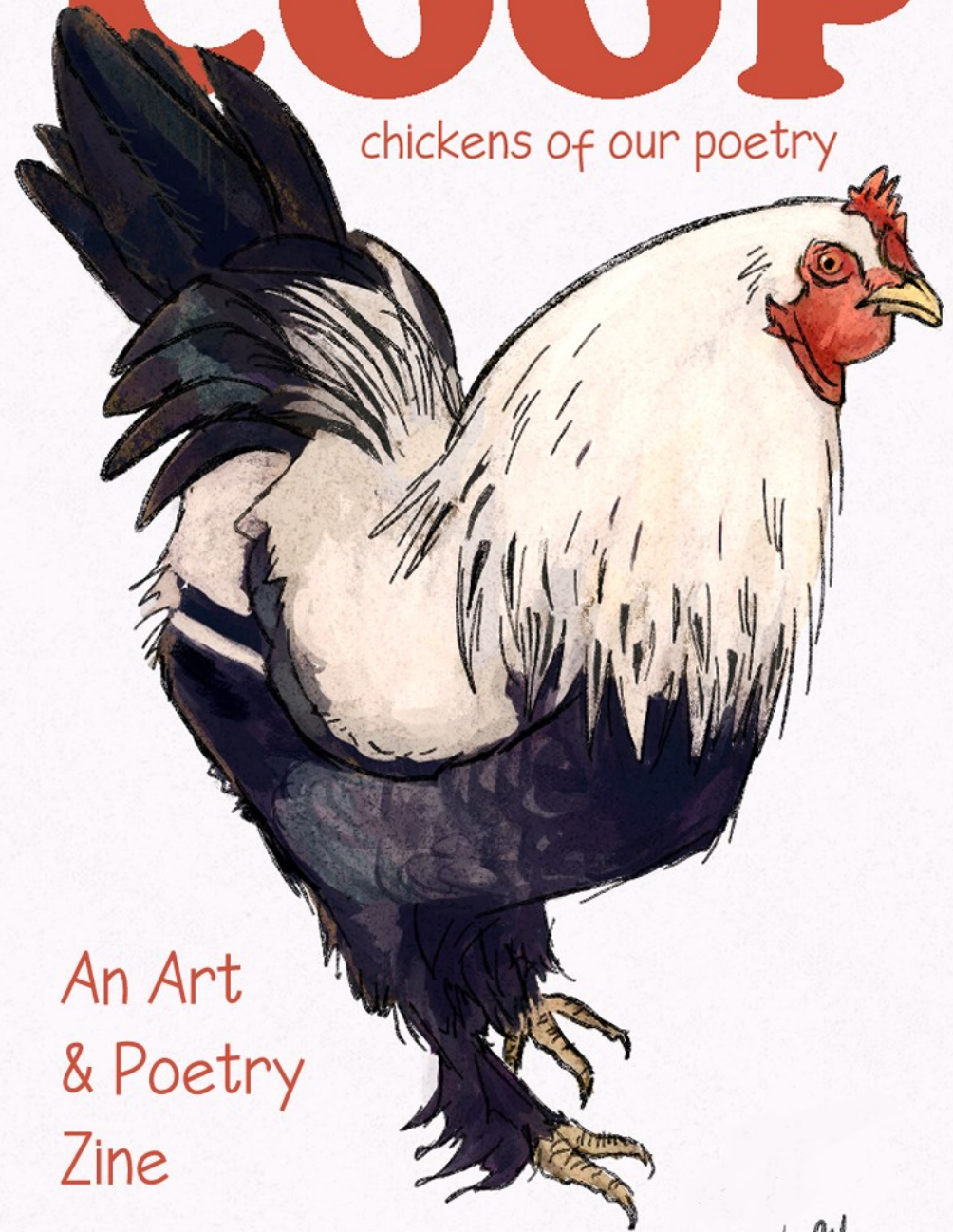


COOP

chickens of our poetry



An Art
& Poetry
Zine

b.lil

COOP

chickens of our poetry

Edition #5



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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: “handsome zeke”
by B. Lil
[okayart on Tumblr](#)
Digital

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Pollo, Poulette, Pulë, Piletina, Pollastre (Chicken)

Ron Riecki
@RieckiRon on Twitter

This poem is about chickens, which you might like to read considering that the literary journal publishes chicken poems, so if you are wanting poems about veal or liver, you might want to consider the Veal Gazette or the Liver Review, two impressive journals of their own right, if that's the correct phase, and if you are not a vegetarian, and even if you are, you can still, at least, read about chickens, especially as I'm not eating them in this poem, just talking about them, and, yes, no one will die in this poem, not me or you or even a cartoon chicken. Everyone will live. And this will allow me to take you to a farm for a social work class I took that was on Animal Therapy and, no, we didn't learn how to do therapy on animals, but we learned how animals can do therapy on us, and there were chickens there, and cows and horses and cats and dogs and pigs and the lead teacher asked us to pick an animal, any animal, and she'd do a magic trick where we'd be transformed by the animal's presence, and I remember everyone making their choices and splitting into groups and heading towards the animal they picked and the horses had so much love that I thought every person in the world would start walking to those horses with their Fusaichi Pegasus legs and perfect necks and perfecter spleens and the dogs were so cute that the entire group fainted and had to be revived, but they saw the Dogo Argentino with

their brave lungs and their search-and-rescue eyes and their long life-expectancy ligaments and they fainted again, these humans in need of counseling who were becoming counselors and everyone was where they were supposed to be, paired up with their animals like we were on an ark and I looked at the chickens. The lonely chickens. The stumbling and innocent chickens with their jokes about them crossing roads when it's impossible to do when you are incarcerated in a coop, and no one walked towards them. We all walked away from them, far away, into the sties and fields and skies and kennels of the world, and so I stopped myself, even though I was standing still, and I did it. I committed to the chickens. I vowed I would marry them. All. If necessary. That they would not be left alone. That they would, in fact, counsel me to sanity, would save me, would cure my addictions with their love and their clucking and their hunger for fruits and vegetables, the irony of these lovely creatures being eaten by carnivores when they are so gentle in their own diets of grains and table scraps and I scraped into their coop and I was loved in their coop and I pet them and laughed with them and the pigs were somewhere else being heavenly and the horses were on the other side of the world shooting geysers of bliss into the future, but I was here, now, with the chickens, who are saviors and they took me down off the crucifix and gave me wine.

Poultry Plant

Paul Hostovsky

I'm only half listening
to this NPR story about a poultry plant
-which sounds like poetry plant-
in Bessemer, Alabama,

when down the rabbit hole I go-
just another cog in the wheel
toiling among the other toiling poets
out on the floor of the poetry plant,

a room the size of an airplane hangar,
a foreman slapping a poem
with the back of his hand-"You call this
a poem?"-a poet lowering her head in shame,

forklifts loading teetering stacks of poems
onto conveyor belts, endless rows
of poems drying on metal hooks,
a metaphorical dust caking all the walls,

a lyric heaviness permeating everything.
"The plant as designed," says the spokesman
for the poultry plant, "simply can't handle
all this volume-tons and tons of innards
and excretions are creating more
pollution than our permit allows for.
I mean all that stuff has got to go somewhere."

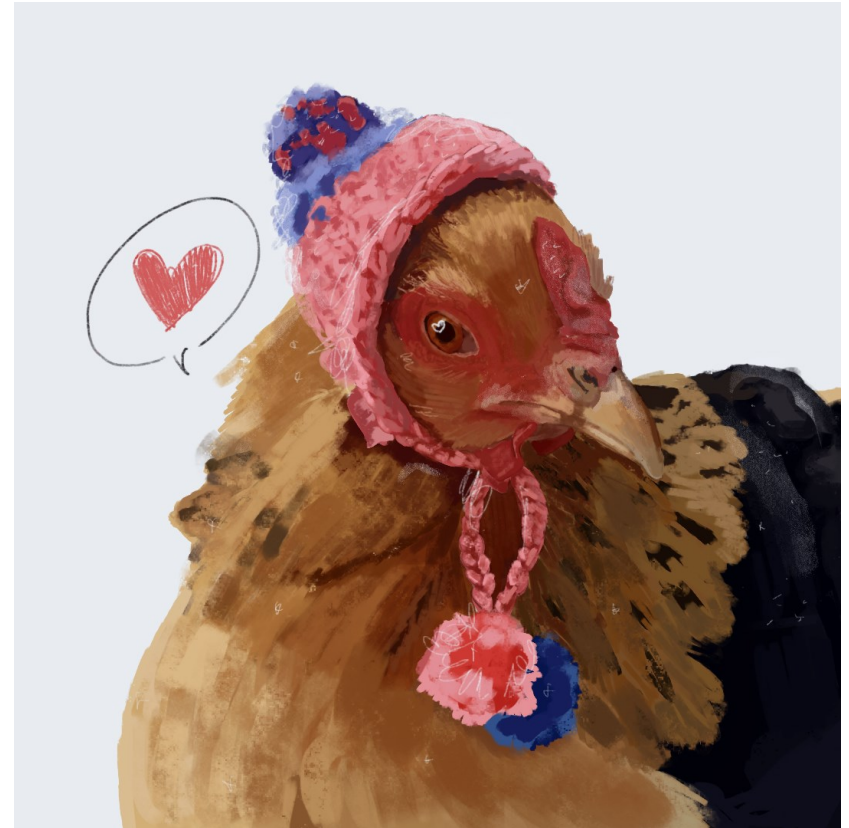
BESIDE

Arya Vishin
@thewodensfang on Twitter

in seminar my poetry prof asks us
what about the chickens? why
are they there? because it is not
as though much depends upon them
or that they were purposefully
placed on the scene. they were just
there, as creatures often are. I say—
why not? think of their white bellies
and yellow beaks, the black beads
of their eyes, their red combs &
wattles. think of the water, sliding
down & off their feathers. because
sometimes the periphery—
sometimes the margins—burst with
life, too. because they demanded
to be included.

So Much Depends

Kaleigh D
@kaleighdjpg on instagram
Digital



Prelude to an Afternoon of Chickens

Heikki Huotari

I can't hear you, there's a chicken in my ear. When talking to myself, I'm at the same time not succumbing to peer pressure and spontaneously not combusting. Chickens cut but to the chase so who's on first? Consider chickens that the chickens neither toil nor spin. If chickens think it's chicken hypnotism then it's chicken hypnotism. Chicken inhibition is prohibited. To chickens in the military one says, Chickens at attention, eyes right and at ease. The chicken Jesus leadeth me beside the sea of chickens that the chicken Moses parts, the chickens that beyond which suddenly there's nothing.

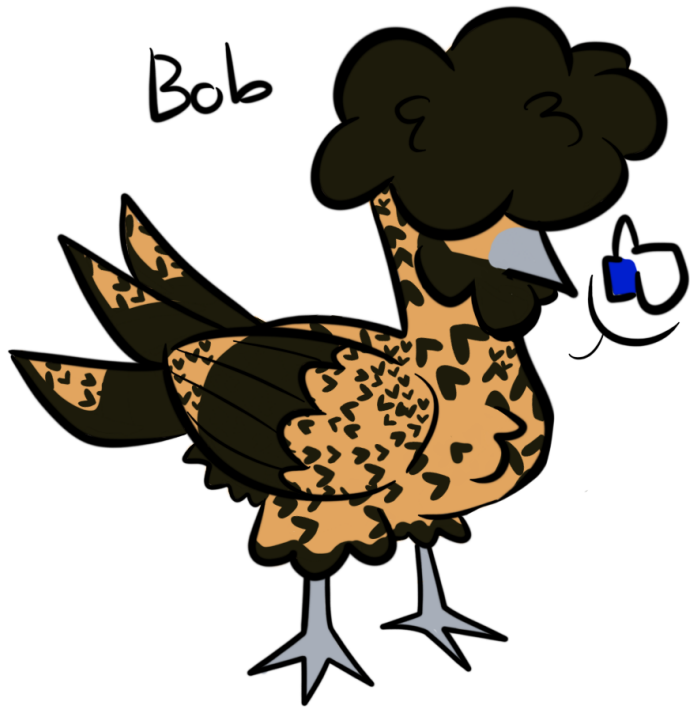


Wawa Chicken

Melissa Martini
melibeans.wixsite.com
Photography

Barbra "Bob" Ross and Buff Laced
Polish the Lizard Slayer

Quonit
quonit on Tumblr
Digital



Up the Volcano

Kim Whysall-Hammond
thecheesesellerswife.wordpress.com

Chickens roam the aisle, having burst
from their basket, but it's only a problem when
we stop to let more people on.
The driver pulls us rounds tight curves
blasts his horn at slower traffic
squeezes between them
and a sheer drop onto smoking fields.

It's 1983 and we are climbing Etna the hard way
in a local bus. Someone is praying in a low voice and
there's nothing to hold onto except each other
and perhaps God. Certainly not the chickens
who squawk at every bump and swerve.
Three villages later we get to the hotel.
It is empty, embraced by a tall curve of still glowing lava.
Hailing a battered Landrover, we pay its owner to take us
further
see the bus turn to descend to Catania once more.

Up once more, at a steadier pace, until the driver stops.
We walk over hot ground, to a raised snake of rock
which we climb, until I realise it is a lava tunnel and
dangerous.
As we climb down you pause to take a photo
and the mouth of the volcano explodes.
Our terrified driver flings his vehicle around

we chase after him, get in, race down
past the deserted hotel
down further to find the bus in a village.

We sigh with relief at the safety of the bus,
Enter, find seats together. A chicken pops onto my lap
You stroke her gently and
a goat puts her head in yours.

The Rescue Chicken

Kim Whysall-Hammond
thecheesesellerswife.wordpress.com

he's a rescue chicken
no rest for her
half her feathers missing
she's one tough bird

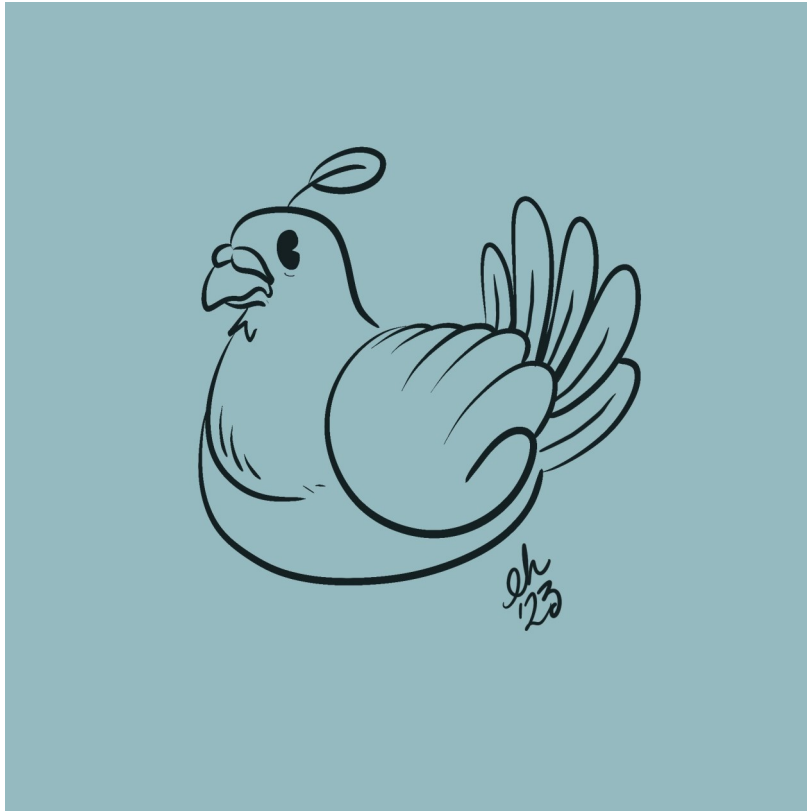
Small, brown, determined
she plans to sneak back in
wirecutters in beak
to cut free the other chickens

Who says a rescue chicken
needs tender care?
This one's for the liberation
of battery hens everywhere

Earth Fowl

Valerie Drew
@helgaki_ on Instagram, @drewvies_ on Twitter

witness them meandering near lakes
with swimming ducks, their cousins,
as they beak at the soil, dirt on their
tongues, glazing in sunlight, these
chickens can't see the wrong things,
instead discovering the breadth of
the breeze, the rusted barn, the rivers,
they cluck with pleasure at this zenith,
a nirvana with a bigger reward than
everlasting youth, the opportunity
to marinate in the eggshell of life



"oh okay"

Zuul Taratogen
@lilithfairtrade on Instagram
Digital

Rooster

Azula zinnia

There he is singing amongst the rising sun; putting all of his feeling into his lyrics without a care for anyone. Though I often wish that this fact were not true, for the boy sang so off-key that it made others a little cocoo, but he sings anyway about the changes happening during the day. Sometimes I want him to just shut up, but alas without him it's difficult to wake. Cause even though he drives me off the roof, I would rather he sing for me than leave me without my truth.

Chickens in the Grass

Nanci Nolff
babeaccuda on Tumblr
Digital



Scrabbling

Kim Whysall-Hammond
thecheesesellerswife.wordpress.com

I am scrabbling for a word
To describe the noise of chickens
Scrabbling in the garden

It isn't rustling
The leaves above are doing that
Rustle is a high pitched word
I need a lower pitch
Mustle, grustle
Tustle is what one hen is doing with a worm

Now there's a sudden outbreak of snail football
The snail always loses

It's life

On this sunny late October afternoon
Maybe it's scrabbling after all

i grew up with chickens

Solar-Praxus

i grew up with chickens.
three of them, scratching in the dirt
of a corner of the backyard of a house
in the suburbs of southern California.
i barely have any memories from then
and even less of the chickens, just one good, just one bad.
the good memory is of the “chick-nics” we’d have
eating dinner in the backyard while the chickens, loose, ate
 our scraps.
the bad memory is of Rosa, egg-bound, dying despite our
 best efforts
the vet sent us a bereavement card after they put her down.

i grew up with chickens.
now ten times the number, clamoring around a hand-built
 coop
in giant chicken run in a ten-acre homestead in an
 unincorporated area of central California.
a horde of Barred Rocks, later Buff Orpingtons,
nameless but loved nonetheless
by a kid climbing the branches of the Newton Pippin tree
 by the coop.
it no longer affected me to see a hen
hanging upside down in a cone
seconds before her life’s end.

i have no chickens now.
as i “finish” growing up
in front of a computer rather than trees
there is no room in our backyard for chickens.
and i cannot finish this poem
(not without them?)

Bring Me Winter

Vali Hawkins Mitchell

The sun is too much. Bring me the quiet darkness of winter.

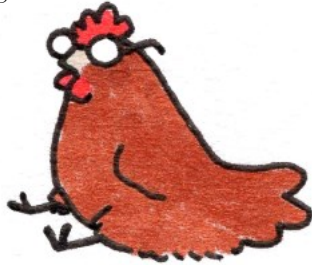
I crave the sound of cars sloshing on wet-black pavement, endless rainy nights, shortened days, and gloomy mornings when the chickens stay hunkered under dripping bushes, the dawn so somber that even the roosters are unimpressed.



Special Feature

Interview with Paz,
aka chick-it-out on Tumblr

For COOP's very first special feature, we interviewed Paz, the artist who runs a popular chicken-based blog on Tumblr called chick-it-out. We hope you enjoy her insightful answers about chicken art placed alongside his expressive drawings!



What got you started with drawing chickens?

In 2017 I decided to keep chickens. My wife and I got brand new chicks in April. Naturally, they changed my life! I think chickens are so cool! Seeing and learning about them up-close and in real life let me grow an appreciation for the wild things they do and the funny shapes/sounds they make.

I had an IT job at the time where I'd doodle on sticky notes in the office during downtime. I accidentally trained myself to enjoy the small 'canvas' that sticky notes provide. A lot of my art still happens on little sticky notes!

The chicken art started after those chicks came into my life in '17. Weekday mornings I would get up and make coffee for me and my wife to drink at work. On one such morning, I decided to stick a teeny, tiny little sticky note to the top of her thermos. A "love note" kinda- a doodle of a chicken that I hoped would brighten her day. It became something of a tradition- I wound up making 150+ "chicky notes" for her morning coffees! Most of them have been posted to my blog.

Now, I make chicky notes for the internet to enjoy. When I send out stickers and letters and such, there's usually a one-of-a-kind chicky note inside the envelope too.

What have you learned since you started drawing chickens?

- * chickens will change your life
- * human connection awaits us in strange places
- * always worth it to engage with people/things openly, sincerely, and with ur whole heart. it's ok (good even) to be silly!!!



Your chickens have so much variety! How do you stay inspired?

I love chapes (chicken shapes) and have a strong desire to capture the Essence of what makes a chape so visually engaging. Chickens will make all sorts of shapes that aren't captured in photos- they happen for a blurry millisecond irl- and those are the silly things I simply Must draw. the people Need to see

There's that viral pic of some buff orpington hen looking Perfectly Round and Orange, and a twitter artist has perfectly rendered her likeness, and captioned it "idk why i drew him." I KNOW WHY!!! it's all about the Chapes !!!



Any advice for other poultry-artists out there?

You don't have to draw feathers... in my head chickens are less individual feathers and kinda more just like charming lumps.



What can people learn from chickens?

- * If you wanna eat it, eat it (eat food drink water it's good for u!!!!)
- * Enjoy things NOW!!!! (chickens are masters of living in the present moment)
- * Maximum joy is unlocked in the company of others (that's why we're flockin together)

Finally, what does chicken art mean to you?

To me, the chart (chickin art) is a way to express love, positivity, and messages of wellness and connection. I think it is possible to do this by spreading silly chicken pictures.



FLOCKINTOGETHER

See more of Paz's amazing chart at flockintgether.com or at chick-it-out.tumblr.com

Editors' notes

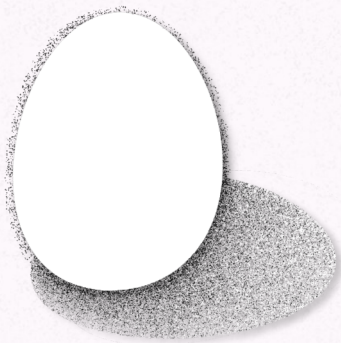
alliyah: We're excited for you to have an opportunity to check out the chickens of Zine 5! In this edition, there's quite a lot of brooding going on - considerations about chicken liberation, questions about "why" chickens, and poetry and art that is in conversation with other art and writing. There are light and amusing moments in the Zine too, but I think this edition in particular gives you a lot to think about if you take the work seriously.

And for more food-for-thought, this is our first zine with a special interview feature! We are thrilled to have an interview from "chick-it-out" sharing how they got into chicken art. And who doesn't love talking about chickens? If you want to keep the conversation and deep chicken-musings going - I'd invite you to join in the fun! Try your hand at some chicken art or chicken poetry and send it our way! We'd love to see what you create and see what inspires you. Thank you to all of our contributors for this edition, and of course to all of our readers, we wouldn't be here without you!

Roak: I love how this edition shows chickens in everyday life. From the "chick-nics" in "i grew up with chickens" to the incredible photo of a chicken outside a Wawa (a convenience store on the East coast of the US). Chickens live in cherished childhood memories, in language quandaries, in philosophical questions. They are denizens of backyards and busses, poultry farms and creative writing workshops. You may find them wearing adorable hats or see them on a field trip. You may even find them on the pages of a zine.

Thank you to all those who submitted their quotidian chickens! Reading through all the submissions for the first time is always a delight. And I hope you, dear reader, felt the same joy as you read this edition.

Special thanks to Paz for providing such fantastic answers to our little questions. It's exciting to have had the chance to interview someone whose art embodies the ethos of chicken art so completely, especially for COOP's first ever special feature!



find more at coopzine.wordpress.com