

I watch  
as Cabrini assumes her  
customary spot in the sun  
on the living room rug.

The owner of the barn  
where I found the smokey grey kitten  
almost nineteen years ago  
said  
Take her or the coyotes will.  
So I took her.

I watch her and remember  
a famous children's picture book.  
In Leo the Late Bloomer  
a worried mother and father tiger  
desperately observe their only offspring  
for signs of growing.  
Can he speak yet?  
Can he draw neatly yet?  
Can he write his name yet?  
How long will it take?

In my case  
I anxiously observe  
my cat for signs of dying.  
Can she still walk?  
Can she still use her litter box?  
Can she still eat?  
How long will it take?

We have history, she and I.  
In earlier days, she'd walk the bathtub rim  
while I soaked  
and mused at her sense of balance.

She'd position herself exactly  
midway between us  
when my mate and I argued  
as if, by her silent witness,  
she could will us peace.

Later, she'd come to my bed  
as I sobbed, comforting me,  
rubbing her long silky fur  
aside my heavy chest.

In recent years  
road trips chased away  
her twenty three hours a day napping habit  
turned her into an adventurer.  
New smells, new sights  
Stirred up, rekindled her kitten ness.

Laps have never been safe  
around Cabrini.  
Sit down and you have  
A cat warming  
Your private parts,  
Purr purr purring,  
looking for a hand out  
stretched to stroke her  
extraordinary ordinariness  
make her day  
blissful.

Haltingly, she hoists herself  
Up off the rug,  
Gingerly takes a step  
On unstable arthritic legs,  
Makes her way to her food bowl and sniffs.  
I watch and wonder  
When the hideous error of death  
Will have it's way.