

Apiaries

by Sarah Sassone

I'm reading an article about honeybees as I wait for the results of my blood work at the doctor's office. They're going through something called CCD, Colony Collapse Disorder. Billions of honeybees have died in the past seven years. I feel bad for the beekeepers and their failing apiaries.

As I finish the article, the doctor walks in with a chart. He says, I thought it would work. He says, It should have worked. He says, We could do more tests, we could figure out why. He says, We can try it again. He says, I'm sorry.

Bees dance to tell each other that they found a food source. They count the dance patterns to communicate distance. Fly towards the sun, they'll buzz. They give acute angles to show the food source's relativity to the hive and the sun. Geometry experts. Pythagoras was a bee in a past life. They dance in circles to say it's nearby.

My husband is home when I get there. He couldn't get out of work, he said when I asked him to go with me. I wonder why he's home.

Well? he says. What did the doctor say?

You know how I had the craving for almonds? I asked you to go get them for me all the time. Chocolate-covered almonds, salted almonds, bare almonds. No other nuts. Did you know that if honeybees become extinct, almonds will no longer exist? The bees are going extinct. Almonds are 100 percent the product of honeybees. I won't have my almonds. If they're gone, I won't have my almonds.

It didn't work, he says.

I shake my head.

The bees might be dying from the Varroa mite, or pesticides, or neglected apiaries. The queen bees cannot produce eggs and the drones only have one chance to impregnate them—they die immediately after mating.

My husband shouts that he's going to work, but I don't know where he's really going. I hope he will tell me where soon. We can meet at the source and try again.

