

1976

Two hundred years after our world astonishing  
Declaration Of Independence: July 4, 1976: I was surrounded  
by people who were staying up all night to ignite their own candles. When  
I became the owner of a black Persian cat with gold eyes, I named him after the Persian poet,  
Hafiz, who was evidently up all night burning like a candle to see the star of his Self in the dark  
inside his mind. One afternoon, I was lying on my bed reading: It is like reaching back for the pillow  
in the dark. The whole body is hands and eyes: I reached back over my head to thumb the wall switch that  
turned on the light: As I switched the wall light on: I saw Hafiz' black ears turn to hear the switch: I saw  
his gold eyes see my thumb on the switch: I saw him fly his eyes to see the light turn on: I switched  
the light off: The cat saw the light turn off: He looked at my thumb on the wall switch  
as he heard the switch crack: Hafiz' gold eyes examined me fiercely: I switched the  
light on and off a few times more: As my clever black cat stalked light fact: I swelled  
with pride of ownership and a glorious hope of teaching him to turn the light on:  
Suddenly: As if Hafiz had totally depleted a year's supply of brilliance: Or  
a veil thicker than his long black hair had fallen down through his sweet  
little mind: My dear Hafiz collapsed in a heap and slept for hours: He never  
looked at the light switch again: He never came near me again: Soon after  
this occurrence: Hafiz ran off to live at Harvard Square: Once in a while I  
would see him crossing the Cambridge Common: I would call his name: He  
would gold eye me pitilessly: Turn: Walk off: I loved this little black cat with  
gold eyes: I loved his freedom and guts: Rather than imagine he wasn't a cat:  
Or be owned: He prowled the wilderness of Harvard Square living off preppy  
trash: In pursuit of happiness: We must hold compassion in the heart of our  
minds for the antagonistic actions of limited beings: Bitter  
hostilities the same all some times choose to use: David: Set  
aside little hates: Self-veiled vision must choose to lose.