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Grace

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Grace

by Mike Vanden Bosch

On a sleeting wintry night a stray mother cat
popped five kittens into my windowwell,
mothering four with warmth.
The fifth lay a foot apart—lost, cold, and stiff—
like a brown three-inch clay rope.

I, like a catherd, picked up the dead to clean my well,
but from an unearthly strand of good will
took it into my home to light
that showed ears and legs
slimed flat to the rope—
nothing to admire, nothing to love.

I blew on the clay, blew until I was out of breath,
then blew again.
I was about to bury it
when its neck, then legs, then tail came alive,
came a kitten.

A miracle, I thought, and brought the new life
back to the well to be suckled
with living milk.