



The Duck's Dream

oral folktale

Once upon a time, there was a duck that had been raised in a chicken coop. We don't know how—a sea-duck somehow ended up there while still in its egg, even though the farm was far from the coast. Yet the truth is, having been raised and taught by hens, the duck was convinced it was the ugliest, most bedraggled hen in the whole coop.

Its webbed feet and pointed wings were meant for swimming and flying—but it didn't know this. It waddled clumsily, inviting laughter and teasing from the chicks who mocked it behind its back.

And so it grew up feeling ugly and out of place. However, it loved that coop—it was the world it knew and cherished; everything it cared about was there.

Sometimes, before dawn, it had strange dreams. Blue dreams of infinite water. It saw itself swimming in an ocean it had never seen awake. A blue ocean. Blue in all its shades. But when it opened its eyes, it found itself again in the familiar coop.

It felt ashamed to look and speak differently, so it tried to stay still and silent. To distract itself, it began to observe its surroundings—and it saw many things. It noticed that beyond the coop stood trees, and in those trees lived other kinds of birds. Birds that were not hens and built their own nests.

Then, to see better, it moved its neck in a new way, and when it tipped its head back, it discovered the sky. What incredible joy when it discovered the sky! It, too, was blue!

It stared upward so long that its neck cramped a little, but that didn't matter compared to its discovery. The sky was immense, with no visible end. It changed color with the time of day or the weather, and in it flew other birds. Some passed by in great flocks, flying far, forming geometric patterns—drawings in motion.

There were times when it wished, for a moment, to leave with them—but that was unthinkable for a hen that could barely flutter above ground. And even less possible with a coop and a wire fence separating it from the sky.

The duck continued its study; it made calculations, read the wind's changes, and so learned the time of year when migratory birds passed. It waited for them in secret.

One day, while reviewing every familiar corner of the coop, it saw the door. How had it never seen it before? At night, when the hens were sleeping on their perches as usual, the duck approached the door. It gently pushed it—and the door opened. Timidly, it stepped out, took a few steps, then dashed back into the coop. That was best, right? No one could know how many dangers lay out there, or what the hens would say if they found out it had left. But now, it knew: it could go out.

Summer passed; the trees began to turn golden. The ants worked tirelessly, gathering food for the coming winter.

It was the perfect moment.

One morning, very early, the duck awoke. A flock was passing across the sky. Without hesitation, it went to the door, pushed it open, and to the astonishment of the hens, stepped out. At first, climbing was hard—its wings were stiff from disuse—but its true nature guided its movements. Flapping its wings swiftly, it rose higher and higher until it reached the flock. Then it joined the group and happily set off toward the coast in search of the sea.