

I LOST A CAT AND A SON THIS WEEK

by Barbara Arenburg

Though the shell of the cat only started a month ago.
Hollow is the man the length of his bed
And his eyes are hollower

The ones like open sockets
Plain unsafe. One might expect a fire
If a bug flies in.

Bugged, he says, like the carbon monoxide detector
With the dangling battery
of daily inspection:

Where is the man in the house?
I saw him last night, rounding corners
I tell you the truth.

And the cat, he is dead
The water we both drank is poisoned.

Fingers fuss at frayed edges
of the giant coat.

When I look outside,
the hollow man holds red rubber gloves
Retreats, retraces his steps, back and forth from the shed.

And what, pray tell, are you doing, exactly,
Besides grinning with evil intent?

The exhausted stragglers pack bags, just in case...

Sleep with lights on,
dream your eyes drip blood
before your head combusts

You are gone when I come home
From the necessary trees
And I suddenly need them again.

Where does the light go inside a soul?
Inside two comatose cavities darkened by dread
Wide and wary they remain stuck like that--

crazy glued

And your blessed cat
Does not seem to matter

When windows become walls, blank white walls
And beds, dead-weighted, and nailed to floors
Are your resting place now

Rest in peace, I say
And you do not answer

I say my goodbyes to the cat.
I do not say goodbye to the son