

FRAGMENT

'Twas winter, and the howling blast
Around a fearful chaos cast,
The tempest fearfully did blow
Along the sheets of blinding snow.
As I sat in my cot so snug,
My feet wrapped in the cozy rug,
At storms outside I gave a shrug,
And close my great arm chair did hug;
Then thought upon the traveller poor,
Who might be coming o'er the moor
In such a wild and fearful night,
So dark, no moon or stars to light,
A thought there came across me bright,
That if I were to place a light
Up in my attic window high,
Some poor lost traveller may draw nigh;
No sooner thought than it was done,
And bright the little glimmer shone;
Then down again to my snug fire,
Expecting some would soon enquire,
Attracted by my attic light,
Shelter to seek this fearful night;
I waited there two hours or more,
But no one came unto my door,
No sound of footsteps did I hear,
Nought but the howling blast so drear.
Wearied then I turned the log,
And finished up my glass of grog,
To bed, said I, now here I goes,
And forthwith sought balmy repose.
But scarce had I jumped into bed,
A piteous cry came from my shed,
Its voice rang midst the tempest wild

Like the wailing of a little child;
Who can it be, now I must know,
And down to see, now I will go;
Some poor lost woman with her babe,
Praps in my cold dark shed is laid;
If I let them remain they'll die,
Hark, hark, another piteous cry,
Enough a strong man's heart to break,
Incessant is that cry and shriek;
O, never in my life had I
Heard such an excruciating cry.
Then down the stairs soon I did go,
My heart with pity did o'erflow,
I drew the backdoor bolt and chain,
Ah, then I seemed to feel a pain,
For I expected soon to see
Some poor lost creature piteously,
Implore me loud to take her in,
To shelter from the dreadful din,
But nought was there, save but roar,
And drifted snow around the door,
Again amid the tempest wild
I heard the wailings of a child,
“They're in my woodhouse, I must go,”
And quick I plodded thro' the snow,
I had no sooner reached the shed,
When all at once a creature fled,
Between my legs, I cry'd odd drat,
'Tis nothing but my old Tom Cat.