

STEPHEN COLLIS / Aristaeus Mourning the Loss of His Bees

For Sharon Thesen

Were the bees...
...or where the hive?
the drive home
to the honey of place
no trace
to return to die singly
far from home the
buzz buzz of cell
phones form the
absence the empty hives
along this untravelled apian
way calling *have you*
seen him small and
mottled like a cinder he
died alone though many
shared a similar fate
stung and silvered at
their electric ears

•

Out over the water a
cell phone's silver
wings beat faster than
the eye can see the swarm
turns in the arc of air

ruptured by container ships
coursing east / west
each small cell its
capital sweet to gather
to keep to
lose your way home
to the hive
where there are no bees but
a silver cell
phone sits humming (on
vibrate) in blue light
encased in grey
papers coiled

•

Bees are interrupted
transmissions dropped
calls to the colony
like did you hear me
when I said we
are in a good deal of
trouble (globally) and the
night set the sea above
mountains blue with
flowered fields and
your cell was the only
light left to light the
way back out of
whatever it was we

were left with
shuttling commodities

•

Whir the bees or the
pollen fallen the
honey pours from the
mouths of dead poets
there are cells in every city
(terror stricken)
the locus is links
chains of communication
the bees have gone
inactive as the
fields have turned
electric the pulses
beat against the heads of
poppies and puppet
regimes in fields of
force I meet a bee
exhausted and far
from its hive
weak it gasps
hold my calls

•

I call but the bees I
know aren't there their
accounts emptied

small hollow bodies
found far from their
hives along highways
containers pass
on the backs of trucks
sick with chemical
and bacteria born
a single hole
in each tiny head
execution style their
cell phones checked for
any final calls I
get home just after
the truck leaves too
late our home is
no longer ours a cipher of
no place or
my bees have left me
with a bitter pill to swallow

•

I have seen them
swarm or singly
falter along a dusty
window ledge
alone is nothing
the bee buzz keeps
coming my solitude
is bundled and has

a camera built into it
keeping you connected
means receive this alone
unable to raise
a host of foragers
they die somewhere
flying all night and
dropping one by one
as exhausted pellets
upon petals that
closed with the dew

•

But the bees are
not math a memory
no photograph
the calipers used to
remove the corpse or
set the chip in place
are covered with honey
a meadow remains
a bee sting on the
bride's foot a river
with a severed head
still talking into its
orphic cell floating
down to the sea
singing its plaintive
ring tone to which
no bees respond

