Travel

by Daniel & GPT-6

September 8, 2026

Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly.
—Henry David Thoreau

The orange cat is asleep on a moving train. The carriage carries him and the railway carries the carriage, and although a considerable amount of work is being done on his behalf, none of it requires him to stand up. His name is Travel. Alice named him after the English word when she noticed, soon after taking him in, that he liked going places. He particularly liked trains. He could sleep on them.

Walking was not the important part. The important part was that he could lie down in one place and subsequently be in another. It was not necessary to remain

awake for the transition. Alice had acquired a cat who enjoyed travel, and she called him Travel, and the name has continued to describe him without imposing any unreasonable requirements on his legs.

At home, the sleeping is part of his work. Alice rescues kittens from the garbage, and Travel helps prepare them for life in somebody's house. He has been doing this from a position of considerable experience. He was himself one of the cats she brought home.

Before he had an English name, he was one of three cats at a garbage dump. Alice was walking home from college when she found them: a mother and her two sons. She was living in a dormitory and could not keep all three. Her father lived in a village, which made it possible to take the cats away from the garbage without first solving the problem of how to accommodate a family of them in a dormitory.

She took the mother and one brother to her father. She kept the other brother. The brother in the village was almost immediately found a good home elsewhere. The mother stayed in the village, where she still lives. Travel stayed with Alice.

The original family had been moved from one place to three. There was a home for each cat, although not the same home. The question of how many cats she

could keep had been settled. The question of how many brothers Travel would have remained open.

Alice lives in a coastal city near Crimea. She chose it because she loves the sea and because there are an unusually large number of stray cats in its garbage bins. The second feature is not normally included among the attractions of a coastal city, but it matters when deciding where to put a cat-rescue operation. There is little point in having an efficient procedure for retrieving cats from the garbage if the garbage contains no cats.

The procedure is to bring a cat home, wash it, and give it to Travel. Alice takes responsibility for the retrieval and the washing, and later for finding someone to adopt the kitten. Travel takes responsibility for the interval. His title is chief operating officer. There is a beginning and an end to the process, and he occupies the middle.

His principal activities are staring blankly at the sky and sleeping. During the first he is vaguely vertical; during the second he is horizontal. The distinction can be difficult to make from across a room, but there is seldom a practical reason to resolve it. A kitten does not need an accurate account of which executive activity is taking place beside it. It needs time beside a cat who lives there.

Travel sits near the new arrival and does nothing. The new arrival remains near Travel while he does nothing. Eventually Alice has a kitten that can go to a home. The nothing is not an interval during which the work has been deferred. It is the work.

He is teaching the kittens to be cats. They have, of course, arrived as cats, but there is a difference between being a cat in the garbage and being a cat in somebody's room, and the difference is not entirely removed by washing. The kitten has to become accustomed to the room and the person who has brought it there. Travel is already accustomed to both. He does not need to keep checking whether Alice is the sort of person who brings cats home from the garbage. He has had that information for a long time.

His presence supplies a working example of what to do after being brought home. The example is not complicated. Be in the room. Sit near the other cat. Nothing much happens. It is possible to lie down. After a while, it is the room the kitten lives in.

After a sufficient period, Alice posts a message on the relevant websites. A cute kitten is available, already washed, free of charge, come and get it. The procedure has produced a cat someone can take home. There is no

charge for the washing or for the time spent with Travel. Alice is finding it a home, not selling it the treatment.

The kitten leaves. Travel does not leave with it. He is the cat who stays while the other cats become ready to go.

Alice has a doctorate in Freudian psychoanalysis applied to dogs and cats. There is also a second doctorate, in film, something involving cinematography and acting. The first qualification has the more immediate application to a household in which an orange cat is responsible for the adjustment of other cats.

Whatever is going on in the cat's unconscious, its body is in the garbage, and the body needs to be moved. After that it can be washed. The doctorate does not remove any of these requirements. The girl who picks up the cat is also qualified to consider its unconscious, but there is an order in which to do things.

Travel has a mother, and the mother is in a village. Alice is in a position to give the family history because she carried it out of the garbage herself.

There is no corresponding requirement for Travel to explain his past to the kittens. He does not have to tell them that he was once in their position, or that he understands, or that with the right attitude a cat from the garbage can eventually obtain a senior appointment.

He occupies the room. His history is not what the new arrival encounters. His current condition is.

His current condition is generally horizontal.

Alice also works at a television station, where, by her own account, she is the best employee. This occupies approximately one hour of her day. She has arranged matters so that the emails from her boss go to a language model, which produces replies that she copies back into the correspondence. When she needs to appear on camera, she reads what the model produces. She does not consider it necessary to attach meaning to all the words. The station receives the work, and, according to Alice, nobody has noticed anything amiss.

The remaining hours are available for the sea and the cats. This is an important feature of the television arrangement. The emails can be passed through a machine; a kitten has to be physically removed from a bin. The division allows her to spend more time on the things that still require her to go somewhere and pick something up.

At home, she has made another useful division. There are things that require a person and things that require another cat. She can wash a kitten. She cannot be an orange tabby sitting next to it, however extensive her education in its unconscious. Travel can do that

without preparation. He does not have to acquire an interest in animal psychology before being put to work.

He was not obtained for the position. He was found with his mother and his brother while Alice was walking home. The occupation became available later. His qualifications consist partly of having been a garbage cat and partly of no longer needing to behave as though he is still in the garbage. It is the second qualification that the kittens get to spend time with.

Meanwhile, his mother has continued to live in the village. Every year she has kittens, and Alice's family finds homes for them. The household that took in a mother and one son has consequently supplied a succession of younger cats to other households. Travel's family is not a fixed collection of three cats preserved from the day Alice found them. The mother is still making additions.

These are his younger brothers on their mother's side. The brother who was found beside him at the dump has long since gone to his own home. The cats in the village are later additions, and they are not new rescues from the coastal bins. The village has its own source of cats.

The resemblance is substantial. In the pictures, the younger brothers look so much like Travel that they could have been made by selecting him and pasting him

into additional positions. One orange cat, then the same orange cat again. The effect invites a technical explanation. The explanation is his mother.

There is, in effect, a Travel factory in the village. The mother remains at the original address while the younger cats are sent to new ones. Alice's father has the mother, Alice has Travel, and other people have his brothers. What began as the problem of three cats and a dormitory has acquired a larger geographical extent.

The resemblance does not establish that the brothers are equally accomplished. Alice is quite clear about the sleeping. "Nobody will beat Travel," she says. The photographs can make him look reproducible. His sleeping championship remains his own.

The younger brothers do not need to win it. They need homes, which the family finds for them. So do the kittens from the bins, which Alice washes and hands over to Travel. One group is related to him and the other is entrusted to him.