

Pig hove, letting legend like dried mud drop,
 Slowly, grunt
 On grunt, up in the flickering light to shape

A monument
 Prodigious in gluttonies as that hog whose want
 Made lean Lent

Of kitchen slops and, stomaching no constraint,
 Proceeded to swill
 The seven troughed seas and every earthquaking continent.

ELLA MASON AND HER ELEVEN CATS

Old Ella Mason keeps cats, eleven at last count,
 In her ramshackle house off Somerset Terrace;
 People make queries
 On seeing our neighbor's cat-haunt,
 Saying: "Something's addled in a woman who accommodates
 That many cats."

Rum and red-faced as a watermelon, her voice
 Long gone to wheeze and seed, Ella Mason
 For no good reason
 Plays hostess to tabby, tom and increase,
 With cream and chicken-gut feasting the palates
 Of finical cats.

Village stories go that in olden days
 Ella flounced about minx-thin and haughty,
 A fashionable beauty
 Slaying the dandies with her emerald eyes;
 Now, run to fat, she's a spinster whose door shuts
 On all but cats.

Once we children sneaked over to spy Miss Mason
 Napping in her kitchen paved with saucers,
 On antimacassars,
 Table-top, cupboard shelf, cats lounged brazen,
 One gruff-timbred purr rolling from furred throats:
 Such stentorian cats!

With poke and giggle, ready to skedaddle,
 We peered agog through the cobwebbed door
 Straight into yellow glare
 Of guardian cats crouched round their idol,
 While Ella drowzed whiskered with sleek face, sly wits:
 Sphinx-queen of cats.

"Look! there she goes, Cat-Lady Mason!"
 We snickered as she shambled down Somerset Terrace
 To market for her dearies,
 More mammoth and blowzy with every season;
 "Miss Ella's got loony from keeping in cahoots
 With eleven cats."

But now turned kinder with time, we mark Miss Mason
 Blinking green-eyed and solitary
 At girls who marry—
 Demure ones, lithe ones, needing no lesson
 That vain jades sulk single down bridal nights,
 Accurst as wild-cats.