

*Robert Flanagan*

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FELIS DOMESTICUS

All fur ball and errant hair,  
breath milky, sardine-scented,  
the cat,  
wishing to be petted,  
clambers my easy chair.  
But she does  
and she doesn't:  
so backs and turns,  
tail whisking my beard, and turns  
to a fresh approach  
with delicate, plucking claw  
and rough tongue.

In a rose silk gown, amused,  
you watch us from the couch.

She licks herself into beauty  
-- this alley-get, cast-off  
I've called to many late nights  
for a lap-sitter,  
only to see her, tail-up,  
step stiffly away,  
her own.  
Now she becomes this present  
choice:  
to please or to refuse.  
Seeming to give, I take,  
and act the master with my stroke.

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