

Don't Eat The Swallows
Laurie Jewett

Listen, my kittens, I'll try to be clear
While explaining a LAW that's compulsory here
At the dock known as Watkins' – and this bears repeatin':
The Barn Swallows are to be seen and not eaten!!

Now, you three are young and experience proves
You'll stalk and attack any item that moves
Like toes in a sheet at night gnawed to excess
When I turn while I'm sleeping! ...Ah, but I digress.

For sixty-odd years have the swallows returned
As to Old Capistrano. Respect has been earned
By their sheer dedication - through flood and through storm -
To fashion their nests, keep their tiny eggs warm.

Because, you see, kittens, while I fill your bowl
And make sure the vet keeps you healthy and whole,
The Swallows, all nesting beneath this old floor
Are sheltered by moxie and not a lot more.

Swooping all through the old open air dock
With no thought of drudg'ry or punching a clock
They fly us away over houses and boats
The wind under wings, and the coppery throats

Aglow in the evening sun that quick flashes
On midnight blue wings with the darts and the dashes
As many mosquitoes are stopped in their flight
Before, with full tummies, the birds say goodnight.

Now, beauty and benefit all must escape
Your little cat brains as you stand there and gape.
But, the eating of Swallows? I simply abhor it.
And you mustn't do it. Just take my word for it.

For we, as we watch, be we human or cat
Must with squeeze of the eyes or with tip of the hat
Express that it's thrilling to see them come back
But always as family and never as snack.