Saunders put his life savings in shares of Smith and Wesson. His investment specialist asked if Saunders liked hunting.

Sitting on a park bench, Saunders tossed breadcrumbs to ducks. Retirement was lonely. As the sky dimmed from blue to pink and purple, Saunders zipped his jacket and walked home.

His legs ached more than usual, and by the time he lapsed onto his couch in front of the television, he could hardly lift his feet onto the ottoman. He turned the television off after twenty minutes, chafed by hearing the program’s host screaming about a Bear Market. He took a bath to soothe his aching knees and might have been startled when he discovered his legs had turned a shade of orange, but he was too angry about his failing stocks. When he lay down to bed, waking soothed him between fitful bouts of sleep.

Saunders grumbled as his body animated the next morning, roused before his alarm with a screaming pain in his feet and legs. Pain tied him to his bed until his bladder forced him to move. He sat at the edge of the bed and noticed the flesh around his knees had hardened from papery translucent to something like rubbery tree bark. He looked at his feet: oversized, orange, webbed.

Despite all this, he turned his thoughts to the morning report. A new program on the television outlined the day’s futures, forecasted down across the board. The down-trending market was a greater concern to Saunders than his strange bipedal transformation.

Legs in agony, he made his way to the kitchen, slapping the tile floor with each step of his dry, cracked feet.

In the kitchen, he dug through the cupboards and selected a crushed, half-full bag of Wonder Bread. He ate two slices and shoved the rest of the loaf in his coat pocket.
After eating, Saunders shuffled through his closet and found a knit cap. He plucked the white feathers from his hair and pulled the cap flush to his ears.

It took him all morning to make his way to the park.

Each time he sat to rest, he found it harder to stand. He discarded his dentures; they ripped at his lips and cheeks. He disposed of his pants and jacket, then the rest of his clothing, careful not to forget his bread, which he retrieved with his beak. When he finally arrived at his favorite park bench, the other ducks were already assembled.

Together they tore through the plastic bag and ate. As a winter bird, he would fly south and enjoy the Florida climate.