

Death and Resurrection of a Cat

Her life had been as most: impulse quick,
acting out an instinct bred the size of rat's feet
scuttling across hardwood floors.

A hunter of ancient toothless insects.
Still, life always seemed enough
as she staggered in the grass, milk-drunk,
and collapsed on a million lightbeams,
purring.

She lived overstuffed
as the cushion that held her impression
warm, long after stepping out for a meal (and
back again). Catnapping.
Suckling kittens.
Growing old with age tucked beneath calico hair,
settling in bones
ready to leave their skeleton in the cool ground.

Fifteen years.
But the sixteenth, like a kitten pawing wild at imagination,
pain twisting slowly, until blind
she began to step in her dish;
each time shaking off the indignation,
like shit on a silk slipper.

Tearing out claws
one by one
until fur hung thick with blood,
and the service porch like the aftermath of punctured arteries.

Perhaps
a tumor self-destructing. Painfully.

Seventeen years to die,
and only eight more times to go.

—R. Blain Andrus