

Seven women walk toward a place at the end of a street. The street is at the tail end of a city, which is dark and sleek. The women are being drawn into this city. The speed at which they walk - a graceful speed - is really an inertia. They reach the place (or, more appropriately, the place reaches them) and it is the base of a bridge. The bridge (a great black ark) is the spine of this city. As they arrive, the movement stops: a momentary fix. The seven that were, are no longer. And now the women are six. The inertia begins again and the women find themselves on a train which travels over the bridge. The train carriage is empty, except for a black cat which is curled and sleeping on one of the seats. The feline is most probably sleeping because it has just devoured a mouse. There is a mouse tail - the feline's trophy - on the ground beneath the sleeping beast. One of the six women notices it and curls a lip (an ironic smirk) - the less mice the better.

The train stops, but the inertia of the women does not. They leave the train and move toward a garden. At the entrance of the garden is a path. The women follow it. They arrive at a section of the garden where wild roses grow. One of the six women looks at these plants and realises that both rose petals and cats paws are soft, yet thorns and feline's claws are not. She thinks of this for a time. Day turns to night. When the trance is over she looks around and she is alone. Again, she looks at the roses - it appears that they are alive. The movement of the other women has continued. But now they are only five...

They find themselves walking up stairs leading to the highest point of this city. At the top are two caves, where one can stand and listen. As they are walking, one of them looks back at a tree. On the branch of the tree is a small bird. On the same branch is a black feline. They arrive at the top. Normally the climb would have left the women out of breath. But the inertia, or the thing pulling them leaves them un-troubled by human trifles. The caves are triangular. From within, a single sound can be heard. It is the sound of a chord - a single chord. One woman - enthralled by the noise - ventures into one of the caves to find its source. As she goes down the sound grows more and more. Only a cat returns from the cave (with lizard in mouth). And now the women are four...

Once more, the movement begins and they are drawn down the other side of the hill. In the distance, the women can see the silhouette of buildings against the night. In the centre there is a circular building, which appears to be watching them as much as they watch it. One of the women examines it. It is certain, the city is brought to life by electricity. When the woman moves her attention from the distance to the power lines at the bottom of the hill, she notices that both live electrical wires and a cat's whiskers appear serene, yet an electrical current and the slash of a feline's claw are not. While considering this prospect, she walks toward the power lines. While walking, she feels the wind blow across her cheek. While feeling, her thoughts are replaced by senses. While sensing, she hears the current of the electricity and sees the city growing larger than before. And so she climbs the power lines as if they were a tree. Until she is above and they are below - now the women are only three...

The group is again in motion and the inertia leads them through alleyways: the city's veins. As they are drawn through one (particularly long and dark) alleyway, there is a bin and a rat. What is strange, is that the rat is attempting to move forward, but is being drawn backward. Being drawn - like the women - slowly toward a mouth. The women move forward and the angle of vision changes (exposing the other side of the bin). It becomes clear that the thing pulling the rat back is a feline. It has pierced the rodent's tail. For a moment it eases the backward pressure, giving the rat a chance

to scramble forward, before dragging it back a few millimetres closer than before, toward those fangs. The process remains a slow one (felines are notorious for their sadistic practices). But those fangs! One woman looks beyond the green building toward an old castle standing in the centre of the city. It is surrounded by a (very fang-like) picket fence made of black steel. In the centre of the castle is a quadrangle, which is deep and dark, like the mouth of a feline. In the centre of the quadrangle is a circle. In the centre of the circle is a statue, which is magical because humans look at it and see a woman with the characteristics of a feline, yet felines see a cat with the characteristics of a woman. At this point something unexpected occurs. The inertia continues, but at the end of this alley way - at first too dark to see - there is a fork, and the three remaining women take separate paths. The third reaches the eye, the second goes to the fangs; the first is lead to the mouth, and so the inertia ends...

At midnight (the feline's hour) seven black cats are seen on and around the statue in the centre of this city. And who has seen them? The traveller, who has uncovered the master plan of this city, watching the women and the inertia. Watching them with the vision of a cat, being drawn through this city. Through side streets, trains, gardens, paths and caves; past power lines, through alleyways, from green buildings to picket fences, over the roofs of castles, down into quadrangles, and into the circle of the statue. The traveller who has sat at the mouth of this city and seen seven black cats enter the circle from seven separate locations and dance the dance that only seven black cats could. The traveller, who has passed through the shapes of a mouse, a bird, a lizard, and a rat in discovery of...

The Cat Empire.