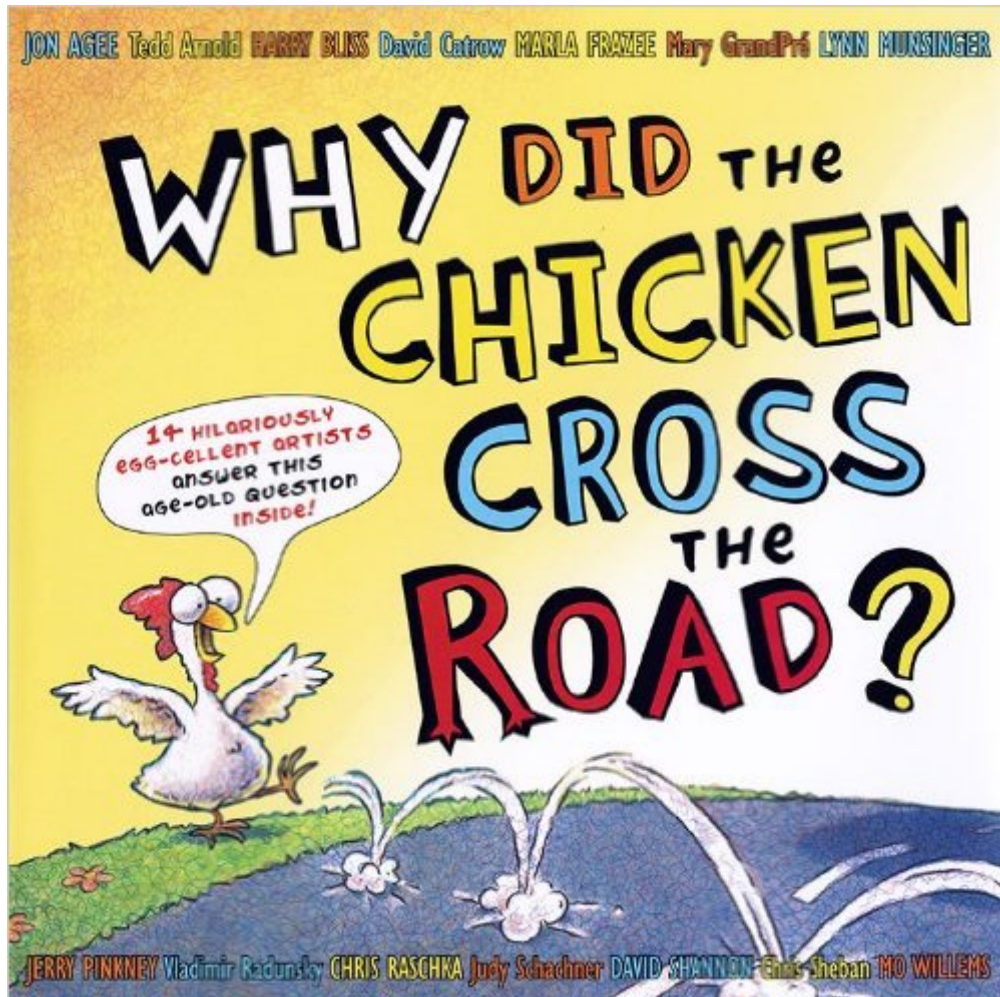


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# Why Did The Chicken Cross The Road?



## Synopsis

We all know the joke. We've all told it. Kids love to tell it over and over and over again, with as many different punch lines as possible. And now we've found out that famous award-winning artists love to tell the joke too—and they have some wacky and downright hilarious ideas about why that chicken really did cross the road. Mo Willems's chicken confesses his motives to a police officer; David Shannon's chicken can drive a car; Marla Frazee's chicken is looking for a more luxurious coop; and Harry Bliss's chicken encounters aliens. And this is just the beginning. One thing is for sure—you won't cross this book without a good laugh!

## Book Information

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Dial Books; 1 edition (September 21, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803730942

ISBN-13: 978-0803730946

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 0.3 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #511,484 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in [Books > Children's Books > Humor > Cartoons](#) #198 in [Books > Children's Books > Humor > Jokes & Riddles](#) #851 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals > Farm Animals](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

There are some jokes out there that are so classic they've passed the point where they're funny anymore. Knock-knock jokes fall into this category. Light bulb jokes too. And then there's the best one of them all. Why-did-the-chicken-cross-the-road jokes. Boy oh boy you just can't make anyone laugh with one of those anymore, can you? Well that's the way my thinking would have gone had I not picked up a bizarre little picture book title by the same name. In this book fourteen different children's illustrators are each granted a two-page spread to offer their answer to this, the oldest of questions. No two answers are exactly alike and no two illustrators have styles even vaguely similar. It makes for a book that kids will adore, grown-ups will pore over, and insipient illustrators will want to keep very close at hand. So why did the chicken cross the road? The answer may surprise you.

Marla Frazee, illustrator of things like "Roller Coaster", and the recent smash hit, "Walk On: A Guide For Babies", shows a determined chicken crossing a road away from a rain-soaked grey-skied chicken coop towards a blue-skied brightly colored fun-factory of a building. Her single thought: "duh". Turn the page and Mo Willems has taken an entirely different tack. In the gloom of a police department some hard-boiled cops are giving a very nervous chicken (note the number of eggs under its chair) the third degree. The chicken itself is insisting that "I just did it to get to the other side! Honest!". To one side a detective is pouring the contents of a significant looking charcoal bag onto a grill. The entire book is like this. David Shannon taps into a vein not dissimilar from his beloved "Duck On a Bike" to show us chicken at the wheel of a fancy red convertible.

An inspired idea: Get 14 leading kids' book illustratos to write the illustrate their punch line to the old chestnut of a riddle "Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road." It's like a series of knock-knock jokes: Rapid-fire visual and written humor that proceeds in wonderfully silly fashion, even if a few are not quite as clever as the others. The 14 2-page spreads are like a narrow window into each illustrator's style and sense of humor. While each is unique, there were more similarities than I would have imagined. A common theme was that the chicken crossed to join some wild or unexpected extravaganza unavailable on the current side of the road. This might be an ultra-chic (chick?) new chicken house (Frazee), a Victorian-era picnic lunch (somewhat dull, but a great tapestry-like picture by Jerry Pinkney), a Cubist/Gauguin inspired tropical oasis in the middle of a vegetable patch (Grandpre)), or simply a huge sandwich at "Lou's Diner Across the ROad." (Catrow). The best of the lot, I think, are those that subvert the traditional elements of the joke. Leave it to Mo Willems to picture a chicken in a police station, nervously insisyinh "I'm telling you guys, I just did it to get to the other side! Honest!" while, in a deft visual pun, another detective pours charcoal on a grill. David Shannon and Lynn Mussinger approach the question somewhat matter-of-factly: Shannon answers, "Because the light was green," with a chicken, pig, and cow joy-riding--to the joy of kids, and the shock and dismay of adults. Mussinger replies "because the light said 'walk,'" and shows an entire street full of chickens and chickens only, including police-chicken, shoppers coming from "Coopingdale's," and a tiny chicken on roller skates--even the crosswalk sign shows a chicken walking.

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