

Fidelity in a Bed of Pinks

The facts revealed by science are always
beautiful.

The bee, in some mysterious way,
has been persuaded to work
on one kind of blossom at a time.

Repeatedly we have watched
a bee in a bed of pinks.
Though clover and other blossoms were near by,
she passed methodically from pink to pink,
and naught tempted her to fickleness.

Each species has developed
its own special device for securing
services more interesting
than the unraveling of secrets.

Even the novice may do this by asking
three questions.

Where is your nectar?

Where is your pollen?

Where is the path?

There are so many flowers
and some are mere weeds.

ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

Gabriella Brand created “Fidelity in a Bed of Pinks” from *How to Keep Bees* by Anna Botsford Comstock (1905). About the poem and the process of composing it, Gabriella writes:

I absolutely fell in love with the style of *How to Keep Bees* by Anna Botsford Comstock. Her writing is a delightful mixture of quaint and tender observations of the natural world interspersed with practical instructions. The juxtaposition of these two modes creates, I think, an inherent yin-yang, feminine-masculine duality. On the one hand, Comstock almost encourages us to anthropomorphize the bee—to imagine the creature with a will, a love life, a determined attitude. On the other hand, she treats the bee as an impersonal mechanism and reduces it to a set of behaviors. I thought this inherent tension could be developed poetically. I read each section of the book over several times aloud, learning quite a bit about bees in the process. Then I put her work down and let her lyrical turns of phrase resonate in my mind. An embryonic piece began to form. I ripped words from Comstock and kept rearranging them until the poem finally emerged.

Gabriella Brand’s work has appeared in *3Elements Literary Review*, *Aromatica Poetica*, *Room*, *The Comstock Review*, *Mom Egg Review*, and elsewhere. She is the founder of the Praying Mantis Salon for literary readings and a writing presenter at the University of Connecticut’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. She lives in New Haven, Connecticut, and can be found online at gabriellabrand.net.

