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## Barbara's Barn

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## *Barbara's Barn*

Gone is the hay, water trough, buckets, stalls,  
seeds, grains, shovels, pitchforks, brooms; tools  
of the farmer. Gone are the sounds: rustle of hay,  
creaking boards, stamping, thumps, whinnies, squeaks,  
and grunts. Gone are the vocal animals: huffing, snorting,  
rubbing noises as animals scratched against posts or rails—  
all replaced by one sound.

Homeless cats are the new crop—forsaken, cast aside,  
dumped, and ditched. Who knew they come in so many colors:  
brown, black and gray blended, orange, cream or buff,  
and even patches of black and white—in the oddest places.  
She captures each and every lusty lot. Neutered and spayed,  
given their shots, and released back on Barbara's farm.

It has a barn.

The doors are opened just enough for a cat,  
not me or you. I've seen it too. It is a haven  
for lost feline souls each with its story.

See Big Tom with the torn ear, healed now.

That one's kittens found new homes.

I tease her, "You know the entire county  
leaves lost or pregnant cats on your farm."  
"Bring 'em on," she answers. "I have a barn."

IDA KOTYUK