

1995

Raccoons at the Cats' Food

Jennifer Rudgers
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rudgers, Jennifer (1995) "Raccoons at the Cats' Food," *Exile*: Vol. 42 : No. 1 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol42/iss1/19>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

Raccoons at the Cats' Food

I know I shouldn't ignore them,
but it's much easier to continue
chopping garlic,
to pretend that they
aren't at the screen door
gobbling cat food
from our wide, metallic bowl.
I can hear them crunching,
grunting irreverently as grandpa
belches at Thanksgiving dinner.

I often watch
their feast before intruding.
Raccoons dine as if they were
stuffed animals
attending a child's tea party.
They sink back on haunches,
potbellies protruded,
and scoop up cat food
with almost royal grace.
Our cats watch this banquet,
perhaps paradoxically amused
at the raccoons' gradual enslavement.
Only twice have I caught
'Cisco bristling. She must know
that their castes stem from our favor,

And that humans always
have loved cats best.
Cat dependency probably
began with the Egyptians, but raccoons
newly live from garbage cans
filled by our decadence.

Sometimes I slip off
my sneaker, stare down
an approaching thief
and then, Thunk,
hurl it at his portly body.
He cowers to please me
and ambles off toward the woods,
keeping one eye fixed on his meal.

I wish I could drive
them away, force
them to forage
for berries and fish,
revoking their indenture.
But, already they've trampled
a path from their home,
through the weeds,
right to the kitchen
door.

Jennifer Rudgers '96