

That Kind of Mouse

Chronic exposure to microwave radiation increases the rate of tumor growth in mice. The same increase occurs in chronically stressed mice that have never been exposed to radiation.

1.

Yes, I'm that kind of mouse.

I wash my tail with my teeth.
Saw it like a knife through tough meat.

It's bred into me
and my offspring. They barber their bodies too.

You don't need lab glasses to spot the bald patches.

I spit my paws & wash my face with spit, excessively.
It's worse in solitary,

a Plexiglas cube no bigger than me.
Released I attempt to outrun it—myself?—on a wire wheel

and for a few seconds, back flat, free—
I feel what they feel—the other mice

happily sniffing each other, yawning with equanimity.

2.

Hey you, with the lab coat—I'm more

than a control variable:

What about me?

I could be statistical
improbability.

I could be the milk of the null hypothesis.

I'm albino: I could be

the stillness of snow, milk pierced from a tree.

Don't underestimate me.

3.

I turn from the wheel to the window.
Snow pours, milk from a cloud.

Don't underestimate me.

I could be snow eloped with a river.
Or the river's reflection, walking on trees.

I could be the willow it walks on.
I have to start somewhere.

Burrowed under wood shavings, fur
infused with the fragrance of trees:

I could be a mouse with a deciduous happiness.