



# Kamikaze Chickens: Advanced Decorations

by J.B. Webster  
 Inspired by Travelblog  
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Structural	Stylistic (Imagery)
<i>Mark in left margin: one from each category in every paragraph</i>	
1. dramatic opening/closing	1. simile
2. 3 sss	2. metaphor
3. conversation/quotations	3. alliteration/assonance
4. question in topic/elsewhere	4. personification
5. transition	5. irony/sarcasm
6. reference	6. allusions/foreshadowing

Style  
 (Structural  
 decorations  
 underlined)

quotation

personification

foreshadowing

sarcasm

reference

Alison Garner writes an amusing story about her experiences on the roads of Africa with its amazing and daredevil chickens. Frequently the road networks in the continent range from terrible to disastrous such that local drivers must display courage and steely nerves with rare use of the brakes, which may or may not work. Pecking casually by the roadside an African chicken will choose the “exact moment for flying leaps which place them just centimeters beyond the wheels” as the car hurtles by while the bird inevitably lands safely on the opposite side. By close observations, it becomes obvious that those leaps of chicken faith are not random because the same flock will repeat the manoeuvre “in the opposite direction in front of vehicles coming along behind even before we were out of sight.” It was chicken bravado. While the males might claim bragging rights in the flock, even the females with tiny yellow chicks in tow would fly before the speeding vehicles with their brood intact as if determined to teach the next generation the sport of kamikaze leaping. In twenty years in Africa I never saw a chicken hit nor spotted a driver who swerved to avoid them. On the contrary, some young drivers would swerve specifically to target them. Older drivers understood the futility of such a prank. Nevertheless it was damaging to the driver’s ego to be outfoxed, outrun and outwitted by a chicken. According to Darwin’s theory, the unfit with poor timing had, eons ago, been eliminated from the gene pool of the African chicken.

Garner's story reminded me of my own experience. In Kampala, the capital of Uganda where we lived for a number of years, an average chicken could be bought for less than two dollars while in the rural north where I conducted research, they cost only fifteen cents each. Following a month-long stretch in the field conducting interviews, I and my mates decided to purchase and transport some chickens back to Kampala. Who could resist such a bargain? While in the market, I became carried away with excessive and ill-considered enthusiasm purchasing 100 hens, and deciding optimistically to ship them south by bus. Eagerly purchasing a large reed or wicker basket in which Africans carry their fowl, we watched as the driver tied the basket with its century of hens on the top of the bus. The bus pulled out. We followed in the car because we were worried that the basket might not be firmly fastened. None of us in the car considered what we would do if the basket slid off, spilling and spreading spastic hens over the savanna. Would male egos survive leaping through the grasses, falling into holes or stumbling over logs in a scramble for a few pennies worth of chicken flesh before a busload of squawking, gawking, mocking spectators? Men might wrestle hungry lions in such an arena. But chickens?

question

alliteration  
irony

assonance allusion

d. open: transition  
reference

The ancient contraption accelerated. When the bus pulled on to the highway, it was dangerously rocking from side to side because that was the nature of what a Ghanaian would call a "mammy wagon." At about eighty kilometers an hour those daredevil, kamikaze chickens began to wiggle and escape through the raffia. Suddenly flying off in all directions, they looked like an erupting exploding volcano. Some remained airborne for a couple of miles, landing far off in the trees or fields. One shot straight up. Into the blue. Momentarily disappearing. Catching the jet stream, it took off west still vigorously sailing until it disappeared over the horizon, possibly landing as a dove of peace during civic strife in neighboring Congo. Those closer to home were landing three hundred meters away in farmers' fields like raining hand grenades sprayed by a helicopter gunship. Gazing skyward, farmers who had been cultivating routinely must have thought the heavens had opened and sent a miracle much better than manna. Surely the gods had gone crazy. As the bus gained speed, the volcanic eruption intensified until a dozen hens could be seen in a spiral high into the sky. At the top of the spiral, they shot off in all directions like long ribbons of debris bouncing and flapping in the breeze. It was a community fowl supper, chicken "take-a-way" or "chicken-to-go". That evening in henhouses across northern Uganda, some chickens were claiming kamikaze bragging rights while farmers around their fires had marvelous even far fetched stories to tell. Only six hens reached Kampala and the family stewing pot. Each cost exactly \$2.50.

simile

3 sss

allusion reference

simile

allusion

simile

metaphor  
personification

d. close