

Three Feral Black Kittens, with a Modification to My Emerging Thesis

For days I have been note-taking
for my opus chastising the poets
for their cat poems. But as I ease shut
the lock on an afternoon expedition
trespassing Casa Ramón—
revealed in the future—the first
black lump, fleeing up stone steps
with a faint, half-hearted meow,
surprises me, then a second in retreat.
The third—glowing emerald eyes,
patchy fur—holds squeezed ground
beneath a slate stoop, hissing
with all the high-pitched kitten ferocity
it can muster, teeny red maw
stretched wide, teeny pointed teeth,
a display of hatred and fear laudable
for one so little. No mother's tit,
no shelter from the week's cold rain.

When I return with two deep jar lids,
carton of milk, tin of chicken
and liver cat food—to be explained
in my exposé—I find the runts
in a dark, dank gap in rubble³
between uninhabited houses.
Out of human reach, anyway.
One, possibly Badass, watches me.
One climbs. One, lost in that gloom.
I pour milk, finger out gelatinous
paté, place both lids on a flat log,
foolish I will be exposed. But kittens
I decide then and there—I've
been weighing this—are exempt
from all diatribe, and maybe
even deserve an occasional verse.
Especially the hissing, shivering ones,
with green eyes and nowhere to go.

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