Millions of Cats

Millions of Cats is a wonderful tale of vanity versus humility, written and illustrated by the singular Wanda Gag. An old man and his wife decide to get a cat, so the old man goes out in search of the prettiest cat of all. When he is forced to choose from hundreds, thousands, millions and billions and trillions of cats, he (naturally) brings them all home. When the wife points out their inability to support the legion of felines, it is left to the cats to decide who among them is the prettiest. Anyone who has ever owned more than a single cat can tell you what happens next. Gag's simple, appealing black ink drawings are perfect for the story, somehow capturing at least the idea of millions of cats in a single page. Repeated lines and the sing-song title refrain make this a read-aloud natural. (Ages 4 to 8)

My Personal Review:
A tale of a man who, looking for a cat, finds too many. For any animal-lover, this is a secret dream, an embarrassment of riches. Millions of Cats sends that dream to the glue factory. The laws of nature state that, when a population becomes larger than available resources can support, conflict ensues. In a scene reminiscent of the enormous slaughter at Verdun, acres upon acres of fuzzy, fuzzy kittens flip out switchblade claws and tear each other apart. All for a chance to enter an exclusive Shangri-La: the happy home of the peasant farmer and his sturdy wife. The sole survivor is found hiding under a bush, the last of his race. He is an inverted Jesus, an unblemished lamb for whose sake all of his kind must die. A kitty Anti-Christ, if you will. Who, through his cunning feint, has gained dominion over the feline earth.

And where are the corpses of the slain? How can that hapless peasant keep his shoes dry as he surveys the site of the recent battle? The truth is clear to the careful reader: the Omega Cat has eaten the bodies and drank from the blood. A demonic Eucharist to profane the very soil, the anointing feast for a Dark Prince of Cats. The unwitting peasant knows not what evil he welcomes into his home. And yet, the final scene of domestic bliss offers hope to a world wracked with bloody regional wars: even after death on an incomprehensible scale, life goes on.
Great Christmas gift for your little ones. Goes great with a new puppy.

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