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# The Cat's ELEGY

CELETT BURGESS  
BURGES JOHNSON



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## The Cat's Elegy





# THE CAT'S ELEGY

By *Francis Gelett*  
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and  
BURGES JOHNSON



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## The Cat's Elegy



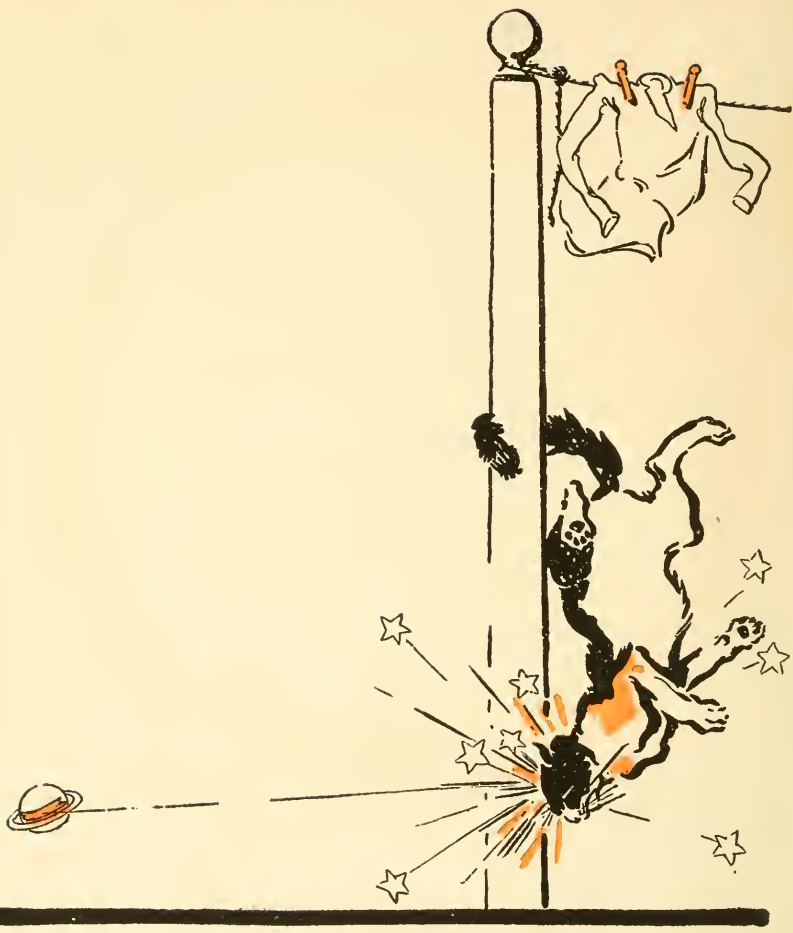


# The Cat's Elegy

I

**T**HE tea-bell tolls for Nell  
to pass the tray,  
The glowing cook winds  
slowly up the clock,  
The ashman homeward wends his  
weary way  
And leaves a trail of cinders round  
the block.







The  
Cat's  
Elegy

II

**N**OW fade the dingy fences on  
our sight,  
And all the air is still, except,  
maybe,  
Where some street-organ, faintly  
through the night,  
Wafts "Holy City" and "The Bam-  
boo Tree."



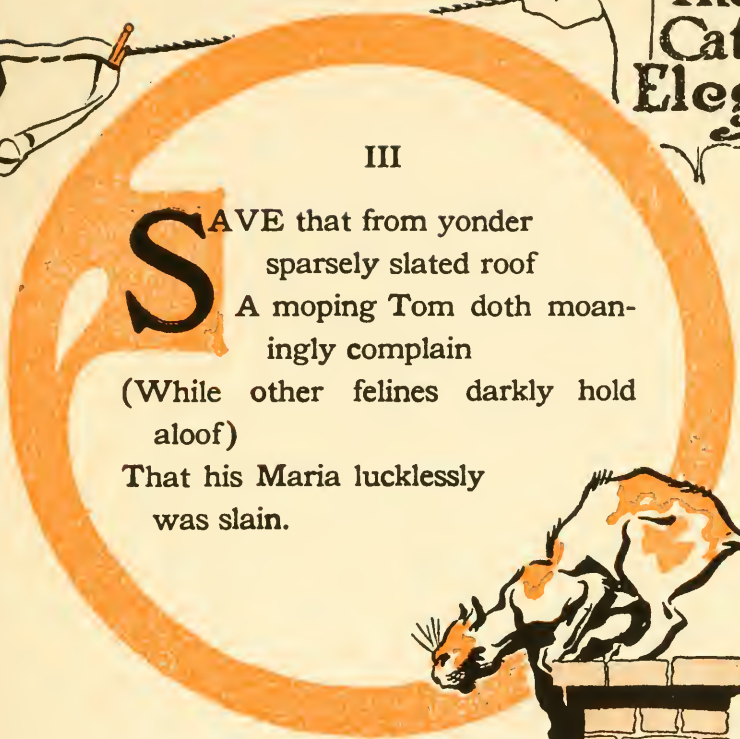






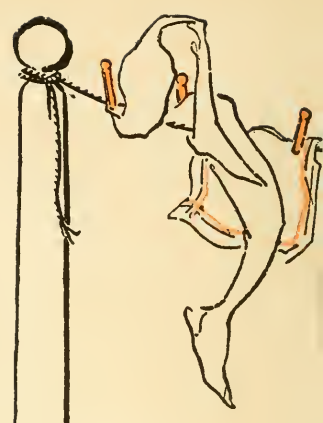
The  
Cat's  
Elegy

III



**S**AVE that from yonder  
sparsely slated roof  
A moping Tom doth moan-  
ingly complain  
(While other felines darkly hold  
aloof)  
That his Maria lucklessly  
was slain.





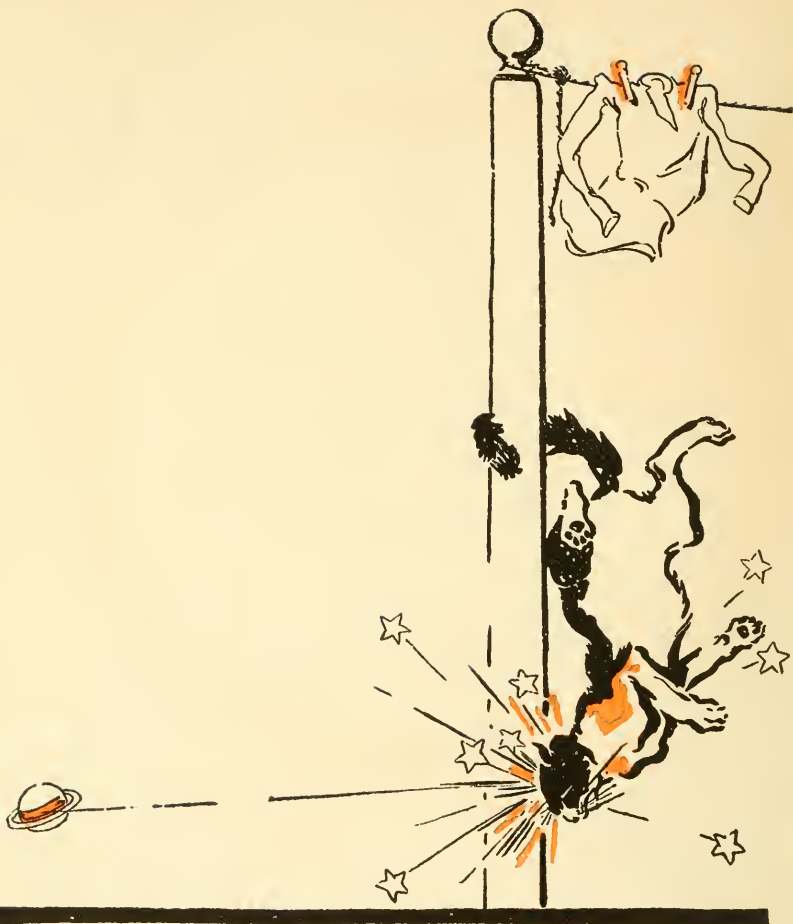


The  
Cat's  
Elegy

IV

**B**ENEATH the shade yon  
dying pear tree sheds,  
Where rest tomato cans on  
ashy heaps,  
Where cast-off garments line the  
pansy beds,  
The flattened form of poor Maria  
sleeps.

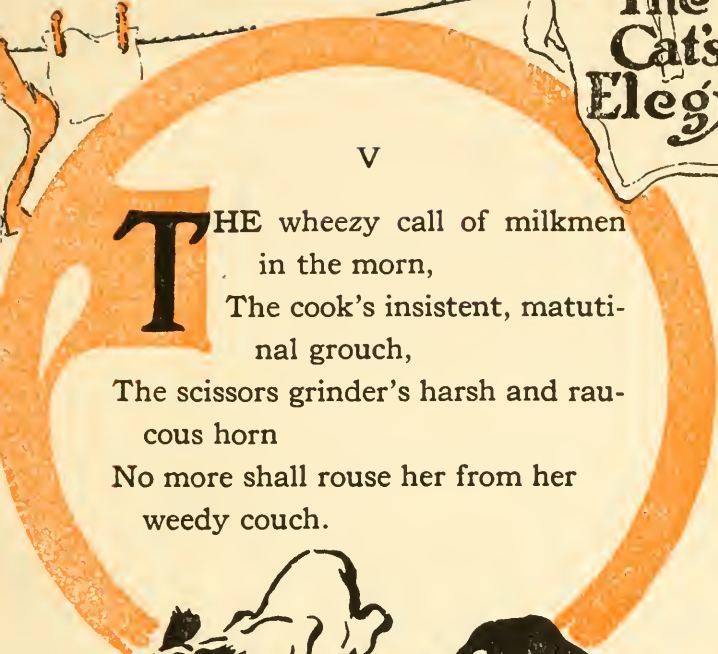






The  
Cat's  
Elegy

V



**T**HE wheezy call of milkmen  
in the morn,  
The cook's insistent, matuti-  
nal grouch,  
The scissors grinder's harsh and rau-  
cous horn  
No more shall rouse her from her  
weedy couch.








# The Cat's Elegy

VI



**F**OR her no more shall wave  
the threatening broom,  
Or busy housewife scat her  
from the chair,  
No children run to chase her from  
the room,  
Or pampered dogs besiege her in  
her lair.







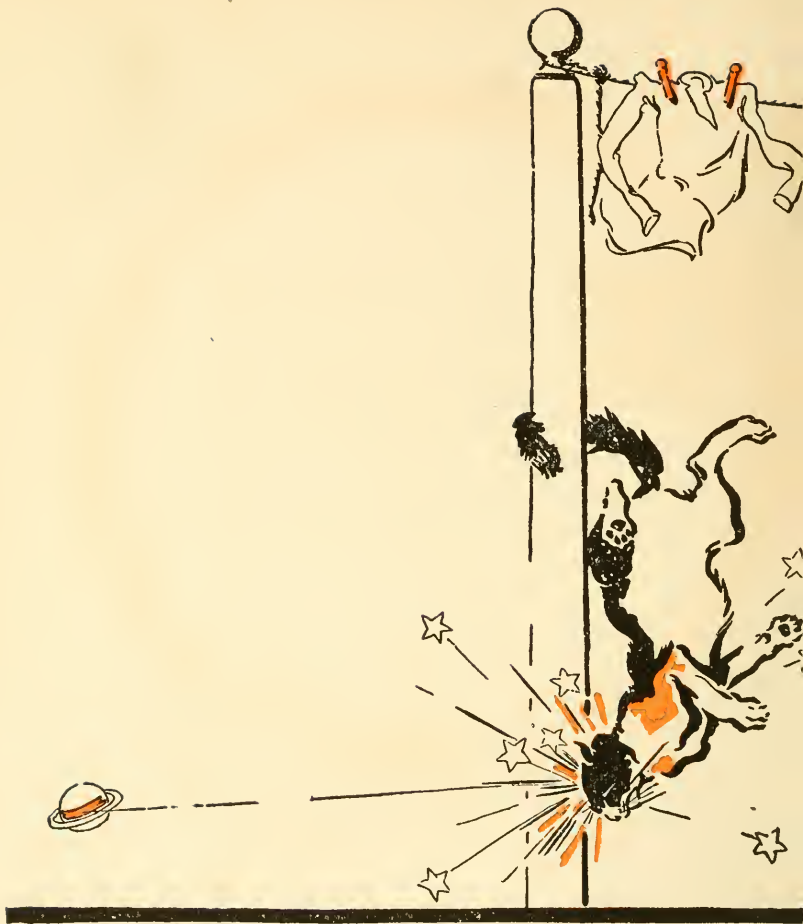
A large, thick orange circle is the central focus. In the upper right, a figure is shown in profile, using a hand saw to cut into the circle. In the upper left, another figure is shown from behind, also using a hand saw on the circle. The background is a light cream color. The title 'The Cat's Elegy' is written in a stylized, black, serif font in the upper right corner, partially overlapping the sawing figure.

# The Cat's Elegy

## VII

**O**FT sought she out appointed rendezvous,  
In dalliance spent the fairest of her days,  
Or nightly studied, with her art in view,  
The acoustic properties of alley-ways.







The  
Cat's  
Elegy

VIII

**O**FT did the predatory cur  
rejoice  
To drive her, quivering, up  
this lonely tree;  
How jocund did she raise nocturnal  
voice!  
How cursed the lodgers, kept awake  
at three!







# The Cat's Elegy

IX

**L**ET not some grooméd lap  
cat e'er decry  
The humble realm of that  
backyard obscure —  
The battered gate, the clothesline  
whence there fly  
The short and simple flannels of  
the poor.







# The Cat's Elegy

X

**T**HE boast of Tortoise-shell,  
the pomp of Manx,  
The Persian, bearing pedi-  
gree profound,  
All dread alike the catcher's nimble  
shanks —  
The public highways lead but to the  
pound.



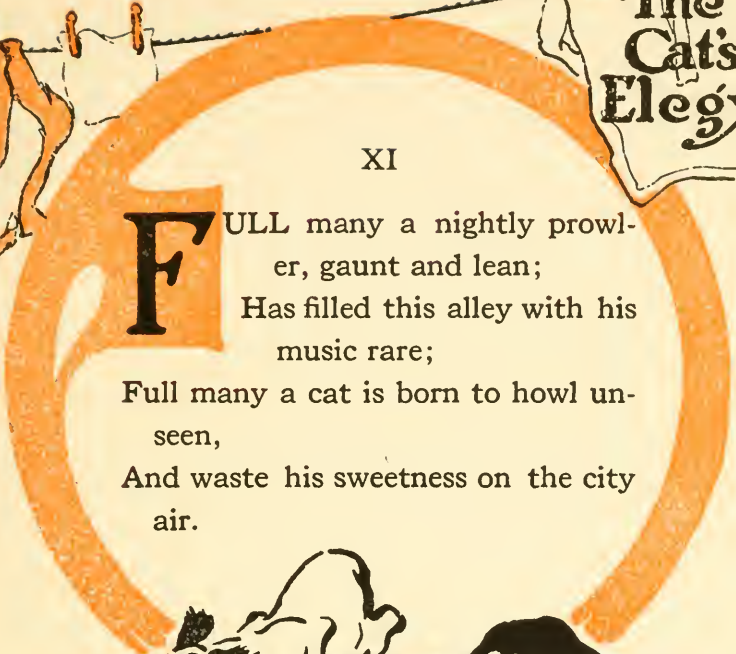






The  
Cat's  
Elegy

XI



**F**ULL many a nightly prowler,  
gaunt and lean;  
Has filled this alley with his  
music rare;  
Full many a cat is born to howl un-  
seen,  
And waste his sweetness on the city  
air.

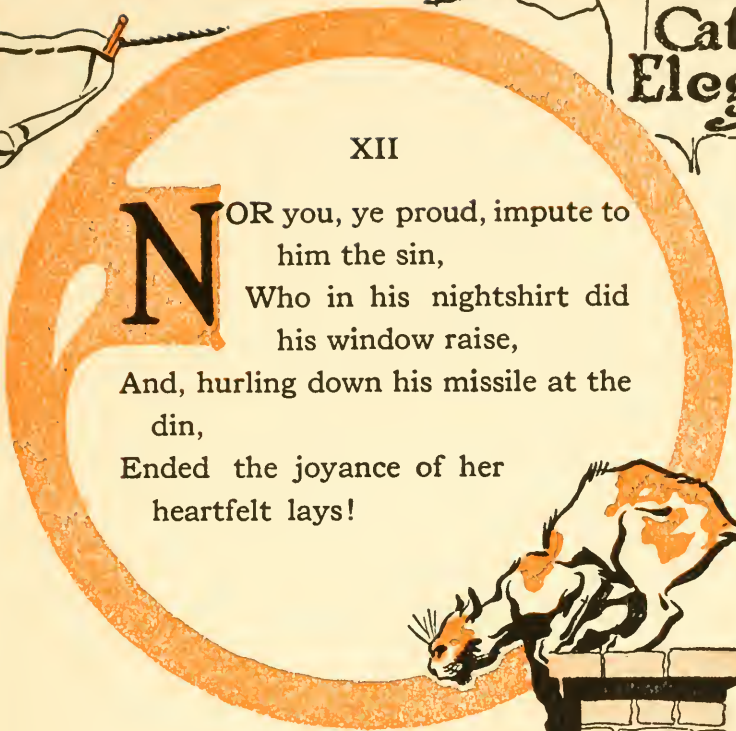






# The Cat's Elegy

XII



**N**OR you, ye proud, impute to  
him the sin,  
Who in his nightshirt did  
his window raise,  
And, hurling down his missile at the  
din,  
Ended the joyance of her  
heartfelt lays!





XIII

**R**ETURNING from some  
animated bust,  
Back to his mansion, pale  
and sick at heart,  
Maria's voice provoked his latent  
lust  
For blood; she fell a victim to her art.





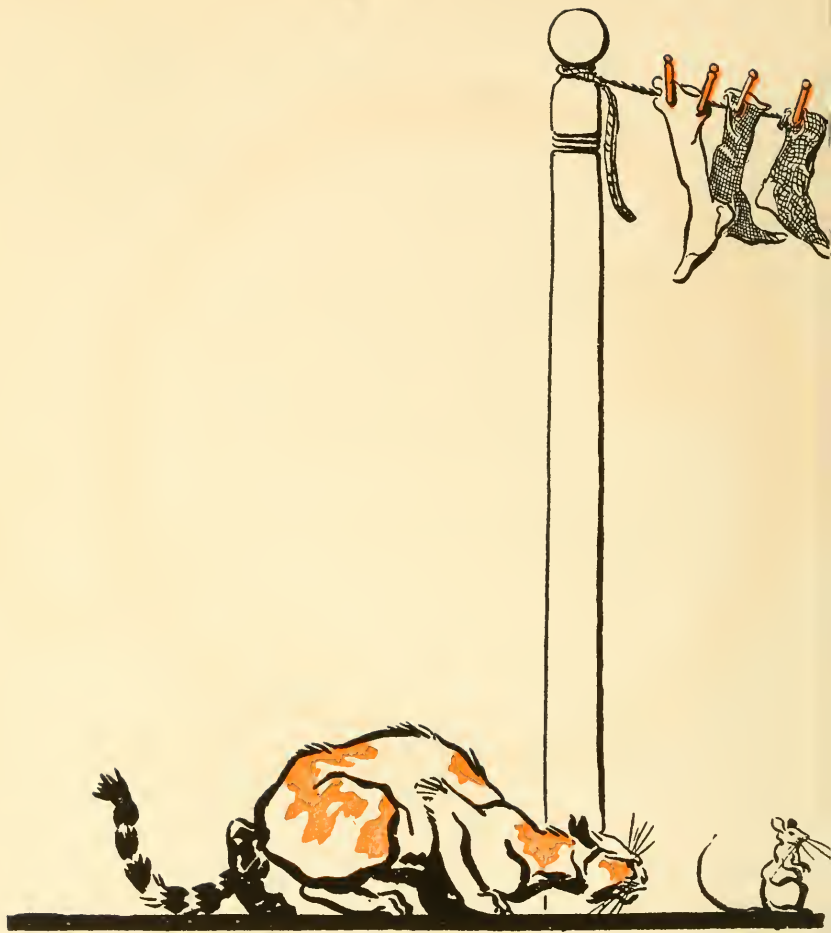


The  
Cat's  
Elegy

XIV

**P**ERHAPS in this neglected  
form has been  
A soul that in Bubastis  
might have reigned;  
The Goddess Pasht have recognized  
as kin;  
Or ruled Kilkenny ere its glory waned.










The  
Cat's  
Elegy

XV



**F**AR from the madding  
crowd she was not feased,  
The while her vagrom fan-  
cies made her stray  
Along the sequestered alley, where  
she raised  
The nightly noisy tenor of  
her lay.








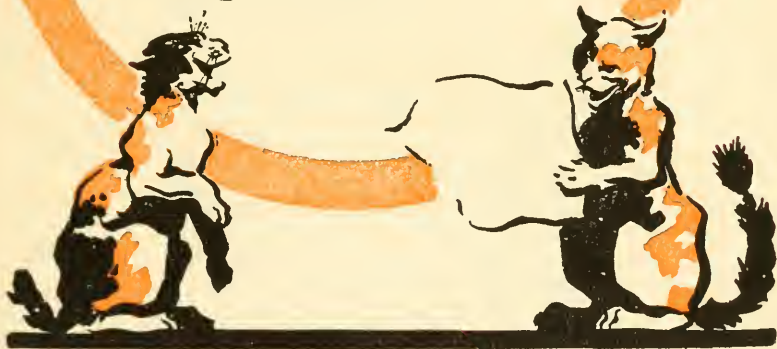
# The Cat's Elegy

XVI



**F**OR who, to grim insomnia a  
prey,  
That weird elusive being e'er  
could mark?

Who has not raised his window in  
dismay  
And blindly cast some weapon  
through the dark?







# The Cat's Elegy

XVII

**Y**ET on some pavement, soon  
or late, there lies  
The cat who tortures slum-  
ber while she prowls;  
While from the tomb the voice of  
Nature cries,  
As some small urchin imitates her  
howls.







# The Cat's Elegy

XVIII

**B**UT Requies Cat, now that  
she is dead  
(Nine times she died, and  
therefore quite deceased)  
Approach and read (with friends to  
hold thy head)  
This touching tribute to the  
little beast.









# The Cat's Elegy

## EPITAPH

**H**ERE lies poor Puss, with  
collar unbedight,  
A homeless cat, a thing of  
skin and bone,  
Full-throated rose her swan song on  
the night,  
And now the dust-heap claims her  
for its own.











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