Dawn McGuire: Poem [1]

April 9, 2014 Honoring Rukeyser [2]

65th and Telegraph

My friend Mary Claire
not the one with gout
the one with cancer

raised chickens in Oakland.
She built a beautiful—what do they call it—
a coop (a fine Cape Cod, $39 plans)

from recovered wood. She had
good cedar, some sassafras, poplar
from her brother's baseball bat.

The roosts were perfectly leveled
when they arrived: Alpha Alice,
Petite Coquette, Becky and Beckett.

At dusk they'd bicker and fuss
until she opened the coop,
then up the ramp they'd go.

Once on the roost, they were set
for the night, hard-wired
to clutch the bar until dawn.

The guy who stole them
must have had a time that night
ungripping their feet.

He gave up on Alice.
She probably broke some skin.
By the time Mary Claire made it

into the yard, he was already
down Telly. "Even from the back,"
she was crying,

"you could tell how fucking
hungry he was."

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Dawn McGuire is a neurologist and award-winning author of *The Aphasia Cafe* (IFSF Publishers, San Francisco, 2012) and two other poetry collections, *Sleeping in Africa* and *Hands On*. Her poems have appeared in various literary magazines, anthologies, the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* and the *Journal of the American Academy of Neurology*.

She won the 2011 Sarah Lawrence/Campbell Corner Poetry Prize for “poems that treat larger themes with lyric intensity" and a 2012 Troubadour International Poetry Prize. She is on the faculty of the Neurosciences Institute of Morehouse School of Medicine and divides her time between the San Francisco Bay Area and Atlanta, Georgia.

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