

Robert Beveridge

Alley Love

Claws unsheath, tails whip
to erection. The cats, a male
and a female, circle, pause.

Pink tongue darts, whiskers
twitch, muscles bulge and arch
under tawny fur. Step, pause.

The male darts in, an alley-
cat, coat varied, patched
like Joseph's. Dart, pause.

The female dodges, white,
long-haired, hard to get.
Tongue darts. Dodge, pause.

They circle once again
the male paws his whiskers.
Eyes flash. Look, pause.

Long hair advances, nuzzles.
The alley cat purrs low.
Blur of fur. Pause, love.

Handfast

water comes together with water
storm against tide, a river
that kisses pools of pipe-drawn waste.
Commingle, from a new substance.
How blood flows from a cut leg
into the mouth that kisses the wound
how the warmth of lips
flows the other way.
Take this water, this stalk,
these lips, this ring carved
from the heart of a climbing tree.

Lineage

The mystic told me
my eyes were like Hannibal's
as he lay dead in the snow
crushed under an elephant

and that was enough
but I waited for more

You were Hammurabi
in a past life
she said
and Adolf Hitler
was your illegitimate father

I walked out of her basement
apartment and up
unto the sunlight
(which, by the way, had not changed)

and headed for Anna O.'s
Bar and Grill.
It was inevitable, I guess
that I order a Heineken

I fed the jukebox, played polkas
and nursed the beer

just another day.

Robert Beveridge makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poems just outside Cleveland, OH. Recent/upcoming appearances in *Chiron Review*, *Poetry Breakfast*, and *CultureCult*, among others.