

# KITTEN

Kitten, somewhere between tabby and nondescript, leaving behind the gambolling mass of other kittens, exited the main room, padded along the corridor, tentatively down the wooden steps into the basement, then threaded around them, the legs, the feet, the shoes, the wet socks of all those silently there assembled, shuffling around on the damp smelly old underlay. They, shuffling around down there since dawn for many reasons: to keep out of the rain, to keep busy, unable to keep still, painful, shuffling with embarrassment, boredom, the jitters, shuffling around like imbeciles, like caged bears (the worst were), the weight on one foot then the other, the great high shoulders on each of them, rocking way up there from side to side. Near their centre, Kitten sniffed the unsavoury air emerging from a large hole, glanced up into the face of one, then, backing safely away, fell to contemplating the ghost of an empty corner.

Kitten, tired or sated by watching, waiting for something in that same empty, ghostly corner, of sitting sentinel for some recondite sign, some signal movement, then turning, seeing behind her nothing, padded past the hole, wherein the legs, the feet, the shoes, the wet socks of all those once silently there assembled once were, then departing basement, up wooden steps, along corridors and back into the main room, back in amongst the rolling mass of other kittens, most of them somewhere between tabby and nondescript.