

## **Rat, 19 and Dying**

We have shared time, I guess that's the thing. He was there like highlighter, an eater and a drinker, a sweet returner as days blinked on and off. He was gray and his eyes were green. People remarked on his calm, we called him Rat the Buddha Cat, kittens loved him, he never got mad, he had no sour in him. In his prime he was big as a goose, friends called him part dog. He was in between me and the world on his quiet feet.

He came from a farm in Iowa, South Liberty, West Liberty, I can't recall. Everycat, just one faceless gray in a mob of faceless grays out in the barn, his mom a big Siamese strolling obliviously by. I reached into the churning mass of his brothers and lifted him out.

I wanted a pal for my other young cat, Mr. Bones, who actually resented him ferociously. But Rat was always friendly and indifferent. He just sat around and twinkled

And he liked to lie with his front legs propped up on whatever was around: a step, a human foot, a pile of books. He was happy in his skin, but I guess he needed that much of a view.

His back legs have almost stopped working. He sleeps all the time in one spot, in a private part of the house. Sometimes he stands up and points his head toward nothing, meows in a croaky voice at the air.