

Roza

by John Olson

Very upsetting morning. I've fallen madly in love with the cat upstairs named Roza. She's one of the sweetest cats I've ever met. Her owner is a retired Romanian woman about my own age named Ingrid. Roza has one bad eye and one good eye. The bad eye looks like a blood red opal and is larger than the good eye. She also has diabetes. Yesterday my wife discovered Roza lying on the walk as she was returning home from work. Roza was barely moving and Ingrid wasn't home. We worried that since it was such a beautiful summer day that Ingrid may have gone on a road trip and might not be back till late evening. Ingrid was new to the building and we hadn't gotten any contact numbers from her as yet. We called a few veterinary clinics, but the answer was always the same obstructing truth. They couldn't do much of anything since we weren't authorized to make decisions for her treatment. All I could do was sit on the hallway floor by the laundry room stroking Roza's listless body while my wife continued to search for someone to call. I could just make out the rise and fall of Roza's rib cage. And her tail move a bit. Ingrid arrived home and gently lifted Roza into her arms and said she had an appointment on Tuesday. This was on a Sunday. We hoped that Roza would come round once she was home. But this morning Roza was lying in front of our door. She was twitching. It looked bad. And my wife and I had to take our car in for an oil change that morning. Ingrid, much to my relief, opened her door and came down and said she'd take her in to the vet. So I spent the morning worrying about the cat in the waiting area at the car garage (next to some 45 year old man going on 8 playing video games on his stupid smartphone). I was trying to read the book I brought, *Pieces* by Francis Ponge. Impossible with the video game noises. I went out in the main hallway where there were a few tables and chairs set up, but then a woman on a laptop starting talking loudly into her laptop phone, and I was forced back into the waiting area. Car completed, we headed south on Highway 99 and stopped

at Home Depot to get some river rocks for our window well, then made it home. Ingrid was home and told us that Roza was still at the clinic, being treated for her diabetes. Roza's system was off balance because she'd stopped eating. She'd stopped eating because of the fucking fireworks going all night. Fireworks which are illegal, but which the city police could give a flying fuck about. They don't enforce the law. At all. Unless, of course, you're protesting capitalism or something. Then they douse you with pepper spray and bash your head in. Otherwise, forget about it. A lot of cats and dogs suffer on The Fourth. I can't imagine the local wildlife, robins, crows, raccoons, and squirrels much appreciate The Fourth either. Nor the few people who have elected to stay home and retire to their beds under a cloud of futility. A friend of ours was kept awake until two in the morning. Before going to work. At a veterinary clinic.

