

Mice

by Frederick Smock

—for Steve Sanfield

Mice have been at your books again—
Alechem, Ansky, all the way to Wiesel
and Zweig. Cossacks and Jews alike
nibbled into dust, fluffed into batting
for nests, rendered into little turds.
Do not be saddened by the mice. Or
by your indifferent cats, lazy hedonists.
Do not be saddened by this destruction,
by nature's obvious disregard for art
(and I have just spilled tea on your letter
telling me about the books, mice, cats).
Books are but a soft barricade against
time. Even our own quiet dissolution
has begun. After all, what will remain?
Turds the size of a mustard seed, I imagine.