

My cat is an oracle, a quiet master of the lounge.
He insinuates great wisdom in his black velvet peacoat,
white silk cravat grazing the floor. All four legs
are tucked underneath so he occupies the rug
like a time bomb. His prophecies are spot on –
that time he said my husband was on Tinder.
One twitch of the ear was all it took.
My oldest friend had died from cancer: a paw
lifting slowly to his right ear. He deciphers the world
in ways that at first seem dubious
but always shows his workings in mouse-spleens,
in complex arrangements of bird bones.
His memory is phenomenal. Any phone number,
he'll knead out the digits on my thigh. Guests
love and fear him in equal measure. He'll list
their future triumphs, flops, their kids' careers
or suicides, their brewing ill-health,
using a simple system of purrs only I can translate.
As a result I've lost friends.
I don't tell them if they don't want to know.
What bothers them is knowing I know,
or knowing I might know, they can't tell.
Oh but he's great company. We watch Netflix together,
He sleeps curled at my feet, the inspiration
behind many poems. Some are even written by him.
Not this one though. This one he doesn't know about.
Look at him, stretching his left leg forward
as if reaching out to touch
the edges of reality, staring right through me.