

Latitudes

In northern latitudes we think we know cold dampness,
frost, and chill. It is safer to winter if honey is good
and enough. If honey be given.

We never winter without thirty pounds of honey.
We have given honey. In winter it is necessary
that honey pass through the city, a devotion of honey.

In preparing for winter we protect, in every diameter,
the spaces between dried leaves. Many words
are said for this method of wintering.

It is a guard against extremes and sudden changes—
warm, fine, a cushion. Like covering with boughs
of evergreen. Our losses arrested. Our scantlings in place.

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“Latitudes” was created from Anna Botsford Comstock’s *How to Keep Bees* (1905). About the poem and the process of composing it, Pamela Hobart Carter writes:

I love erasures. Often I make them as I read a book in my lap, handwriting words I extract, but this I erased on my computer by copying the passage into a file and deleting words as I read along, always keeping language in the order of the original text, except for the title, which is plucked from the first line of the poem. I chose line breaks, punctuation, and capitalizations of my own. I really wanted to include *scantlings*, such a quirky word, but had no idea what it meant and had to look it up. Sometimes I try to make a poem of very different content from what I am reading. Here I decided I wanted an abundance of honey. Honey would be central.

Pamela Hobart Carter is the author of *Her Imaginary Museum* (Kelsay Books 2020) and *Held Together with Tape and Glue* (forthcoming from Finishing Line Press). Her work has also appeared in *Barrow Street*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Chaos*, *The Seattle Star*, and *The Chrysanthemum 2020 Literary Anthology*. She lives in Seattle, Washington, and can be found online at playwrightpam.wordpress.com. Her website contains a section entitled “Make a Poem at Home: 11 Poetry Lessons for COVID Times,” based on her work with young people over the years.

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