

If you see the cat don't make eye contact.

by Margaret Osburn

Beware the banties.

They've a violent nature.

But rumbling, tucked into themselves, small and round,
feathers the color of thick rust with the bright sheen of satin,
the birds look as comforting as throw pillows.

Bish has given the birds biblical names
and is as affectionate toward them as she is toward her cat.

Catch is a dark calico
—chocolate, black, and gray.
She'll shoot up when her hair raises
thick with electric shock.
That's when you'll see her pink petticoat
—*only her belly fur is pink.*
A straight-down orange stripe splits her face.

Most evenings she sits, mindful, at the edge of the summer kitchen,
a big ole dark head with no body and a carrot of a nose.
If you come upon that head,
it can scare you some.

Catch eats rats and gophers and keeps the place
clean of fox and stray hounds.

Fur floats in fat wads across the garden.