

# A CAT BY THE NAME OF SISTER-WOMAN

Leon Hale

— Reprinted by permission from **The Houston Post** August 20, 1969



House cats have always identified mostly with female people such as nice little old ladies, and young girls aged 12, and rich women who live alone.

\;4.03z7

You don't very often find a man who likes to admit he's fond of cats. Men seem to think there's something sort of sissy about it. I know guys who shoot alley cats

• on sight and laugh as if that's a very masculine, hairy-chested thing to do.



Well, I tell you what: **I** like cats. Always have.

Dogs too, but dogs cause trouble by biting neighbors and messing up yards. Cats don't make anywhere near as much trouble as dogs.

We've got this cat now by the name of Sister-Woman. An ordinary

calico-type cat with an unknown daddy who was just passing through the neighborhood.

She's about a year old now. We've had her for eight months and I have spent \$85 on her. I'm not so sure that heaven doesn't consider that a sin. I could probably keep six orphan children in Asia fed for a year on that much money, but instead it is going into this calico cat.

Took her to the vet's and had her spayed so she wouldn't be dropping kittens all over the house, and when I went to get her the bill was \$30, for the operation, plus some shots and other services that are supposed to help a cat's health.

"You know what I think about a guy who will spend \$30 on a cat like this?" I asked the vet.

"No, what?" he said.

"I think he's a fool."

The vet grinned, took my check, and said a lot of people spend more than that on cats of no better breeding.

Then after I spent all that money so she could run around at night without being violated, this cat is not permitted to go outside. Stays in, all the time. She thinks the temperature of the world is a constant 74 degrees, and so she hasn't even shed her winter coat.

Do you know why I spend money on that cat? Because she loves me, that's why. She's just crazy about me. Can't stay away from me. When I stretch out on the couch, she leaps up on my stomach and makes these low, comfortable noises down in her throat and she curls up there and sleeps on me. If I move, she follows.

Most nights she sleeps on my feet. Early in the morning I'll wake up and she is sitting there staring at my nose, waiting for me to regain consciousness. Then she goes in the kitchen with me and stalks around underfoot. If I get out of patience with her and boot her across the kitchen, it doesn't bother her a bit. She just comes right on back and gets in the way again.

Sometimes she hides behind the hall door and leaps out and grabs the ankle of people passing through. She will bite the very blood out of you, and it hurts. If she didn't think so much of me, I wouldn't put up with it.

Since she isn't allowed to go out and hunt and kill what she needs to eat, she pretends to hunt and kill in the house. She kills the same thing all the time. It's a belt off a house dress which she fished out of the closet.

This belt is her Thing. Two or three times a day she slips up to wherever she has left that belt, and springs on it and rolls and kicks and bites and tears and shakes. Then as soon as the belt is totally lifeless, she drags it up the hall, making these awful weird and mournful noises.

She drags the belt to her dish, pokes it down into the feed, and in that way pretends she's eating what she has killed. What she's really eating, though, is a mixture of tuna and liver, two small cans for 35 cents. Good grief.