

It has been a long time since I have considered a cat to be a pet. I think of Harry as my child and Ella as Judie's daughter. Together, they have four two footed siblings. I talk to Harry as if he is a human being. I know for sure Harry understands a few words, but I don't know how many. He tells me when he is hungry, when he is upset and when he wants lap-time using different forms of meow. And yes, I am aware of Pavlov.

Many intelligent cats have shared my abodes through the years. At the time I suddenly found myself living alone, I had two furry kids to comfort me, Goofus and Cheetah Cat. Goofus was a young feral cat that hung out on my patio. He came into the house one day and never wanted to go back out. He knew to use the litterbox, so I suspect some fine person dumped him. He got his name because he liked to fetch with wads of crumpled paper and he loved to have me hold him above my waist so he could nurse on an earlobe. Yes, it could get soggy, but it made him happy. He lived with us for several years and followed Norma to the Great Beyond soon after her death.

I rescued Cheetah Cat from a parking lot in April, 2004. A few months later he was my sole companion. In his youth, his face had the same shape as that great predator of the Veldt. Cheetah Cat was possibly the most intelligent cat that shared my quarters. He was an indoor-outdoor cat. He knew the sound of engine in my car. Every time I arrived home, as I turned into my driveway, I would see him come out of a backyard, zoom across Lansing Street and run past the car. I often had to stop half way up the driveway because he would turn and trot in front of the car and I did not want to runover him. If I took too long to unlock and open the front door, Cheetah Cat would stretch up and try to turn the doorknob with his paws. In 2016 my friend Roma helped with my move to Windsor Gardens. At the end of each day he would be under a bush near the porch. He came into the open when she was off the porch and nearing her car. He

did not come onto the porch until her car moved away from the curb. When he died, it was like losing one of my daughters or my son.

In 2018 Harry came to live with me. He is a good cat, but over time he has become part of an ongoing plot, engineered by Ella, to get me out of bed early in the mornings when she is hungry. This morning Harry pounded on me until I got out of bed, fetched Ella's bowl, put food in it and placed it back in her dining room. The clock read 3:30am when I crawled back into my bed.