



The Carpentered Hen

John Updike

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As a present to John Updike on his fiftieth birthday, and as a treat for his readers, his first book, a collection of light verse originally published twenty-five years ago, is brought back into print, with an author's foreword and some small revisions.

Many of these poems were written when the author was a young art student in England and a "Talk of the Town" reporter for *The New Yorker*, which published over forty of them. They deal with the quiddities of things, the oddities of science, quirks of American life (especially as reported in *Life* magazine during those smiling Eisenhower years), and moments of epiphany in literature and nature. A number—"Ex-Basketball Player," "Superman," "Mirror," "Quilt"—have been frequently reprinted in anthologies. All show a sharp ear, a fond eye, and an active though not always light-hearted fancy. Written mainly to amuse, Updike's early verse was also, as his foreword states, "a way of dealing with the universe, an exercise of the Word." Admirers who know him mostly through his fiction should be delighted to encounter what he calls "these old evidences of my own high spirits." *The Carpentered Hen*, in recent years a hard-to-get collector's item, now again.

*unhinges her wings,
abandons her nest
of splinter, and sings.*

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