

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Speetha

By George Kalogeris

Greek for “spark,” and the name of my father’s cat:
Speetha. It spoke to the creature’s speed and quickness.

Ideal for keeping the darting, occasional mouse
Away from his butcher’s block, or chasing them off

The overflowing garbage pails out back.
No need for setting traps or scattering pellets

As long as there was a sprinter like *that* around.
When I stroked the tabby’s fur I heard it purr,

And felt the soft but insistent way it led
My palm to brush along the bony torque

Of its arching spine, and down the stiffening length
Of its outstretched tail... But what did I know about

The interlocking vertebrae of those feline
Inflections, that readiness to pounce at a fateful

Moment’s notice? To say that a cat impressed
Itself on my writing hand before I could write

Is true, but all it meant back then was *Speetha*:
Greek for spark. That pet who followed my father

Home each night at supertime. The lit
Fuse of its yellow eyes already aglow

In the evening shadows. And then it turns and trots
The half-mile back to our store. And takes its place

Inside the stinking shed. And waits until
My dream is dark enough to show me the mouse

Transfixed by its teeth.