

Mitigative & Preventative Measures

3 types of honeybee form
one hive: named a colony

the Queen hatches
Worker bees, infertile
females who polish
the cells feed
the brood candy
the nectar pollinate
the plants wax
the combs tend
the Queen guard
the hive & harvest
the honey

Drones, the men of summer
live to fuck their Queen
& die

In 1873, Moses Quinby
Father of Practical Bee Keeping
invented the Quinby Bellows Smoker
a device designed to fume
the contagious pheromones
bees release
when danger is eminent

the smoker spit embers and charred
chips of decayed
wood from the combustion
chamber—the bees do not sleep
withered antennae beg the air
to extinguish the firing fog

Moses also contrived
the New Quinby Hive, the genesis
of the boxed bee business;
beekeepers base themselves
off his model: gas & file
the bees & steal
their sustenance

In 2006, the United Federation
of Worker Bees called
for a strike; swarms organized

& withdrew from the hive
leaving hexes of honey
alone for the Queen
picked as a scab

the USDA named this
Colony Collapse Disorder
scapegoated pesticides & mites
prescribed “mitigative & preventive
measures to improve bee
health & habitat &
to counter mortality
factors”

the escaped worker
bees floated through
the cities & the suburbs, swatted
by the sweaty palms of vexed
humans strutting the streets
as though they belong
they fled

to the farms—the elders were suited
to lounge in pastures
sipping on dandelions
& sunning with cow folk
but the youngsters kept
messing around the pigs until
the farmer sprayed them
with his hose, they took solace

in the forest, quiet pines ripe
to build a commune
of hives & keep everyone safe
from human civilization
but the field bees
yearned to yield
a larger crop, they could not stay

finally, they found the meadow
freckled with wildflowers
& fenced by a fortress
of trees: a hollow
oak unfolds her branches
to uncover an aperture
where time emptied
her trunk, creating space
for the bees to sleep

what if the first aliens look like flowers?

zero
gravity stems from the ground
each body rooted to the same
soil

rivers
map myths, store spirits
in the wrinkles of
earth

lace
wings of leaves together
lunar petals swell with
light

clouds
of mercury drift
through berried branches
bloodless

exhaust
steams into the trees
an astronaut
escapes

his ship
flummoxed, his body
drenched in moon, he
snips

stems
sampling the population
figure a few won't
hurt

he
couldn't know he killed
an artist, a tailor, and
two poets

his need
to plunge his great
steel pole into the sea
of grass

marking this land
as his own