

Danielle Hanson

Types of bees

There are queen bees, we all know that. It sounds glamorous but really she just stays still and lays 1500 eggs every day and what's so exciting about that. She stores all the sperm in her body. There are no balls or paparazzi in the tree. But maybe all queens feel trapped. Queens can live for up to five years, but only 2-3 are productive, then she's just hanging around without even laying the eggs. Then there are drone bees, which aren't drones at all, really. They make a low-pitched vibration which could be called droning, I guess, but it's not all that boring. Drones come from unfertilized eggs. The drones beg worker bees for snacks. They're kicked out in winter because they eat too much and don't work. They dance, but not to attract a mate because the queen is the only mate around and she's not picky and already has enough sperm and there's no room to dance in her room, what with all the eggs. There are worker bees, which are appropriately named. They work themselves to death. Workers use body vibrations to heat the hive. They can heat a hive enough to kill. In summer, they use their wings as fans. There are seven jobs a worker bee might have in their life. Workers start life by cleaning their own cell and then might become an undertaker, babysitter, attendant, honeymaker, waxmaker, guard, or forager. The work of undertaker bees is called necrophrosis. Around 100 bees die every day in the average colony. 10% of the worker bees will be undertakers at some point in their lives. They carry the dead on their back. The living too, really.

Ode to a Golden Bowl

Holder and spiller of light,
breast shield of an Amazon, you
shine hollow, shallow
cup, up-turned hat, stopped-up
vortex of thoughts, you sit
useless on the shelf, museum of
dust, planter of possible. Tapped,
you ring an invitation to stillness.

Uproar

And when
the clouds came
down from the
mountains they
pressed the hawks
to the lampposts.

The towhees hunched
into the ground. Hundreds
of crows flowed down
the hillside—an outpouring,
a gushing—dribbles and
drops of stragglers. Burrowing
owls replenished the aquifer
until the sun came back, yelling.

Invisible Violin

- For Elijah McClain

There's a boy playing an invisible
violin, an invisible boy outside
his home gathering ghosts
of cats and dogs, a spirit Pied Piper.
They all sit down, take a break
from the Afterlife, take a break from
remembering how each of them was
removed from the visible
living world because we
wanted that space to be empty.

Garden

The garden is over-
running its banks like
a wave caught still
in a photograph.

The tomatoes overdroop
the grass, slowly sinking
through the air, taking
weight from wet soil.

The cucumbers reach
for tree limbs and
climb their way toward
sky and gone.

The melons mount a ground
war on path. They march
in the stillness of morning,
holding us down with crisp beauty.