

POEMS by Paul Curry Steele

Cats and Humans

Domestic cats spend almost two-thirds of their life sleeping, in frequent naps. At night they noiselessly prowl the house while their owners lie in bed sleeping heavily and long. They consider themselves superior to humans, who have no tail to wave in the air, who have to work while cats can idle, who falling cannot land on their feet.

Images

The devout and credulous
are prone to see
images or reflections
of divine religious figures,
predominantly of Jesus
or of the Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary,
in most unlikely, mundane objects:
a rusty old screen door;
a recently prepared grilled cheese sandwich.
A dark patch may be seen as the Virgin Mary
or as Jesus. Word of the image spreads.
When the object is solid and accessible,
like the rusty screen door of Mrs. Bass
in Port Neches, Texas, many people come,
often from a great distance,
to see it for themselves.
They usually kneel before it and pray.

The cheese sandwich, which ordinarily
would soon spoil and disintegrate,
was bought by a corporation in Pennsylvania
for \$28,000.
They must have preserved it in some way.
The mind can err extravagantly.

Churchgoing

From my tender years on,
Mother would take me with her
to church services (twice on Sunday,
prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings).
She wanted to instill in me
a love and respect for our religion,
for home, God, and family.

I disappointed her.
I became an atheist
and a practicing homosexual.

Marigolds and Roses

Roses have thorns.
Marigolds do not.

Rose leaves have no scent.
Marigold leaves have a pungent weedy smell.

The marigold flower: showy but quite scentless.
Oil of roses: precious for perfumes
and more expensive by far
than caviar.

The marigold holds
its bright beauty
suspended, pristine,
for a surprising number of weeks.
Eventually it wilts and dries up,
but stays on its stem
until knocked or blown to the ground.

The rose performs a subtle
and chaste solo dance
over several days,
from the bud unfurling
to the fully opened bloom
to the fall
of all
its petals.