

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/2

Marne Wilson

A VALENTINE-SHAPED HEART

is the name of the defect that took my cat's life.

It sounds like such a pretty thing,
perfectly fitting her personality,
all sugar and spice and docility,
so innocent that for years she thought
hissing was a special kind of greeting,
never believing that other cats
might want to do her harm.

Every time I entered the room,
she'd spit at me like a cobra
before rubbing her face on me affectionately,
a performance that never failed
to give strangers pause.

It gives me pause now to think
that some of her sweetness
might have been caused by
nothing more than a lack of energy.
Never strong enough to fight,
did she need to take abuse with good nature
and act as if she couldn't comprehend it?
Now I wonder how much of life I misunderstand,
having been so wrong about her
and her valentine-shaped heart.