

THE ANIMAL QUEENDOM

when my mother cat had kittens
i somehow thought she'd never leave their box.
i assumed that, except at feeding times,
she'd want to stand eternal maternal vigilance,
a monument to sociobiologic singleness of purpose.

instead, right from the start, she liked
her little forays back into the other room,
even an occasional stepping out into the yard.
and now, just one week later,
although she dutifully feeds and washes them,
she much prefers to sleep stretched out
on the couch.

i figure any day now she'll be wanting
to go after her real estate license.

TAMING THE WOULD-BE WILDE-MAN

i sit down with ray zepeda's class
for lunch after their final exam
and i order
hash-browns with peppers and onions and cheese,
a side of sausage,
a side of sour-dough toast,
and a coke.
when my repast arrives
the girl sitting on my right says,
"i used to eat like that
but it started to ruin my body."

"it's never hurt mine," i say.

she glances pointedly at the beergut
resting comfortably on my lap
and says, "it can take years off
your life though."

"i don't know about that," i say;
"after ninety good years, i can't complain."

but she comes right back at me with,
"well, you sure look ninety,
and i bet you feel even worse."

i decide to talk to the girl on my left.