

On Chickens

Chickens outnumber humans on this earth by almost 3:1. As if a single chicken wasn't terrifying enough, for some reason this world thinks it's a good idea to keep them in greater ratio than the Russians had over the Germans invading Northern Germany in 1914. While it's true the Germans pulled out a victory (if anything in war can be called victory), we can be sure that the chickens will be more ruthless than the Russians when they rise up. Why they haven't already, I cannot fathom. The conditions we keep them in are worse than those preceding every great uprising of the last millenia. The bolsheviks weren't detalonned (or dehanded, I suppose) and kept in wire cages and forced to push out children for the culinary delight of the ruling class, but look where they took their rage – into revolution! And while I suppose it's true that smaller forces have enslaved and brutalised larger populaces when armed with great firepower (such as in the death camps so exploited in popular media over the last century – an exploitation that does not mitigate their obscene reality), the advancements in firearm technology in the last fifteen years have allowed toddlers, infants even, to murder their own mothers with surely no more cogitation than powers the average fowl's existence. Although it's true that chickens are belligerently stupid – possibly stupider even than the seed sprouting forth from the dearth of intelligence required to leave a loaded gun within reach of an infant.

It is a common myth that chickens cannot fly. I have heard tell of a chicken that like a falcon would perch in a tree waiting to swoop down to it's masters arm upon hearing said master's beckoning. Now I don't know about that, but I have seen with my own eyes a chicken fly over a fence seven feet tall, and right into the pen of a pit bull terrier, and into that pit bull's patient jaws. Although the event meant less food for our table growing up, the satisfaction at seeing masticated feathers floating about for the next half hour more than sufficed that night. The head of the chicken was not consumed by our dog, and its eyes held the same belligerent emptiness that they had when blood ran through them.

I mentioned earlier that I did not understand why the chickens had not risen up against us, but as I write this, repressed memories are rising. As a child I was obsessed with treasure maps (as all young children are). I spent hours researching aging methods (butter, flame, dirt) so that when the map was found years hence it would appear to be a genuine pirate treasure map from days of yore. After perfecting my map – a map leading nowhere, as I had no treasure – I needed only a place to bury it. Naturally the chicken pen was the logical choice. At this point

in my life, I had not seen the empty hate that has evolved alongside feathers in the Aves class, and I did not know the sheer manpower that the chicken race held worldwide. To me the entire chicken population consisted of twenty seven chickens, three turkins and a cock, about thirty yards from my backdoor. They provided eggs, not nightmares. But that would soon change, for as I entered the pen, the chickens flocked behind their cock, trailing me by inches, centimeters, waiting for my eyes to drop within striking distance, at which condition they as one surged forward, seeking purchase for their beaks in my fleshy face. I screamed, as all kids would scream, but the birds were unfazed by my vocal undulations. But, as they soon learned, my screaming was to bring doom upon them, for my father heard it and in a brief instant was at my side with a shovel, separating life from body for every bird that dared touch his son. In their arrogance, and in their lack of artillery, the birds were vanquished, and my father had cemented his place in my mind as authoritative protector for years.

Perhaps this is why we keep chickens in such numbers. A savvy man can keep them from the more evolved weapons, and can use them as a canvas on which to paint his dominance over nature. They also taste pretty good.