

CAROLINE BERRY

Orange Cat

My cat is a hand my cat
works for the city my cat
is a retired laborer, weekends
my cat throws himself like a lit
baseball in Schrodinger's general direction
my cat finds himself back in a large
lap trembling, wondering where's

hands that should be holding my cat
where's stories that should be writing
sparrows homes pillows for my cat, where's
debris and webs of dust that should be
climbing up the whiskers of my cat, where's
sirens to teach how to sound my cat,
where's the heart like an ambulance
think it's headed so fast? Where's walls

where's the ground the grass now covered
in walls, where's the wall having Petrarch's cat,
made a mummy and displayed for being
so loyal while even the fleas repelled
from his body like a task force...

And where's Petrarch himself who always wrote
about the heart while my cat doesn't know
if what he's saying is now more nothing
than ever before, my cat continues
like the cat of Dorian Gray to wish
away his own time and that
he had ever been there. Still my cat

continues sending off his pilgrims to
plant lilies where it hurts, my cat continues to
pretend he has no hands and instead fishes
for you with raddled calls. You say *yes*
there are ropes and loud sounds and piles
of crying but what's the numbers, numbers...

Jesus bless my cat because with no hands, my cat
cannot count and has untaught himself
the base-ten system, because if it happens
says my cat it happens however many again and again.