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# One Ordinary Cat

by Martha Holmes

You're right to think she was just an ordinary cat, no different than a trillion others who come and go through human lives. A calico, born in a barn, one of six. Just one more, really, not unlike the millions who die in the hands of caring humans because there are not enough caring humans or because there are simply too many cats. We named her Katy.

I never minded her sleeping around my neck, her fur moving with my breathing, sticking to my skin on hot summer nights. It never bothered me that she would lick my neck in imitation of being with her mother, who had not gotten the chance to wean her, thanks to me. Like all ordinary cats, she would put herself in my path, risking a stepped-on paw, if she wanted my attention. Through time I learned to understand her range of meows, from the feed-me, to the let-me-out, to the meow that meant hold me or the simple hi there. Through the years her habits changed, and in the last few she would crawl under the covers and sleep by my thigh, giving a poke with a sharp claw if I got to hogging her space.

Katy cat. She would come when I called her and purr whenever I picked her up. I went out one night, and when we returned she was under the bed with her four kittens, still wet. I have reels of videotape of them playing, entranced by a sock, devoted to a feather, lunging at one another with

all the ferocity of a butterfly. We kept one, a white female named Blanche. She's 19 now.

My call when arriving home is always "Katy! Blanche!" but Blanche is the only one now. She is mourning for the mother she can't find in any of the usual places. A deep moan rises through her after these searches, and she's beginning to sleep by my thigh.

So, despite the more important matters of the world and the decisions men make about the lives and deaths of others, this writing is a farewell to one ordinary cat. I held her while the vet put the killing liquid into her vein. I felt the life going from her body like a lover departing in the night.

Cats just care about the food you give them, some people say. They're just using you. Those people must be talking about the outdoor cats that nobody gets to know, the cats that flee if you wish to pick them up or scratch you if you try. Then there are the ones who follow you on long walks up to the top of the valley and all the way back, who seek your lap when you're trying to write, and even have walked across your keyboard, leaving you original writings you wouldn't have thought of yourself, like »»kkkkkkccccccyyyyyyyy3333q, by Katy.

If there isn't enough love in the world, it's not the fault of cats.

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