

POETRY

Feral Cat

He's a wild and independent creature, this cat.
Comes from years of living rough
Heavily muscled, claws like scimitars
A fearsome hunter who kills for need
Hiding uneaten ration for another day
Not counting on success and knowing hunger.
Now finding soft berth covers his dish, empty or not
Habits of survival not forgot
Sleeps deeply on the porch during the day
Only takes a constitutional dawn and dusk
Then disappears to the bolt hole that sheltered him
In the bitterness of winter's cold.
And yet there is something in him
That craves affection. Once he was owned
Taken to the vet and neutered
Before lost or abandoned to live solitary
Desperate struggle to survive.
Afraid but wanting a kind hand,
A friendly voice, he rolls on his back
Trusting exposes soft orange belly fur to rub
Claws carefully sheathed
And meows to call attention.
One day perhaps he will venture into the house
But still he hesitates in the doorway,
Caught between familiar dangers outside
And perilous unknowns within.

Rayna Patton
Willowbrook at Delaware Run

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