

## Ducks

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We accidentally bought ducks who could fly.



It's not supposed to happen that way. Most ducks you purchase that aren't already dressed for your dinner plate are designed to be well, dressed for your dinner plate. That means their wings are stubby little things that will only allow them to flap about crazily and reach the thrilling height of three centimeters off the ground. So that we humans can easily scoop up their eggs or their um....duck thighs. I am unclear on how the whole duck-eating works, as my house is full of non-duck-eaters.

These flying ducks were a random purchase since a predator had stolen a few of ours for his own dinner plan and we needed to build the flock back up, quickly. Instead of choosing a breed, we bought cute, fluffy babies from the local farm store, and all was well.

Until it turned out that they were Mallard ducks. The only ones who can actually fly. Farmers we are not. We

discovered this phenomenon only because we pulled into the driveway to see a random duck standing outside of his pen, looking around like, "I am so not sure how I got out here, but this is amazing, and the rest of you should join me," or something along those lines. Fluent in duck-speak I am not. He should possibly run for office, because his speech must have been quite inspirational as, day after day, we would arrive home to escapee ducks who had found their non-genetically-modified wings.

We clipped said wings (and let me be clear that any mention of “we” and a duck procedure means the “we” is my animal-expert daughter. But it was too late. They had tasted freedom, the bliss of life outside the pen, and we keep arriving home to see them wandering about, with happy noises in their throats and plenty of bugs in their bellies.

As often happens, I have learned a lesson from these silly ducks. When I reflected on their raucous leap to freedom, I thought how similar we who call ourselves Christians should be to them.

But we aren't.

We stay in our cages because we are trained to. Our wings have never been clipped, but our brain tells us they don't work. Maybe the church told us a list of things it “means” to be a Christian: What clothing we should wear, the political party we should vote for, the special lingo we should use, the way we should practice behavior modification.

We don't fly. Oh, but we could. We could soar.

The ID card of our faith is supposed to be such crazy freedom that we appear drunk with it. The first people to ever be called Christians were so overflowing with love and liberation that they were accused of day-drinking.

Our entire identity is supposed to be love. Christians? Oh, watch out for them. They're the ones always first in line to help and love people! Christians? All they talk about is love! Especially when they're interviewed on those cable news shows.

In reality, our identity has become putting people into groups, classifying: This one is “in.” This one? For sure “out” and let's give her a shove with our Bible on the way, just in case.

We are known by our politics, our legislative leanings, our opinions. We say we base those opinions on the scriptures, but a cursory glance at the Bible leads us to the inescapable conclusion that the early faith was radically different than ours. That the tenderly new Christian belief was so radically freeing and loving that people were drawn to it, puzzled by it, frightened by it; not because of its classifying of people, but because, in a shockingly new way, all of the groups that usually were excluded were now included.

It could turn out that these ducks will figure out how to fly right off our pond one day. They've certainly tried. They are not afraid of freedom, afraid that it will be *too much*. That they'll be too duck-like out in the beautiful world. That they'll influence other ducks to join them in their exploration. That their way of life will change. They welcome it. And perhaps, so do I. I will wish them well in their free new way. It certainly won't be safer. But it will be truer to who they were always supposed to be. And who wouldn't want that.

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