

## FAWM 2024 – Sherwood Anderson’s “The Egg”

12 a new center of gravity –

human body electricity  
and the warmth of human hands  
and the gentle rolling motion  
till the oblong object stands

*Still grumbling at Columbus, father took an egg from the basket on the counter and began to walk up and down. He rolled the egg between the palms of his hands. He smiled genially. He began to mumble words regarding the effect to be produced on an egg by the electricity that comes out of the human body. He declared that without breaking its shell and by virtue of rolling it back and forth in his hands he could stand the egg on its end. He explained that the warmth of his hands and the gentle rolling movement he gave the egg created a new centre of gravity, and Joe Kane was mildly interested. “I have handled thousands of eggs,” father said. “No one knows more about eggs than I do.”*

*He stood the egg on the counter and it fell on its side. He tried the trick again and again, each time rolling the egg between the palms of his hands and saying the words regarding the wonders of electricity and the laws of gravity. When after a half hour’s effort he did succeed in making the egg stand for a moment he looked up to find that his visitor was no longer watching. By the time he had succeeded in calling Joe Kane’s attention to the success of his effort the egg had again rolled over and lay on its side.*

**I’ve handled thousands of eggs.  
No one knows more about eggs than I do.  
Columbus didn’t know the secret,  
But I assure you that it’s true:**

**The warmth of my hands  
And my human electricity  
And a gentle rolling motion  
Makes a new centre of gravity.**

**He grumbled at Columbus.  
He took an egg down from the shelf.  
He paced the floor and rolled the egg around in his hands  
Mumbling to himself.**

**Joe Kane was mildly interested.  
My father tried to smile like a friend,  
And declared that without breaking the egg shell  
He could stand the egg on its end.**

**He stood the egg on the counter... and it fell on its side.  
Again and again – the results were always weak.  
After half an hour’s work, the egg stood for a moment,  
But Joe Kane had gone off to take a leak.**

**I’ve handled thousands of eggs.  
No one knows more about eggs than I do.  
Columbus didn’t know the secret,  
But I assure you that it’s true:**

**The warmth of my hands  
And my human electricity  
And a gentle rolling motion  
Makes a new centre of gravity.**