

*John Grey*

**NEW RELATIONSHIP AS SCIENCE FORM**

I entered the room and turned on the lights.  
There were bare feet wiggling below  
the sheet, tiny sightless creatures  
squirring in the cold, loose, primitive  
genes with bits of flesh and bone hugged around.  
The lump mid-bed meant nothing to me.  
It could have been the mud-hill they  
burrowed into out of harm's way. It  
could have been the dung they feasted on.  
A lover might have thought lips and breasts  
and thighs curled up in there somewhere,  
waiting to be unraveled by touch, by kisses.  
But I was zoologist for that moment. Did they breathe  
through those smooth nails? How did they procreate?  
I entered the room like it was a journey  
to a new part of the forest. My body  
jerked tight with a crisp "Aha!" This was  
a find. So unused to humans, the beasties  
neither ran from me or ran to me. They just  
went about their chilly, wriggly business.  
And so I slipped into bed beside something  
previously unknown in this world.

**BEN AND HIS PET COUGAR**

I found him as a cub in the woods, near my house.  
I made milk for him from a formula I found  
in an old library book.

I have never been to the city. I have not once  
taken the train. I drive, but only to the feed store  
and back. I don't trust my old truck to take me farther.

He had the run of my house. He chewed up the  
couch my mother left me. His growing teeth  
snapped my father's fishing rod in two.

I have no friends. Kids laugh at me when they  
aren't running from me. They call me the fool with  
the big cat that's going to kill him some day.

He shredded my shirts so I just wore them shredded.  
He bit a hole in my jeans but that's the way I like them.  
When he grew big, he scratched my face, thinking

probably that I was cougar enough to take it.  
I bled and I do believe, he almost cried at the sight of me.  
I patched myself up, have no faith in doctors.

One day, a snowshoe hare scurried by the house  
and his hunting instincts took over.  
He burst through the window, busted the glass,

ran off and he never came back.

I have never been to the city. I have not once  
taken the train though I see it rush by,

on the way to the city most likely, One day,  
my truck broke down not a hundred yards from  
my house and I just left it. It's been there to this day.