

The truth is...we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

We started in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

Curious? Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member.

**Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group
© 2018 Pen & Ink Writers' Group**

February 2018 selection – What the Cat Saw...

**Simba
By Elvira K. Castillo**

The cat has marvelous eyes. When I look at a cat, my first thought is, "What is the cat thinking," as the cat's eyes seem to be thinking as well as seeing. When you ask the question "what the cat saw," you can also ask, "what is it thinking," while looking in one or many directions?

Sometimes I wonder if a cat can see "through" things. An example of this is an experience I once had with a cat named Simba. He was our neighbor's cat who often strolled into our yard, and loved bathing in the sun on our driveway. One day while I petted Simba in the back yard, he purred away, but those eyes concentrated on a thick patch of flowers under an evergreen tree. His eyes stayed fixed on the flowers and I wondered what he was looking at, as the flowers were still and so close together that you couldn't see anything amongst them. But, Simba continued to stare, and suddenly he raced into the flowers and quick as a wink he bounded out of the flowers with a mouse clasped tightly in his jaws. I was shocked as I never, ever saw any mice in my yard. I probably would have jumped ten feet in the air if, while weeding the flowers, I'd have come across a mouse! I'm still amazed at Simba's feat.

Occasionally Simba made himself at home in my house as I once baby sat him while his owners went on vacation. I have to say sometimes I suspected what Simba was thinking through his eyes, especially when he contemplated jumping up on something he wasn't sure of. In one instance, he sat staring at the top of my television set. This time I knew just what he was thinking and grabbed him before he was able to jump on to the television set and knock it down on the floor.

Yes, a cat's eyes are very mysterious and one wonders just what they are seeing or thinking. One thing I'd like to know, can a cat see at night time when their eyes glow in the dark?

###

What the Cat Saw By Carol Karvon

My name is Cat. People sometimes assume it's short for Catherine. They'd be wrong. They pass me by without even seeing me, like I'm invisible. That's not a bad thing. I get to see a lot of surprising and unexpected things that way.

Like Janie pinching Elsie when nobody's around to see her. Of course, Elsie screams and mom comes running. Janie just stands there looking all sweet and innocent. But I've got her number. Someday the tables will turn on her and Elsie will get her revenge.

Or the time I saw Jimmy sneak into the pantry for a sip of brandy. The joke was on him. He got caught out because his breath smelled like booze. All the gum he chewed didn't change a thing. Neither did the mints he took from mom's purse. Something about the look in his eyes made mom suspicious. He actually looked guilty and didn't fool mom for a minute.

I've seen grandma stuff rolls into her pockets and take them to her room. I can't figure out how she keeps them from crumbling and turning into a mess. I think she's afraid there won't be enough left for her to eat after the kids ravage the food. Mom and dad know she hoards food in her room, but they don't want to confront her, so they just turn a blind eye to it. Sometimes I wonder if insects finding the food stash before grandma consumes it, might make a difference to mom and dad. Then maybe they'd have to act.

And, don't even get me started on some of the phone conversations I've heard. People are very candid when they think no one else is in the room -- or no one is paying attention to what they're saying into the phone. Sometimes I see people touching their phones and they're not talking at all. I think it's called texting. Then I can't hear anything, only the slight clicking of their fingers on the phone. That's not any fair! I'm as nosy as the next one. I want to know what's going on in my own house with my family.

Just the other day I heard mom tell Aunt Grace how wonderful she looked in her new brown dress. I know that's not true. Mom told dad Aunt Grace needs something more

colorful. Brown is just not her color, said mom. Dad being a very wise man, made no comment.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the idea.

Oh, I forgot to mention. One of my most disliked things is when someone will call me Kitty. Sometimes, they say it over and over again, “Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty!” They think I’m deaf so they think repeating it will make me come out of hiding. I really think that makes me sound like a baby. I’ll have you know I’m a beautiful full grown Persian cat. When they call me Kitty, instead of my preference of Cat or even Cassandra, I just crawl under a chair and ignore them. I go into my, I’m a cat mode and be happy I let you live with me.

###

The Enforcer
By Sharon Uzarewicz

If Dusty were human, she would have been a sharp-eyed, ruler-tapping, brook-no-nonsense headmistress. But even as a diminutive feline beauty, she presided over her domain with an iron paw, enforcing rules and maintaining order with little more than an angry tail swish or sullen glare.

Rule number one - don’t upset the cat.

Rule number two — if you don’t live here, don’t come in. It upsets the cat.

Rule number three - whatever you do, don’t upset the cat.

Our fifty pound Collie was an afterthought in comparison. An educated visitor to our home knew to ask for Dusty’s whereabouts before entering, as she was apt to attack first and question later.

To her credit, Dusty shouldered her self-appointed responsibilities with tireless tenacity. Besides her endless vigilance against outsiders, she denied herself rest until all of the family were, literally, tucked in bed, which she verified by a nightly visit.

With utmost finesse, she would sniff our faces (still breathing) and then proceed to knead the blanket around us (safe and snug). One last look over her shoulder and her duties for the day were done.

As long as we toed her line, harmony prevailed.

One winter, my mother and I started a massive jigsaw puzzle on the large dining room table in the basement. What the cat saw as she settled herself on a nearby chair, I haven’t

the slightest idea. But each night, as we lost ourselves in blues and greens, she guarded us faithfully.

We had spent weeks on this monster, and the night its completion was in sight, we decided to stay up and finish. As the hour grew late, Dusty reminded us with a soft meow that it was past our bedtime and she, for one, was tired.

“Go on up, Dust. No one’s stopping you.”

Her eyes narrowed as the meow escalated to a low growl and her tail began a steady but angry flick. We understood her message but paid it no heed. Clearly affronted, she soon left us to our folly. It was past 2 am when we placed the final piece, and with a tired but satisfied stretch, went up to bed.

The next morning Dusty had again taken up residency in her favorite basement chair. With a delicate lick, she groomed her outstretched leg, pausing to meet my eyes as I approached the now empty table.

I was dumbfounded. The puzzle, each and every piece, littered the floor.

Can cats smirk? Can they talk?

This one managed to do both with the utmost clarity.

###

What Carson Saw that Cat Didn’t By N. Stewart

“I don’t care what Cat saw, Carson. It doesn’t matter. It is what you see that I want to know. Everyone sees something different. Catherine sees from a very clinical and efficient perspective. With her there are only two options. Everything is either black or white and no shades of grey ever exist. By her standards, if not right, than it is wrong. But that is not you, son. Put what you see into your own words. Don’t try to use hers. Just tell me what you saw. Show me what the world looks like to you. What did you see this morning when you went outside?”

“I’ll try to show you, but Cat is smarter than me and I don’t know if I can come up with anything worth writing.”

“Tell me what you saw. You can put words to paper later.”

“Okay, here’s what I saw. When I looked out my window this morning, I saw big flakes of snow, falling gently to earth, covering each and every blade of grass, each and every branch of a bush, and each and every rooftop, looking very much like tufts of

summertime cotton balls. Mother Nature beautiful in her magnificence unfolded before me. I stood there for some time, lost in the wonder of it all.”

“That’s it. That’s more like you. Show me more.”

“The sky was an azure blue with puffs of billowy clouds, hanging way up high. I needed to be a part of the beauty that was outside. I put on my boots, scarf, hat, coat, and gloves and opened the back door. As I stepped out into this magical world of white, the crispness of the cold air smacked my face and stung my eyes. Bitter cold it was but so comforting at the same time. I raised my face and let the snowflakes stick to my eyelids; nose and I licked those that fell on my lips. Little crystals of frozen waters quickly melted on my tongue. I held out my hand to catch a few and marveled at the engineering behind each unique pattern. So pure, so tender, so peacefully quiet out there.”

“And...”

“I tramped along a path, kicking up snow as I went. I was enthralled with every sight dressed in white. I stopped suddenly and held my stance. A cardinal sat on a snow-covered bush, picking off a withered piece of fruit. His majestic red feathers were in stark contrast to the surrounding white of the newly fallen snow. We stared at each other in awe. Another quick movement to my left caught my eye and a squirrel dug in the snow, seeking a treasure that had been buried when the ground was warm and dry. He too stopped what he was doing and stared at me. Relax little ones, no harm will come from me I whispered and silently backed away, watching the enchantment of a winter moment.

Many minutes had passed and I was covered in snow from head to foot; feeling chilled. I decided better to watch the wonders of winter from the warm comfort of the inside. With a hand I brushed the snow from my coat and stamped the snow from my boots. Opening the door, I felt the rush of heat touch my reddened face. The snow remaining began to melt and formed droplets on the floor as I took off my things.”

“See you can do it. You are you. Write your winter observation assignment for school the way you told it to me. Do not worry about what your sister saw while looking out of her window. She is not you and you are not her. You looked beyond the window, seeing all the shapes of beauty and shades of winter’s splendor. And, given that ability to see differently from others, makes you worthy and unique in your own right. Now, go while it is still fresh in your mind and write an amazing winter story.”

###

What the Cat Saw
Contributed by Edward Von Scheffler

