

FAWM 2024 – Sherwood Anderson’s “The Egg”

4 the dreadful cycle *The hand of the maker trembled.
Grotesques are born out of eggs as out of people.
semi-naked pullethood
one hopes for so much (from a chicken)
in defiance of all th’ infestations
they completely aroused expectations
they walk under the wheels of a wagon
to go squashed and dead back to their maker
to serve God’s mysterious ends*

**If, in my turn, I’m a gloomy man,
Who sees darkness when there’s no cause for alarm,
It might be because what should have been my joyous youth...
was spent on a chicken farm.**

**You may have no notion of the many and tragic things
that can happen to a chicken once it’s born.
Fresh out of the egg, just a tiny fluffy thing –
soon it’s hideous and naked, eating loads of meal and corn.**

**And most will die of cholera or pip or other diseases
a few will survive... maybe a rooster and some hens.
Standing, staring with stupid eyes at the sun
intended to serve God’s mysterious ends.**

**Yeah, despite all th’ infestations
You’ll dance to doomed expectations**

**Hens lay eggs that hatch and look so sweet
And lay more eggs – the dreadful cycle’s complete.**

**One hopes for so much from a chicken...
With all the ways the chicks may come to harm.
It’s all so unbelievably complex... most philosophers
must’ve been raised on a chicken farm.**

**The chicks that survive seem so bright and alert... but they’re so stupid...
Chickens and people are much the same.
Your hopes aroused, then they’ll walk under the wheels of a wagon
To go squashed and dead back whence they came.**

**Eight miles from Bidwell down ol’ Griggs Road –
Ten acres of poor stony land had some charm.
What should have been the happy joyous days of my youth:
My boyhood ... on a chicken farm.**