# WAVES

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**Krzystzof Ostaszewski**

## OPUS 80, A TRAGEDY

Recently the beaches of the Riviera have been afflicted with a plague of cats. Some of the local residents claim that these are not cats at all. They say this because the creatures have squirrel-like red tails and blue eyes, in which there lurks something undefined, something ominous. And although the psychosis has no basis, tourists are abandoning the fashionable seaside resorts. All the while the cats prance proudly about the streets, lolling on the terraces of elegant villas. A man may be lying peacefully on the beach sunning himself, reading a book, or just brooding over his life, and a cat will sit right behind him, silent, very still, but in such a way as to be noticed. It squints its eyes rapaciously, staring at the sea. It seems the beast is lost in thought, pondering some decision.

The cats have yet to do anyone any harm, so really there are no reasons for panic. Yet it is difficult to remain calm when the animals appear everywhere, red tails flashing at every street corner. They do not meow, they do not purr, they just sit silently in some horrible way. No one can say anything definite about them, because thus far everyone has seen only *one* cat. There should be some comfort in this, except that the beasts are seen by everyone all the time. If someone is sitting on the beach, looking a cat in the eye, then *at the same time, in some totally different place,* the mayor of Nice is wiping the sweat from his brow staring in alarm at the red-tailed grey cat strolling around his office. The animals are real, they can even be petted. But their blue eyes then observe so penetratingly, so seriously, that no one tries to approach them anymore.

The cats have overrun the Riviera. The beaches and the sea, the hotels—everything belongs to them. They even come at night; then people waken up with a scream—and see the cats lying by their beds. They too are asleep. Dreaming of people.

*Vienna, September 28, 1976*