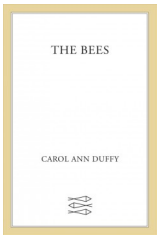
The Bees [1]



view in catalog [2]

Before we slide into autumn, and the lightning bugs, daddy long legs, and bees disappear, take time to enjoy Carol Ann Duffy?s new collection of poems, *The Bees*. No, it has nothing to do with the dark subject of colony collapse. Instead many of these poems center on this communal insect and its work in the world. Other poems are about love and family and the desolation of winter, yet even in these, bees hover over the edges of the poems, providing a small celestial moment of grace and fortitude (especially in those set during cold months.)

Duffy writes lyrical poetry that resonates with imaginative and sometimes unexpected images. Examine how the title poem begins: ?Here are my bees / brazen, blurs on paper, / besoted: buzzwords, dancing / their flawless, airy maps.?

In this poem she compares bees to words, how they dive deeply into everything and bring back scents that pervade her ?shadowed, busy heart, / and honey is art. ?

Another poem, ?Virgil?s Bees,? describes the insects? important work: ?each bee?s body / at its brilliant flower, love-stunned, / strumming on fragrance, smitten.?

Duffy must have once worked pollinating flowers. In ?The Human Bee? she says, ?I worked first in apples, / climbed the ladder / into the childless arms of a tree / and busied myself, dipping and tickling, / duping and tackling, tracing / the petal?s guidelines / down to the stigma. // Human, humming, / I knew my lessons by heart??

Duffy?s poems are both accessible and beautiful. She?s been a poet since age twelve and is the first female British laureate in history. Try this, her 24th collection.

Her poems are feminist in a way that reminds me of the work of Sharon Olds [3], but more nature-oriented like the poetry of Linda Pastan [4].

Posted by Dory L. on August 13, 2013

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