

FELINUS

A sleepy Nina plunks down, curls up
inches from my face, purring fervently
until her very bones vibrate, as does my chest.
Ninotchka, please, I say with
difficulty, but her half-eyes conceal themselves
behind their milky nictitating membrane; what's still visible
mingles green cloisonné & gold leaf.
Feminal, flush, she's intact yet all mottled: when I breathe
laboriously out, her fur ruffles white under black & rust.
Each ivory whisker's tipped with madder stipple, even
the freckled roof of her mouth
comes purpled with ridges and inky cornices.
(I can see inside when she yawns.) My arms are in a weird
position, I can't hold up my novel, so I stare at her face. Little fangs
curve out from underneath her speckled upper lip.
My eyeball-catechizing doesn't seem to unnerve her.
After minutes of frantic frilling, she suddenly emits a tiny sigh
and is utterly asleep. I know her body could be halfway across
the room before her brain came fully to, if needed.
Her limbs, soft as an infant's, would tauten to alert
in seconds flat, total cathexis. I try
to lift the book again. She
presses her paws up to her face in a fitful unconscious
tight stretch, each claw fractionally extended. Then sighs again,
her toes relaxed and pink. Each piece of being
come to Nina does itself, goes right back again. There's no concatenation
in her small skull, no filaments confusing
where it's supposed to be, what it's up to now.
Her chest rises and falls. Gradually, mine
too. No mind, no problem. Presence
feels enough. Her flatlined mind's
perpetual felicity.