

Tell the Bees

BY SARAH LINDSAY

Tell the bees. They require news of the house;
they must know, lest they sicken
from the gap between their ignorance and our grief.
Speak in a whisper. Tie a black swatch
to a stick and attach the stick to their hive.
From the fortress of casseroles and desserts
built in the kitchen these past few weeks
as though hunger were the enemy, remove
a slice of cake and lay it where they can
slowly draw it in, making a mournful sound.

And tell the fly that has knocked on the window all day.
Tell the redbird that rammed the glass from outside
and stands too dazed to go. Tell the grass,
though it's already guessed, and the ground clenched in furrows;
tell the water you spill on the ground,
then all the water will know.
And the last shrunken pearl of snow in its hiding place.

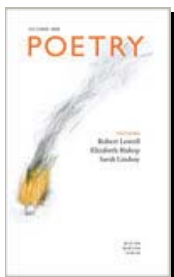
Tell the blighted elms, and the young oaks we plant instead.
The water bug, while it scribbles
a hundred lines that dissolve behind it.
The lichen, while it etches deeper
its single rune. The boulders, letting their fissures widen,
the pebbles, which have no more to lose,
the hills—they will be slightly smaller, as always,

when the bees fly out tomorrow to look for sweetness
and find their way
because nothing else has changed.

Source: *Poetry* (October 2008).

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This poem originally appeared in the **October 2008** issue of *Poetry* magazine



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