

Arvin Abejo Mangohig \Lost Cat and Other Poems

Lost Cat

It would be a good thing to not love animals anymore. They die
On us. They can never survive us. And daily your black purse
Grows heavier with one item less ticked off.

But

Streets litter themselves with potential take-homes.
Babies under cars, inside wheels, atop walls, behind glass doors
Once in a while the strongest temptation purrs across our hearts.
What a steal: two kittens in the drain, all abandoned
Never by their fleas. Instant relationship. Bedmates already.
Best friends with ready yarn from the last one's treasure box.
But the world denies us happiness at every right turn
They run away like a teenaged you with better parents.
They get sick at the slightest wrong thing. Who knew
Love was this breakable? A vase in the wrong
paws.

Some conclusions creep up on you, shatter altogether
Prepared for. A wounded paw at the window means goodbye.
Look back now. It returns between shadow and curtain.
Your life empty on both sides and every stray cat
Meowing *Hey, Stranger*, at you every walk home.
Its tail in the air marking questions: Ready to love? Again?

Scratch Post

With cats at least you know
Who gave you scratches,
Who tilted the dropped vase,
Who spoilt the fried fish.

Not so these bruises as if
From thin air, as if you had written
All the wrong answers and your life
Was being corrected in red ink.

Our Other Selves

There are days when you could have died
And the ghost leaves the body unknowing that you haven't.
A slight slip at the top of the stairway creates another you
Or a deathly fever fails to claim what it came for survives.

So that all those selves become you and scatter about
And you the keeper diminished and suspicious
Cannot figure out the ghosts at the corner of your eye
How they haunt you wanting to come back.