

Just Vermin

You're only a rodent—
Just *vermin*, some say:
You carry disease;
You hatch ticks and fleas;
You put little children and dogs ill-at-ease;
But I've seen how you prance and you leap through the trees,
And *I* could never think of you that way.

But *you're* different still—
Though like other squirrels,
You flip and you twirl
Through the warm summer breeze
In an earnest ballet
Held high in the trees;
And your reflexes, as fast—
And your black eyes, as keen—
As those of any squirrel
That I've ever seen;
But your breast and your coat
Are the color of pearl,
And this I've not seen
On any other squirrel.

And I can't help but notice
That you're all alone;
That other squirrels refuse to make
Your tree their home;
That you're shunned and you're hated,
Taunted and baited,
And over time you've become bitter and jaded
In a world where color determines affection,
And to be different means to endure endless rejection;
And it seems to me that you've paid quite a price
For this genetic roll of the dice.

But, oh, how you're beautiful, my friend:
How your pearly coat shines
In a glimmer of sun
When the afternoon's gone
And the day's at an end;

And the winter snow hides you;
You have less to fear
When predators draw near,
For the white coat you wear
Makes you harder to pursue;

Damn what others might say—
I like you, my friend!
For you and I are connected:
We've both been rejected,
And we both know the world
Isn't what it should be;

Yes, I like you white squirrel,
For I know you are *me*.

For Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's very own, honest-to-goodness white squirrel.