Back Cover: Crack

Kate Marshall Flaherty

Follow this and additional works at: https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-tc

Recommended Citation

This End Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Spiritan Collection at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritan Magazine by an authorized editor of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.
CRACK

I no longer smell the dusty chicken dirt, nor feel the poke of hay stubs as I squat over the incubator. Each breath hangs, suspended in cobwebs; I try to be patient. In the warmth of a golden lightbulb, shadows play tricks on the eggs. I squint and sigh.

Ah! The first chip of shell! 
And then — another!
Painstaking, slow ...... at last
from my special speckled egg
    a tiny triangle pokes out.

Hours, it seems (and an entire supper wolfed down), before I am back in the barn and the hole is big enough for me to spy its wee beak-chisel, limp pipe-cleaner spine, egg-white slick, its too-heavy head exhausted with pecking.

    Every time it is still
    I think it dead......

Poppa’s stern voice in my mind:  
they need to peck to strengthen their necks

and me leaning into the almost-death of it, coaxing, bargaining, worrying — can’t stand my little one’s weak jabs.

and so I remove just one piece, before the cowbell rings for bedtime, delighted in my own freer breathing.

    And in the morning, my favourite
    the only one dead.

— Katie Marhall Flaherty