

The Dead Cat
by Justin McGonigle

The smell was of sweet and sour chicken mixed with vinegar and motor oil. A deep rancid smell. I smelled it for 3 or 4 days before I found its source. Did anyone else notice that one of our cats is missing? When I was a kid, my family had a lot of pets that didn't last long for one reason or another.

I found it dead in a little cubby at the top of the barn stairs. It was my first time finding a dead cat. I'm not sure we had this cat long or if it was even part of the family yet. One day I noticed it missing and then I found it dead.

It was half rotted, in the corner with the darkest shadows. It was lying on its side and it had a smile on its face. It was made of grey clumps of fur, forming the shape of a cat.

I didn't want to touch it and disturb its peace. I walked away, wondering how long it would take to decompose.

I don't remember telling anyone about it. I do remember going back later to see it, but by then it was almost gone and didn't look like a cat anymore.