

BEE HIVE BY NIGHT

Glenna Holloway

My honey mills wind down in aftercool
of autumn-staging sunlight's rapid plunge.
All day productive order was the rule,
now workers rest before their first waves lunge
at morning ripeness waiting in the clover.
Moon-time awakens hulking stealth with claws--
just like a Choctaw spirit passing over
sleep-dark weeds and logs on brazen paws.
Old Bruin knows the dynamo is dormant;
he knows he needn't fear sting-barbs or shot.
He raids as if he's cued by an informant,
then wanders off to some deep woodland spot,
my precious topaz beaded on his chin:
His tongue will find it, tell him where he's been.

So he'll be back. He needs no workers' dance
to point him toward his coveted reward.
Once found, his black brain memorized each chance
he took and won. He's proved himself the lord
of night, of fields and salmon streams, wild bees
besides. Now mine, compared, make easy prey.
Each raid, he's also seen my apple trees;
he'll soon gorge twice at my expense. By day
I don't believe old tribal kin return
as bears. By sun I count compounded loss
and load my double-barreled vengeance, burn
with educated scorn for tales that cross
the years. Through hunter's sights his powers pose
against the moon, my aim. He's safe. He knows.