

WALT'S CHICKEN STORE

Charles Fort

They said he was born with claws
 instead of hands that held the egg
 until the correct indoor temperature
 separated the veins and ripe yolk
 from its webbed sac and grew
 three times its liquid birth weight
 with a wool blanket over a tub
 until a crack in its swollen shell
 hatched the tumbling holy bird.
 He walked single file into the aisle
 behind his father who understood
 how Walt cut through chicken wire
 into the backyard where the rooster
 ruled the pink flamingo's nest
 as he pulled out the alley cat
 asleep inside a barrel of feathers.

These were birds for all seasons
 one for a family of Christmas poor
 two hens for the minister's wife
 whose stained apron caught fire
 and a blue ribbon champion
 with its clean bill and gold bands
 reserved for the three time mayor
 photographed at bird's eye level
 who adopted the roaster for a year
 to nearly talk and double in size
 and provide a quill and pen.
 He held the bird in his hand
 opened his father's straight razor
 and slit its pulsing throat
 as it bled into the shadows.
 Mixing the proper ingredients
 into a golden bowl of birdshit and sin,
 Walt raised the breast and wing
 and trapped wire to a crippled leg
 before he fed what he meant to kill.