

# COOP

of our poetry



Duck, Duck, Goose!

find more at [coopzine.com](http://coopzine.com)

## Editor's note

Rook

We celebrate chickens here at COOP, but we also like to celebrate others: the chicken friends, the creatures who live among chickens, their avian cousins. We encourage people to write chicken poetry when they're not quite sure what to write, because chickens feel goofy and low-stakes and there's a lot that could be said about them. But not everyone feels a deep connection with chickens. Some have more experience watching the geese swimming on a nearby pond or the pigeons roosting under a bridge. It doesn't matter which silly little creature that lives outside your window or inside your heart: write that poem.

Within the pages of this zine are some incredibly beautiful and heart-wrenching, serene and surreal poetry, not to mention images that showcase the diverse talent of our contributing artists.

It's interesting to see which animals our contributors were drawn toward. There's such a delightful assortment of birds (plus alpacas!) in this issue. Thank you for introducing us to so many different chicken friends and helping us see them in a new light. I'd never thought of a bagpipe as a goose before!

## Editor's note

alIyah

At COOP we've never been afraid of being a little bit out of the box (or out of the egg-shell!) and this special edition of COOP, we decided to even allow writers and artists the freedom to go beyond our typical chicken theme and show us their best art and poetry pertaining to any variety of birds. In this issue you'll find ducks, and geese, pigeons, and turkeys, and a host of other feathered friends. And isn't there something that is just so naturally poetic about birds? Perhaps it's their ability to not be bound by land that makes them the perfect subject. It was a pleasure to see how the contributors brought their unique perspectives into their work, and how they made an effort to see beyond the obvious or literal - but convey humor, hope, narrative and metaphor that goes beyond the page. Enjoy this special edition, keep bird-watching, and keep looking beyond!

~~COOP~~  
~~chickens of our poetry~~

GOOP  
geese on our pond

Duck, Duck, Goose!



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For submission and publication inquiries please contact us at [coop@coopzine.com](mailto:coop@coopzine.com) or visit us on our website, [coopzine.com](http://coopzine.com)

When finished, please pass on or recycle!

Content Warning: Some poems portray animal death.

Cover art: “Duckie and Goosie”  
by Larz Alexander Hagen  
[@larzstarz\\_arts](https://www.instagram.com/larzstarz_arts) on Instagram  
Digital

## underneath Northtown Mall's bridge from the parking structure to the main building

Joseph Self  
[@bigbot66](https://www.instagram.com/bigbot66) on instagram

Pigeon down for peach blossoms. They swirl  
down in concrete wind. So many times  
we have learned to paint and failed to comprehend.  
The newest rendition lies beneath, gray with guano  
blended corners where the sweep brush failed.  
This land belongs to the pigeons. Their king  
has long since bonded with the immaterial and artificial.  
He pecks at stained paper wrappers and the foundation  
of this human attempt at sky. A covering  
like a tent or a ceiling to replace what highest yields  
is nothing new to him and he favors waddling the land  
where his easy banquet will soon unfurl, but he, the king,  
is not reserved against abandonment. He knows who  
the angels are and it has always been them. Fast. Unglorious.

Mottled  
after a painting god saw while making the world  
of green leaves giving way to vivid pink fire, which lifts  
until it dies and black branches reign over the gray  
firmament.



Ridgewood Pigeons

bedfordtowers  
 @bedfordtowers on Instagram  
 Photograph

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# When I Look at Crows

E. W. Here

I can't help but see death

I remember being clothed in Black

as Black as the birds

and a little Crow landed in the grass

she watched me

watched me cry

and smear my black lipstick

as I called her name

## Swan Song

E. W. Here

over the lake the Swans fly  
glide and gleam  
each pale feather as it falls  
and graces the glass water  
echoes the touch  
of a piano

## Dreaming of Peacocks

E. W. Here

the little Duck with the grass-colored head  
drifts through the mossy lake  
the water behind him rippling out  
in an endless tail  
of shifting color

## and watch the geese take flight

Ellie Simmons

warmth is, especially  
on the sunbaked rocks of the river,  
a reminder of youth.  
i return on occasion in the summer,  
dip my feet in the chilling water  
and consider how i never feared.  
i keep to the shore when i visit,  
for the wade to the field  
of sun kissed sedimentary  
requires a tread through currents  
abrading and deep,  
seething around my ankles.  
the child that i once was  
never saw the threat,  
never distrusted the waters,  
despite the numbness of the limbs  
that comes with the cold.  
there was no danger in a sweeping current,  
no hesitation as she reached  
for the geese, who surely  
would nip at her fingers  
if drawn too close.  
i linger on the brink of the waters now,  
and watch the geese take flight  
from their perches  
on the sun-warmed rocks.



afternoon snack

Nancy Nolf  
@babeaccuda on Twitter and Tumblr  
Digital

embrace of mine,  
all bellows and drones and tasseled  
goose? He lifts  
his bill skyward, tunes  
his own broken clarinet a moment,  
then resumes his foraging,  
returning his nose  
to its own business  
as if to say, Who knows  
or cares if love is fighting  
or love is loving?  
And who dares  
presume to understand love's ways  
or love's eyes for the one  
with the one leg and three heads,  
or the three legs and no head?  
And who's to say why one  
is the one love is dying for  
while another is a dead bore  
at love's oblivious side?  
There is only  
this music that drones on and on  
while someone or other is  
dancing till he drops  
dead of exhaustion  
or disillusion  
or strangulation.  
The indifferent  
beaks will always go on eating.



# Bagpiper Among the Geese

Paul Hostovsky

I think it looks to them  
like one of them,  
this three-legged goose  
belly-up under  
my arm, wrung neck  
hanging down with my finger-  
prints still on it.  
I think they think  
I've killed it,  
till I squeeze with my elbow  
and it comes to life,  
groaning, becoming a three-  
headed goose now  
craning its necks  
over my shoulder, sounding  
the alarm. The gander  
lifts from his desultory nibbling  
as if to consider  
whether my domestic  
squabble is impinging  
on his honor, his distant,  
foreign, and a little  
ungainly cousin having eloped  
with me, the interloper.  
But is it love  
or death, this alarming

# Sapience

S. Sadedin

Hens scratch and peck  
bathe in pools of dust  
stretch and writhe  
ecstatic in sensations  
connecting to the world  
content in the flow of existence

Geese graze  
sideways-yanking grass-tufts  
moving slowly  
across the sunlit meadow  
until some impulse stirs —  
the great white wings open  
shouting in joy, they cascade  
from end to end  
content in the flow of existence

And me?  
I sit among machines  
in a dark room  
so tell me again  
about Homo sapiens?

## Herding Chickens

Kasey Butcher Santana  
@solhomestead on Instagram

Two baby alpacas, planned for autumn,  
but only one arrived.

With no playmate, Nell bounds around the pasture,  
shouldering her aunts, more concerned with grazing than  
games.

She seeks thrills from behind her mother's fluffy tail.

I am training a flock of chickens to march from their coop  
through the gate,  
from pasture to backyard to range.

With two feet in the air and an excited hum,  
Nell rears up and jumps,  
joyful and curious at the sight of plump little birds.

She chases, trying to bop them with her soft nose.  
Squawking chickens turn and bolt,  
seeking shelter from excited cria feet.

One by one, I toss flapping hens  
over the fence where they land with a  
thud,  
but when it is time for them to go home again,

## Broad Breasted White Turkey

Patrick Kuklinski  
@todaysbird on Tumblr

You look nothing like your ancestral mother  
Packed in rows with your sisters and brothers  
You'll never touch the sky  
Even if you were free, we've made it so you could never fly  
We built you to give everything  
Your children, your body, your soul  
You suffer a life of pain  
For our convenience  
I'm sorry



Handprint Turkey

alilyah  
Watercolor

Nell is ready, waiting.

Two hens hide beneath the hay feeder where big alpacas  
eat.

Two run zigzags around the pasture with Nell trailing  
behind.

One makes her way straight to the coop, eating the apple  
waiting there.

Chickens aren't meant to be herded,  
but alpacas don't know that.

The curious prodding of this fuzzy menace  
teaches five frantic hens to flee from coop to free-range  
so fast you'd think they could fly.

### 3 Quail Haiku

M. A. Dubbs

@madubbspoeetry on Instagram

“Bobwhite Quail”

Whistle speech from brush  
a throat white, black border chin  
breast breathing peeled bark

“California Quail”

Their black or brown plumes  
tilt down on beak, shake with run  
marching quail shako

“Montezuma Quail”

Stubby fowl between  
oaks and juniper forest  
eerie cry hidden

defend her brood, she would conclude,

and then the people came.

they drove her away, dug her out and destroyed her nest,  
"she bit someone," they said, "leaving now is, for the best."

i think about that now, and though perhaps a bit obtuse,  
i simply wish this poem was only about the goose.

# The Nest, or What Happens When Customers Disturb a Goose

Rye Galbreath

i think about the goose  
who, in the spring, chose the patio for her nest.  
after all,  
it was warm,  
and safe,  
and no one was using it anyway.  
the perfect spot she must have thought,  
  
and then the people came.

"we'll just move around her," was what my manager said,  
"after all,  
it's for business,  
for profit,  
and no one was using it anyway."  
it's just a pest she must have guessed,

and so the people came.

i couldn't fault the goose  
who, while they dined, stayed rooted to her nest.  
after all,  
it was hot,  
and dangerous,  
and she was using it anyway.



## Keep Your Ducks in Rows

Teri Anderson  
@tinyteri13 on Instagram and Twitter  
Cotton on aida fabric

# Make Way for Ducklings

Caitlin O'Halloran  
@selfcaremaven on Threads and Twitter,  
caitlinohalloran.com

On a summer afternoon,  
families gather around the row of ducklings  
in the Boston Public Garden.

These eight tiny ones, frozen in bronze,  
form a single file line led by their mother,  
who knows that wherever she goes,  
her children will follow.

One looks up at the sky,  
beak open, seemingly distracted  
by a pigeon flying overhead.  
Another looks downward,  
ready to peck some tasty morsel  
off the ground.

A girl sits on top of Mrs. Mallard,  
her bright pink sneakers dangling  
off either side.  
Her mother snaps a photo with her phone,  
while rocking a stroller back and forth  
to soothe the girl's infant sister.

A father stands nearby,  
iced coffee in one hand,

as he waves at his children  
who are playing leapfrog,  
hopping over each duck.

A young child, who couldn't be more than three,  
holds a small piece of torn bread  
in the palms of her hands,  
offering it to a duckling,  
who refuses to eat.



# Make Way for Ducklings

Joe Shlabotnik  
via Flickr  
Photography