

EIGHT LIVES GONE

Under the marrow leaves an old tom-cat
Shuts its one remaining eye.
Calms its withered nerves and dreams
Of pornographic afternoons.

How once it crossed the sun at dusk,
The air full of scent, flesh and prey.
Danced and sprang a marvellous fiesta leap.
Watched the sky burn down to the blackest fur.

Then crouched and polished with pleasure
The thought: Kill the next moving thing.
And found a hard cold eye
Already in the mouth.

Now it spies on next-door's-cat.
A meaningless animal reared on friendliness
And milk. Buries its present of Christmas past
A damp toy mouse -skeleton of wire and cloth.

Smelly, diseased, unwanted in the house,
It slinks past marigolds. Swears softly
From its butcher's heart and eight lives gone
Smells the rot of apples -the grubby
Dirty death of old cat sleep.

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