

Bee Disappearance

Adam says ninety percent of the world's bees just vanished. I say, they died? He says, they vanished. The dandelions in the cracks of the front steps have vanished. It must be related. Or the neighbor on the right side came in the night with poison. She does that sometimes. I love the yellow spots on the gray steps. She is offended by their weed status.

Adam says, it's all about perspective.
I say, they're my damn steps.

Adam is more concerned with the bee situation. That's what he calls it. He wonders what I'm going to do about it. I tell him I'll eat less honey. His eyebrows tell me this is the wrong answer. Bees affect the world economy. Clearly, he says, the world is about to end. When we fight, he uses the word perspective. I use the word melodrama. He leaves.

He packs his hiking boots and a copy of *Aura* in a duffel bag and heads to Argentina. He does not tell me why Argentina. When I ask, he says he doesn't know. I suspect my neighbor suggested it. To retaliate, I blow dandelion puffs on her front lawn.

When I ask why *Aura*, Adam says he wants to take in the culture. I send Adam a letter explaining that Carlos Fuentes is Mexican and that I was stung by a bee. I am lying. About the bee. But I want him to come home because if the end of the world were to come I wouldn't want to be alone in a small house with no dandelions and an angry neighbor.

The end of the world does not mean as much to me as the end of my world.

It isn't long before he mentions the possibility of a conspiracy. I expected this. I send him a copy of *The Crying of Lot 49*. I write perspective across the title page. The bees do not mean anything. None of it means anything.

Do I mean something?

At night I sit by the window with the phone and watch my neighbor crouched on her lawn pulling up dandelions by the roots. Soon they are all gone. I grow depressed. First I think it is because I scattered them to their deaths. Then I think it is because now the mark I left is gone.

Am I as important as a million bees? What about two bees?

Adam eventually writes back that he has moved to Madagascar where the air smells better and the flowers are brighter and the rain makes a clearer sound when it falls. He hasn't found a bee, but he is hopeful. I put a dandelion and some air in a mason

jar and leave it on the steps until it rains. After, I set it on the counter by the sink and I wait for a bee so that I can send it all to Adam and ask him to come home.