



ON GETTING YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW

Matthew King

You'll have to figure out what counts as ducks,
to start. It's not as easy as you'd think:
our schemes of things are always in a flux;
the borders of our kinds expand and shrink.
Once satisfied you've got your ducks defined,
you'll make your head hurt trying to decide
how best they'd be arranged—should they be lined
up bill to tail, or maybe side by side?
And if you get them set, next thing you know,
they'll find their feet and waddle all around,
before, parading to the pond below,
they plop, one by one, from the slippery ground.
Birds will go where their brains will have them go.
Maybe let them get themselves in a row.

Image: "Family" by Gouri Prakash. "On Getting Your Ducks in a Row" was written by Matthew King for *Rattle*'s Ekphrastic Challenge, October 2021, and selected as the Editor's Choice.