

Two Poems

Casey Fuller

The Sound of Outlaw Sprint Cars

—River City Speedway, Grand Forks, North Dakota

A billion bison circling a mountain
of fire. Dante. Giant lions. Rabid dragons.

Waiting, the feeling a fascist makes
in a soccer stadium, that brief pause,

after a speech—then, death applause.
An oil tanker exploding, the quiet port

razed, gone. A thousand chainsaws
attacking an alternative school. Doug

Stewart's Hemi-Cuda when I was 9.
Forest fires versus tornadoes. American

flame throwers versus foreign rainforests.
The idea of death suddenly appearing

real. No, a tornado taking a forest fire
over. A tsunami of fire. A fire seen

from satellites. Then, that fire reaching
those satellites. Total fire. Fire everywhere.

A conflagration of flame. The whole
Earth burning. Star sound, a sun.

The Kittens

i caught two magnificent kittens
and held them in my arms
one a roughneck tuxedo
with broken yellow teeth
another a calico i flew to my mom
from texas to seattle
siblings they never ran
after i brought out the wet food
i named the toothless tuxedo baldie
and the flawless calico harriet
after the shiest character in emma
who falls hopelessly in love
again and again
full blown roses i knew
i had to take them to the vet
to get them fixed
but i didn't have money
i moved to san antonio
to fix my broken marriage
my wife just lost the job
we moved to texas for
three weeks after we moved
like all desperate man
i began looking out windows
and there they appeared
first as a group of three
baldwin harriet and a third
i never named
tired with a ripped ear
baldie's skinny body
was scabbed from

endless fights with
a giant tom
harriet young so young
and already pregnant
slept on a palm tree branch
i found a place that would
take them but couldn't promise
they wouldn't be killed
then i found a coalition
who said if i trained
to capture wild cats
i could take them to a vet
any third wednesday of the month
for only five bucks
traps i found are
rectangular cages
that slide close on one end
and are stored by volunteers
who the cat coalition
divides into regions
you had to schedule with your region
coordinate with your regional volunteer
schedule with your vet
document the attempt
and after you lured the cat in the trap
if you could lure the cat in the trap
you have to take them to the vet
at the time they said
then store them in your house
in the rectangular cages
for forty eight hours
if you miss your wednesday
you have to return your trap
and try again

in a disheartening month
ruined by her lost job
my wife blamed me
for moving to texas
and the fight she had
with her bosses
i made all the food
washed all the dishes
washed all the clothes
walked the dog
took out the trash
never complained
had a job that would start
in two weeks
it was over
and we knew it was over
before we split
and she moved to minnesota
i saw baldie get run over
with his nameless brother
in a miracle
baldie made it out
but his nameless brother
was smashed on the street
tried to get up
and go on
but fell
writhed
and fell again
i watched from the window
and my wife
who no longer loved me
saw me crying
unable to speak

in front of the glass
then she walked out
picked it up
hugged it
moved it to some grass
so no one else
could run it over
again.

Casey Fuller is an English PhD student at the University of North Dakota.