

*Will we be eaten ?*

*No, today we won't be eaten*

*Today we wont*

*Today we wont*

\*

### Duck Down

If followed by an exclamation mark, *duck down* commands and warns us to seek protection, to crouch or bend so that the body's upper regions — the head and torso as well as other parts that might protrude— can descend to a lower level and take refuge, away from imminent danger.

If not followed by an exclamation mark, *duck down* could be a flat, emotionless verbal response to the sight of a duck —sitting or otherwise— falling to the ground after being hit. As such, but expressed with more bravado, the expression could also be used to indicate a target met, a box ticked, a fait accompli.

Ach! Ach! Ach!

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Aχ! Aχ! Aχ!

When a duck plunges its head below the surface of the water its rear rises delightfully above, exposing to our gaze the soft undercoat that covers the belly where duck down grows. Left in the wind, tufts of the silky plumage, radiate and swirl, wispy like dandelion seeds.

Feather, whose hard and horny shaft often pierces its cloth sheath, surprises unpleasantly those prone to find a pea under a hundred mattresses intolerable. Hence down, desired for its insulating properties and warmth, is considered superior. Its exquisite fluffiness is measured in *loft*, a word rooted in air and sky, which could easily be employed to measure clouds and whispers, the crème de la crème of dreams and ideas, the froth of a lie, the foam of a raging mouth.

The chthonic and the ethereal down.

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*(The beasts of burden assemble. The quacks and hee-haws quiet down. A couple of crocs masticate in the corner. Patiently, they stare back.)*