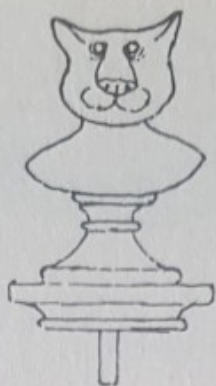


DRAWINGS BY EDWARD GOREY



THE NAMING OF CATS

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES.
First of all, there's the name that the family use daily,
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo or James,
Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill Bailey—
All of them sensible everyday names.
There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the dames:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter—
But all of them sensible everyday names.
But I tell you, a cat needs a name that's particular,
A name that's peculiar, and more dignified,
Else how can he keep up his tail perpendicular,
Or spread out his whiskers, or cherish his pride?
Of names of this kind, I can give you a quorum,
Such as Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Coricopat,
Such as Bombalurina, or else Jellylorum—
Names that never belong to more than one cat.
But above and beyond there's still one name left over,
And that is the name that you never will guess;
The name that no human research can discover—
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess.

When you notice a cat in profound meditation,

The reason, I tell you, is always the same:

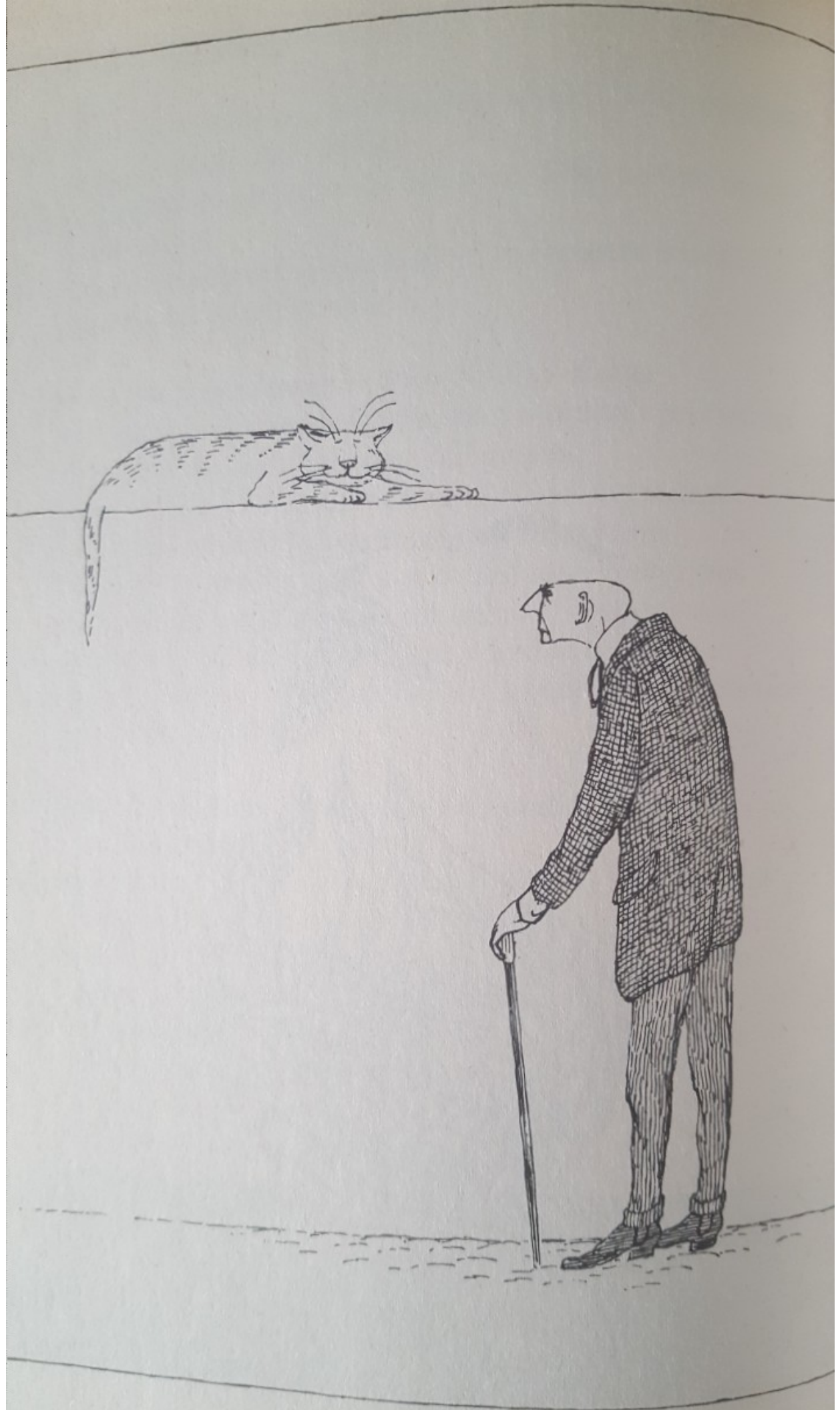
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation

Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:

His ineffable effable

Effanineffable

Deep and inscrutable singular Name.



OLD DEUTERONOMY

Old Deuteronomy's lived a long time;

He's a Cat who has lived many lives in succession.

He was famous in proverb and famous in rhyme

A long while before Queen Victoria's accession.

Old Deuteronomy's buried nine wives

And more—I am tempted to say, ninety-nine;

And his numerous progeny prospers and thrives

And the village is proud of him in his decline.

At the sight of that placid and bland physiognomy,

When he sits in the sun on the vicarage wall,

The Oldest Inhabitant croaks: 'Well, of all . . .

Things . . . Can it be . . . really! . . . No! . . . Yes! . . .

Ho! hi!

Oh, my eye!

My sight may be failing, but yet I confess

I believe it is Old Deuteronomy!

Old Deuteronomy sits in the street,

He sits in the High Street on market day;

The bullocks may bellow, the sheep they may bleat,

But the dogs and the herdsmen will turn them away.

The cars and the lorries run over the kerb,

And the villagers put up a notice: ROAD CLOSED—

So that nothing untoward may chance to disturb

Deuteronomy's rest when he feels so disposed

Or when he's engaged in domestic economy:

And the Oldest Inhabitant croaks: 'Well, of all . . .

Things . . . Can it be . . . really! . . . No! . . . Yes! . . .

Ho! hi!

Oh, my eye!

I'm deaf of an ear now, but yet I can guess

That the cause of the trouble is Old Deuteronomy!

Old Deuteronomy lies on the floor

Of the Fox and French Horn for his afternoon sleep;
And when the men say: 'There's just time for one more,'

Then the landlady from her back parlour will peep
And say: 'Now then, out you go, by the back door,

For Old Deuteronomy mustn't be woken—

I'll have the police if there's any uproar'—

And out they all shuffle, without a word spoken.

The digestive repose of that feline's gastronomy

Must never be broken, whatever befall:

And the Oldest Inhabitant croaks: 'Well, of all . . .

Things . . . Can it be . . . really! . . . Yes! . . . No! . . .

Ho! hi!

Oh, my eye!

My legs may be tottery, I must go slow

And be careful of Old Deuteronomy!

