

## Boots

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What's lost and what's found  
in our boots on the ground  
when Johnny came hobbling home?

I followed him home one cold winter's day  
bounding after his footprints along their way  
right up to his home, and there I meowed  
'til his hearth and his home I was allowed.

I spied his new boots warming up by the stove,  
and into those boots I soon snugly dove.  
So he called me 'Boots' because of that:  
a funny name for a tortoise-shell cat!

My Johnny grew up, and, well, I grew old,  
my heart fluttered worried, but his beat bold.  
He marched off to guard us, to flex youthful might,  
to trample the wrongful, to champion the right.

Years later while hunting one night in the snow,  
I remembered the footprints of long, long ago.  
When I crept through the cat-door, I suddenly knew  
that—bless my nine lives—my wish had come true!

Straight into his lap I leapt with a purr,  
but things seemed so different from what they once were.  
I made for the boots by the fire...still chilled.  
But one wasn't quite empty; it wasn't quite filled.

At breakfast I'd brush my tail over that leg  
in the usual manner a cat tries to beg,  
but that leg it was thin. It was cold. It was steel.  
And all of my pleadings Johnny just couldn't feel.

At times there's an itch haunting him like a ghost,  
and I'll use that strange leg like my own scratching post,  
but it does him no good, so we'll go for a walk,  
and he'll tell me what ails him, for he knows I won't talk.

I wish I could trade-in the lives I still hold—  
risky it is, as I'm getting quite old.  
I'd buy what he gave us. I'd give what he lost  
just to follow both footprints once more through the frost.