

MELISSA FREDERICK

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While I Lie with the Beehives

my mind circles the concept of horizontal,  
how it transforms bodies to slabs of matter,  
how this posture will never qualify me  
to be a worker in the human sense,  
and only workers are whole.

My eyes follow my highly active neighbors,  
their honey-tinged abdomens  
tracing flight paths that cling  
to hymenopterous memory  
until they're performed in front of a crowd.  
They get the message. They earn their keep.

I, on the other hand, lie here and expend  
resources. I absorb my own memories,  
as they are recorded on brain tissue,  
like wax cylinders that get scraped  
after every revolution.

The bees are unaware.  
They spill from their boxes like amber capsules.  
They hum question marks into every conversation.  
They tickle my skin with their walking and diving,  
crisscrossing the air with the strength of their purpose,  
weaving infinite patters of three-dimensional traffic.

They make me dizzy.

My head hasn't left the ground for days.  
I can't keep my equilibrium.  
I don't dare gasp, or I'll have them loose in my lungs.

They could leave the earth behind  
and take me with them.  
They could seek to form their own  
layer of atmosphere,  
the force of their resolve lifting me by the ribs.

But they won't. It's our mutual decision.  
I have no potential energy to give.  
The soil is pulling me under, particle by particle.  
In a week, it will have me  
buried to the halfway mark.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Melissa Frederick is the author of *She* (Finishing Line Press 2008). Her work has also appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Muse/A*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Oxford Poetry*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in suburban Philadelphia and can be found online at [missficklereader.wordpress.com](http://missficklereader.wordpress.com).

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