

NOTES ON A DYING CHOOK

POEM | John Charles Ryan

an amoeba of auburn hues
pontificating on one leg

meditatively in a t'ai chi
posture

lashless eyes tightened to slits
red rubber viscera underjaw

hung like a windless
flag

when the patio door creaked
her orange moons and absolute

black opals flashed full
embouchure

her shape particularised,
dashed underfoot hoping for

the salmon-coloured ceramic
floor and

when denied entry sputtered like
a dervish on dinosaur feet

mohawk comb a flabby
mess

of raw meat (birdsign of dehydration),
lapped the swamp under pot

plants, accepted no freshwater
almsgivings

the hangman was silent with his deed
lest dogs would smell the knell

and, impassioned, unearth the
entombed

but somehow, when the chirruping
in the steel cage ceased, I convinced

myself she had simply wandered off
into the wandoo forest.

