch through cinders in the drive-way, slip inside. For a moment, the door gapes. I snug it closed, crank the deadbolt three times, twist it tight.

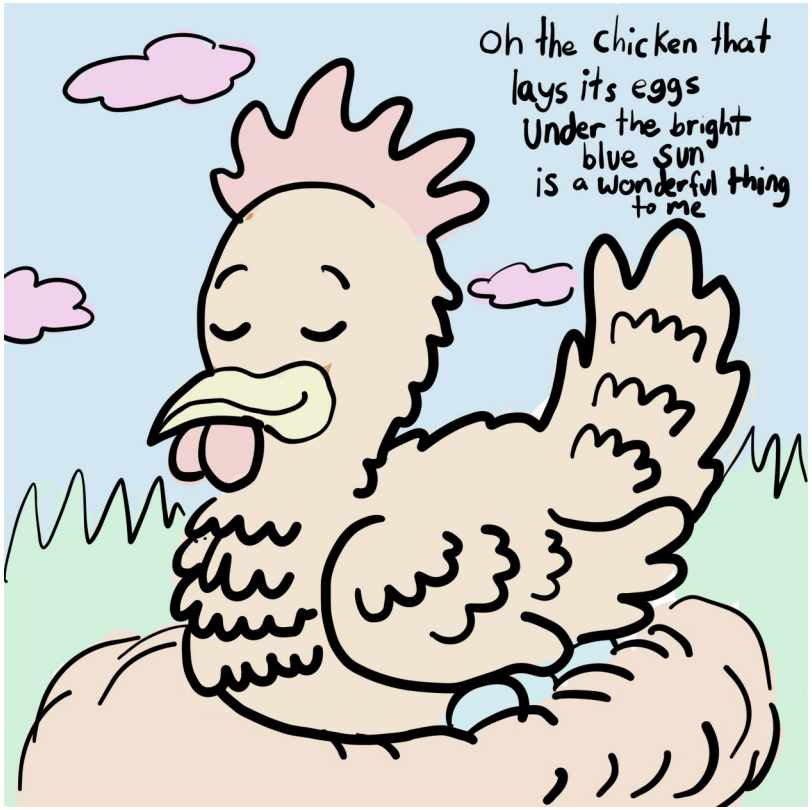
"There," I say, "that'll give you something to cry about."

Chicken Sketch #3

Ray
clorofolle on Tumblr
Pen, watercolor pencil

The chicken under the sun

Zowabob
@zowabob on Instagram
Digital



How about a little empathy

Colin Gee
@ColinMGee on Twitter

How about a little empathy
for someone who only has
5 to 6 memories
for a dinosaur on a dresser

Cacklefarts

Jeff Gallagher

A Cheshire lad laid this before my eyes,
Wrenched from a tired and battered tome:
Quaint earthy cant that leapt from the throat
Surprising shy ears and the muddled mouth.

A bright mush of gibberish and war comic German,
Lost through the years, brought briefly to life.
And there, in the corner, on a damp, dusty bookshelf,
And there, in the graves of illiterate landsmen,

Reclined all the life of an alien culture,
Its poetry, humour and accurate vision...
Yes! The crabbed, clumsy creatures squat at an angle;
With a squawk of discomfort they give up their prize,

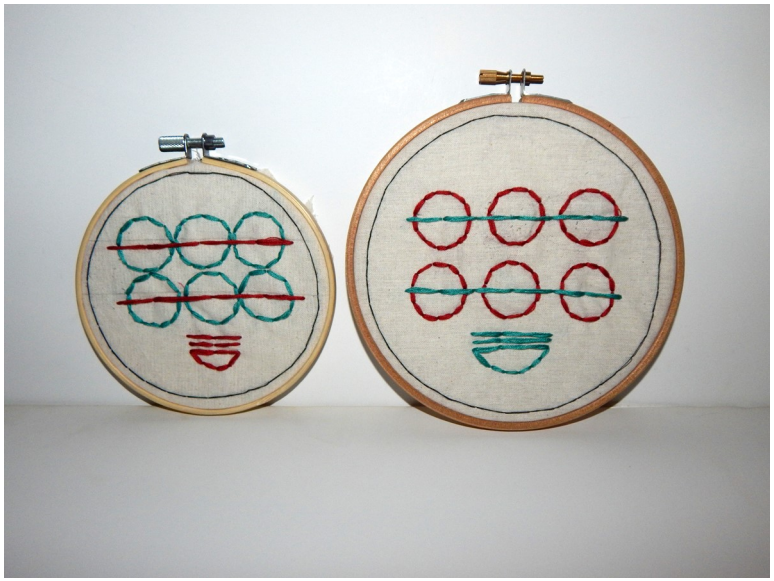
Each cacklefart caught in a brown, wrinkled hand;
Till Victorian primness kills the life and the fun
Of the word's bold exactness; confines it to books.
Foul progress has killed it, as sure as eggs is eggs.

Egg Song

Whitney Gratton
Digital

Chicken and egg

Teri Anderson
@tinyteri13 on Instagram
Embroidery thread on cotton canvas



Blessing

Whitney Gratton

I wish you
hens upon hens
upon hens —
to the seventh generation
may your children's
children's children
never want
for eggs.

Editor's note

alliyah

Well the COOP zine has hatched again and we have more chickens than ever! Thank you for finding your way to the zine, I hope you've enjoyed the read. This was a fun edition to see come to life. As with each new edition of COOP, I've been so impressed by the range of emotions and subjects that fit within this chicken theme. This time around we were pleased to even accept a short story and embroidery piece within the pages.

One of the most challenging and exciting pieces of the editing process is figuring out with Rook what order the works will fall into; arranging the sweep of emotion of the edition. In this one you'll find moments of humor, sorrow, light-hearted care, whimsy, brooding, and nostalgia. I'd like to think that chickens work as a beautifully feathered blank canvass ready to hold this diverse landscape of poetry and art. It's exciting when the pieces are finally put in place, working together, each one becoming a part of a vision and conversation. Art and poetry can't exist in a vacuum, but always ideally finds themselves in a greater conversation.

If you'd like to join the conversation at COOP, please consider submitting your piece to the next edition. Our message is to get creative, pick up the pencil or paintbrush, and don't be afraid to share your work! Thank you again for playing a part in that mission by reading and sharing COOP - keep creating, the world could use your voice!

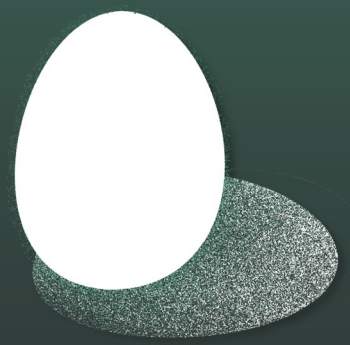
Editor's note

Rook

This edition of COOP is particularly exciting for us. We've had more submissions and submitters than we've ever had before, and the quality of submissions has been excellent. We are publishing our first short story and our first traditional art pieces. Represented among the poetry are all the different moods of chickens, from the silly absurdism of "Cacklefarts" to the heartfelt grief of "Vincent," from the thoughtful introspection of "Riddle" to the lighthearted humor of "chicks at the store."

I am so happy that COOP gets to be the publication that shares this art with the world. Thank you so much to all our submitters, thank you to alliyah, and thank *you* dear reader, for giving this quirky little zine a read.

With every new edition for COOP, I feel as if we've taken a huge stride. The world is that much richer in chicken poetry and art. We've come that much further as a publication, with one more edition under our belt. Let's do another. Let's look ahead to more sunny-side-up mornings and inspire chicken lovers everywhere to create their art and write their poetry. Let's cut loose, be free, and think about those beloved, befeathered little dinosaurs that humanity has been obsessed with for millennia.



find more at coopzine.wordpress.com