

MARIKO O. GORDON

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Nightfall

At nightfall  
black deeds  
are susceptible  
to small encouragements.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Nightfall” was created from *How to Keep Bees* by Anna Botsford Comstock (1905). About the poem and the process of composing it, Mariko O. Gordon writes:

Anna Botsford Comstock was a remarkable person. Born in 1864, she was a pioneering educator in nature science and a prolific writer and illustrator. Her *Handbook of Nature Study* (in its 24th edition) is still in print, 91 years after her death. *How to Keep Bees* was written “for those who would keep bees for happiness, honey, and incidentally for money.” This poem is from Chapter XII, “Feeding Bees.”

Comstock’s prose wafts like a late summer breeze through this technical DIY manual for amateur apiarists. Deconstructing her work felt almost sacrilegious. I read through the text and circled words or fragments that resonated with me. I transcribed the words but kept their order, sifting through to find those that best fit together and still captured her spirit. Once I found words that when bound together could cast a spell, I went back to the text to find any small but crucial words needed to connect the syntax dots.

Mariko O. Gordon serves on the board of the Asian American Writer’s Workshop, which publishes *The Margins*. She lives in Durham, North Carolina.

