

GINNY LOWE CONNORS

---

The Chickens Have Died But 5 Goslings Have Hatched  
*a found poem, from a letter addressed to Rebecca Ann Blankenship, April 29, 1874*

My Dear Aunt Bec,

The circuit rider was here last night and when he read your letter, he said  
*I tell you that was worth reading.*

Alfred has gone to school, he has bin going now four weeks and has not  
learned all of his letters yet. Me and Jennie and Arthur are here. I am  
writing Jennie is getting dinner Arthur is sleeping Pa is plowing.

This is such a curious spring some think the world is coming to an end. Ma  
had a heap of chickens but they died. She has 5 goslings hatched, though.

Bose is going to have alog rolling tomorro. And Jo, she has herself a baby  
girl. It was four weeks old yesterday, It has blue eyes and a white head and  
a big mouth.

Write soon. I remain your niece as ever,

M. A. Terrel

## ABOUT THE POEM

---

“The Chickens Have Died But 5 Goslings Have Hatched” was created from a letter written by M. A. Terrel in 1874. About the poem and the process of composing it, Ginny Lowe Connors writes:

This found poem comes from a family collection of very old letters that I have in my possession, written to my third great-grandmother, Rebecca Ann Applewhite Blankenship. The family lived on a farm in Tennessee, but a few years after the end of the Civil War, Rebecca, a widow, moved with her daughter Hattie and Hattie’s young husband to a cabin in Arkansas.

They were in Arkansas by the time Rebecca received a letter, from which this poem is drawn, from her young niece.



HERON TREE

24 September 2025

[herontree.com/connors1](http://herontree.com/connors1)