

1963

## Death of a Kitten

Robert L. Smith

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ROBERT L. SMITH

DEATH OF A KITTEN<sup>2</sup>

Saddest of all, the name.  
Ante-name, an appetite:  
Round white kitten-head intent at meals.

Her name's resonance, when  
Sounded, brought her into form,  
Fixed her in a hand's familiar fit.

Her name remained behind  
When she sickened, for it was  
Left by dying flesh, marooned on earth.

Open loud the icebox:  
There's a presence by the door.  
Something milk and fish and roast-intrigued.

Beneath the sink, the line,  
Bleached white circle from her dish,  
Will waver on the floor, dimly crossed.

Sometimes in the night the  
Bed will shift beneath no weight  
And the blankets sink beneath a dream.

Joyful scrap of paper  
In a mournful wind. Such things  
Make her yet *Omphalos* of our house.