

# Catching Chickens

Category: Poems

written by Daniel Klawitter | April 27, 2012

**Daniel Klawitter**

Morphine doesn't do much for dementia.

I know this because my grandmother  
was trying to catch an imaginary chicken  
on her deathbed.

Wanting to calm her fevered thrashing,  
my sister cleverly said: "It's okay grandma.

I caught the chicken for you.

You can rest now."

But my grandmother's faded blue eyes  
suddenly sprang wide open, and fixing my surprised  
sister with a stern and lucid glare, declared:

"No you did NOT!"

And I'm still uncertain which came first:  
our nervous laughter or the shock of her clarity,  
so unexpected, we almost died.

I guess we all have to catch our own chickens,  
before we cross the road and reach that other side.

**About the poet:**

Daniel Klawitter is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church and lives in Denver, CO, with his wife and three cats. He has a BA in Religion Studies from the College of Santa Fe, NM, and a Master of Divinity degree from Iliff School of Theology, in Denver. His poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals, including *Sacramental Life*, [Blue Collar Review](#), [Cyclamens and Swords](#), [The Penwood Review](#) and [Umbrella: A Journal of Poetry and Kindred Prose](#), and in the book [Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration](#) (Orbis Books).

**About the poem:**

" 'Catching Chickens' was inspired by my grandmother's actual experience before she passed. It's interesting how the elderly often 'go back' and latch onto some childhood memory in their last days and weeks. For my grandmother, it was the memory of trying to catch a chicken for her father. I was intrigued by the possibility of playing with this image/metaphor, linking my grandmother's end-of-life concern to the old joke: 'Why did the chicken cross the road?' Which really, when you think about it, is a philosophical question."

**Poetry editors:**

Judy Schaefer and Johanna Shapiro