If I Could Speak Hen

If I could speak hen, if your hens could hear me speak, this I would say to them:
the world contains more than just misery—it contains beauty
too, and love, and joy, and moments of vacant idleness without pains
or worries to disturb your peace—but that you were not fated to have
any of it. Had you been born in a body only a little bit
different—wings wider, feathers colored, a voice that sings instead
of clucks—you would have been spared this misery, you
would have known instead the fullness of a life
lived in accordance with your nature.

If I could speak hen, if your hens could hear me speak, this I would say to them:
that your fate and your suffering aren't your fault, that the torment inflicted on you
is not payment for the supposed 'privilege' of having been born. We both know
it is no privilege to live a life like yours—a life which really would have better
never to have been—and that, by contrast, a life like *ours* of wealth and plenty *is*
undeserved, dispensed without reason, without justice, without mercy, and neither
with compassion. Nor is this payback for a crime you don't remember. Know
that you are blameless, innocent, never have you sinned. Quite
on the contrary: it is *we* who are deserving of the blades and the fires that soon will be your fate.

If I could speak hen, if your hens could hear me speak, this I would say to them:
that humans aren't your enemies, that none of us were born like this—callous
to the suffering of others in this world, blinded by our avarice, unconcerned
with what is just. No, is it just that some of us were duped by a false

ideology: Humans are supreme, it is said, given license to enslave
and exploit, to kill and to consume, all that is lesser than because
different from our own. But this is to confuse a wish with a reality. In any case
not all of us are like this; some of us do *see* you, recognize your value, and wish
only simply that you be free.

If I could speak hen, if your hens could hear me speak, this I would say to them:
we are they who care for you, bear the burden of your suffering, it is we who refuse
to let you die in vain. What we've seen and what we know has scarred us,
wounded us profoundly. There are even lines playing out right now within
our minds, ceaselessly repeating. They are little prayers that keep us strong and by which
you are remembered. To give them voice is to bear our souls, our souls that contain
your plight inside them:

Stop the torture stop the pain
Ahold Delhaize is to blame
I burn with anguish I burn in flames
Ahold Delhaize is to blame
Your hens' lives haunt us and this we cannot feign
Ahold Delhaize is to blame
We boil with anger and disdain
Ahold Delhaize is to blame
Fury fuels us and it cannot be contained
Ahold Delhaize is to blame

Etc.