

RESTAURANT COMPANION

by Jerry Meythaler

The spreading dawn seemed carried by a breeze
To light the snowy sweep in its ascent
That undulated toward a copse of trees,
Whose branches under frost were softly bent,
A silver network silhouetted bright
Against the vermillion sky; and, on my part,
As whitened shrubs gave border to the sight,
I knew the joy of nature's soothing art.

Just then, within the restaurant, as it
Suffused with nature's light and morning still
Just to my right a form, soft, grey, alit
Outside the window on the curving sill –
So near that, but for the elliptic pane,
I could have reached my hand and fur-caressed,
He sat, so candid. yet reserved, urbane,
Tail swirled about his paws, in artful rest.

Ears turning out and back, in honest weal,
Or forward in soft curiosity.
While I proceeded with my morning meal,
He, hushed and humble, sat companionly.

His courteous eyes on me but briefly rested,
More often toward the slope or trees were turned,
As though to say to me: "I'm interested,
But due respect for privacy I've learned."

It was enough, in fact, just right, as both –
The cat and I – basked in the velvet calm,
And we, who cherished separate peace, were loath
To break the spell of dawn's transcendent balm.

Eventually, alas, I was the first
To move, and, duty-bound, our union rend,
And into life's commercialism burst,
With wistful look, forsaking my brief friend.