

My First Cat

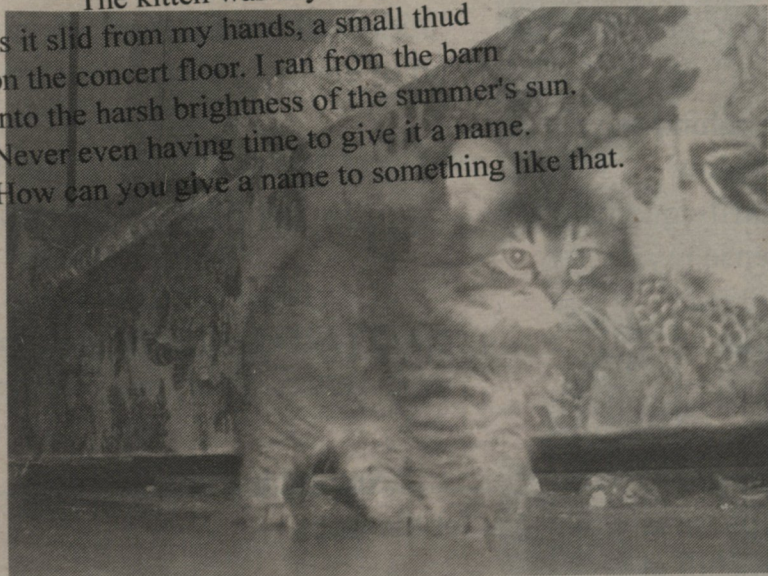
by Alex Field

The mother lay with her kittens
in the dark corner of the hard-floored dusty barn.
I walked over to the corner,
my mother behind me
with an approving smile
watching her eight year old son
select his first cat.
Behind her walked the farmer,
sweat stains all on his tattered shirt.
The farmer and my mother talked as I
met the kittens, trying to decide
which one I'd take home.

One kitten came up to me and
swatted a shoelace hanging loose.
Another rolled on its back as it dug
its tiny black claws into a some straw.
But a third kitten caught my attention
sleeping close to it's mother.
So still and calm.

I placed my hand around
the soft furry animal, the one
I'd take home, and love.
Which I loved already.
I turned around and said,
"Look mom, he's still sleeping."
My mother's approving smile disappeared
as the farmer said,
"He's not sleeping. He's dead."

The kitten was anything but peaceful
as it slid from my hands, a small thud
on the concert floor. I ran from the barn
into the harsh brightness of the summer's sun.
Never even having time to give it a name.
How can you give a name to something like that.



Jingle Sour Grapes

by Christmas Jones

"Bah humbug"

I stand in the shower, and cry.
The warm water drenching my body hides the cold tears.
I just finished puking. Puking toast.
Not even something good, like a McHappy meal with calorific Coke. No
pizza. Fucking toast.
And I cry because of that, and because I saw you with her today.

It was at the mall. I was doing some Christmas shopping. Saw so many
things you would just love. Ha. You'll have to get her to get them for
you.

You two looked so cute, a couple Hallmark would use to market some of
their crappy romantic birthday cards. I walked behind you far enough not
to be seen, but close enough to hurt.

Why we broke up...I'm still searching for that answer. We had our share
of differences, but isn't that what compels people together? Isn't some
conflict healthy? You can't prance around all the time with huge, fake
plastic smiles on.

We got each other. We knew each other inside out...is that what drove
you away? Were you scared of becoming one of those pathetic pre-
dictable couples? I hardly think we were in threat of that. Or were your
scared that you loved me too much, and I loved you too much in return?
I know it wasn't because of a bland sex life. Hell, weren't you just over at
my place last week fucking my brains out? Oh yeah, my period is late...

Well, you are with her now. Keep smilin', hun. Don't get too close to
him, girl. Because one you do, you'll be the one crying in the shower,
barfing up dry, god-damned toast.

Wash. Rinse. Repeat.