

Litter Box

by Jake Barnes

Kate and I both quit smoking that winter. We stuck it out for two months. Kate said next time she was going to use the patch. One afternoon, Kate and the neighbor lady had a conversation over the fence. Kate reported that Florence was moving out. Florence said her husband Donald had brought one of his girlfriends over to the house. Her cat had told her, Florence said.

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Whenever I put one over on my wife, she gives me a look, then curls her fingers and scratches the air. She's reminding me of something she told me awhile ago when she was miffed at something I said or did. When I died, she said, she was going to have me cremated and put my ashes in the cats' litter box. Kate has a mean streak. I don't think she'd really do it, but I wouldn't put it past her. I told her to go ahead. I don't mind, I said. Dead is dead. Who cares what happens to the remains?

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It was raining a bit outside; the deck was wet. My wife pointed to a corner near the door to the porch. There was an opossum with three tiny babies on her back. The babies had black eyes and looked liked mice. "Aren't they cute?" Kate asked. I grinned. We stood there watching. I put my arm around Kate and gave her a hug. I kissed her hair. "You put out some cat food for them, I see," I said.

