

CRYSTAL HURDLE / "Freedom of Chickens" Manifesto

For Gregor Robertson

so much depends
upon

the pea brain
goodwill

of a clucker
laying

a red wheel
barrow

poor wee thing
homeless

ousted from its
garden

glazed with rain
water

city of Vancouver
workers

unemployed post-Olympian
shelter

beside the white
chickens

Chicken Riffs

why is Vancouver, city of,
privileged as a place?

we hens can lay eggs without roosters
bring on the Transgender Studies

Bees not accorded the same rights
swarm to nowhere
cell phone incarceration

we believe P.E.T.A. is a literary theory

chicken or egg?
which came first?
what kind of tautological bullshit is that?

no District 9 for us chickens!

is the proposed shelter
 a ghetto
 a reservation?
neither?

the egg is nature's almost perfect food
wards off breast cancer in humans
but we can't eat our eggs
cannibalism

Just don't try it!
we don't want a new Mad Cow disease
we are contralto and soprano
the Alpha and the Omega
(the good fats)

why not a new opera about us chickens?
we can be well dressed

Bird Flu has nothing on us

Deconstruct me for a feather duster
I am very useful

Chicken potpie
a Vancouver special
Can you spell M-A-R-K-E-M-O-R-Y?
How about E-X-T-R-A-D-I-T-I-O-N?

I'll lay eggs, but only if I want to

Hermeneutics!

Crucified with Christ were two thieves
whose only crime was stealing eggs
Figura?

Why is it called Chicken Pox?
a pox upon malignant naming!
an itch less vile than scabies
I can be more affectionate than a housecat
Just try me

Humanistic!

UVic is overpopulated with feral rabbits
Why don't they immigrate to Vancouver
where we can co-exist harmoniously
or dear Gregor can build more shelters?

Isn't that the same name as the giant cockroach
who only thought he was human?

If you're a bug, even a big one,
you're ripe pickings for my din-din

Cluck! cluck! cluck!
You only pretend to be harmless
to be vegetarian

I am my own metaphor

We exist in time and space. You move the plot forward. Egg egg egg egg. I am my own narrative. Replication. Supplication.

There's nobody here but us chickens!

I will always lay my eggs where you will least expect them.
Build me a nest, but I will want Other.

Post-Colonial claptrap. See how pale my feathers are. Stroke me. Stroke you.

Great Hens/Roosters throughout History and Literature:
Chicken Little
somebody in Beatrix Potter
um um, give me a little time here
Didn't Napoleon Bonaparte keep a hen?
Something scrawny in the stewpot of Precious Ramotswe?

I can't say the sky's falling
just because abandoned chickens
are treated better than abandoned humans

Gregor is filled with so much love
that surely he'll get to them...soon
Tent city in the Burrard Street bike lanes?

Maybe WE should move to Victoria
and be honoured at the Capital
Gregor will provide the airfare
or hijack a BC Ferry as a monohierarchical
Noah's Ark

The crowing of roosters in the pre-dawn hours
is a tourist selling point for Kauai
To listen to us is to love us

Love us not for our flesh, our eggs, our feathers, our beady eyes, our wattles, our combs, our Dim Sum feet, just love us, the elemental us.

Get that yellow wallpaper out of my coop!

The horror!

We are more Vancouver mascots than Satchi
than the spirit bear
than some stupid bulbous whale
Cluck cluck cluck cluck!
Follow the bouncing ball.
Join us in our song.
We are the world
small as it is—
Gregor's Vancouver

we're not as stupid as many people feel

what fox is in what chicken coop?

beady eyes

glazed with rain
water

tasty

beside the white
chickens

(mrrr)

so much depends
upon

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(with apologies to William Carlos Williams)