

THE OLD STRAY CAT

(G W Williams)

Please open up your home and let me in
For winter's fingers claw the autumn air
I have no strength to search for food and warmth
My limbs are heavy and my fur is thin.

You shrink away from me and I from you
You hate me as I starve and foul your soil
You blame me for my mange and for my fleas
And do not deign the reason to construe.

The worms and parasites still find me host
At least those unseen creatures need me still
When even research poachers sneer contempt
While poking me with boots to judge the cost.

The bags of trash are sealed with twisted wires
As safe from me as diamonds in a vault
Nourishment that, useless, rots and waits
For transport to the local council fires.

I search a neat dry lawn to wet my tongue
I ache with cold and yet my mouth is dry
A child laughs loudly as it aims a stone
It is the elders who instruct the young.

I hiss with anger and howl and try to run
I drag myself away in streams of pain
The moon is full and hurls its crystal light
That offers me no warmth as does the sun.

Tonight I know that death will surely win
Giving to me, the vanquished, final peace
But, please, I do not wish to die alone
So open up your home - and let me in.