



February Bumblebees

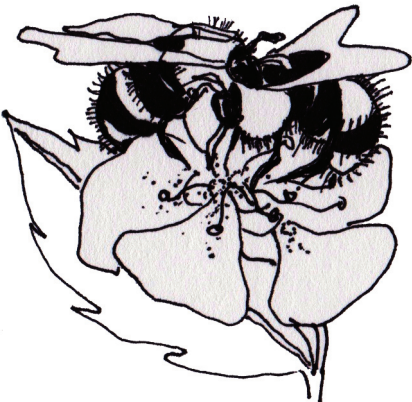
Christine Lowther

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Save one from drowning:
slide your paddle-blade beneath her
wings thinner than onion paper
tangled in water;
break up the brawl between insect and ocean.
Lucky creature, sprawls for a second
on the paddle, no debt of gratitude
she takes off on a fast steep path to the sky.

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This one matches my brand of daffodil:
pollen-yellow on the outside,
a pastel-orange centre.
Why not call her fumblebee:
she clammers with difficulty into the heart
of an exquisite white crocus;
probing, she finds her sugardust treasure,
revels and rolls, clumsily mauling
the sweet-powder prize until sated,
she blinks through pollen and, with those tiny wings,
veers away over the water, dodging
columns of strands so thin
they only appear when the sun lights them
—spiders' lines cast and let go
catching the wind that billows them across the bay.



Christine Lowther's latest book is *Born Out of This*, a memoir that was shortlisted for the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize. She has three poetry books: *New Power*, *My Nature* and *Half-Blood Poems*. Her poems appear in *Force Field: 77 Women Poets of British Columbia*, on BC Transit and in various literary presses. Christine co-edited *Writing the West Coast: In Love with Place and Living Artfully: Reflections from the Far West Coast*. She lives on Vancouver Island.



This poem is one of ten poems selected to appear in The Pollinator Poetry Post, a public art project of Border Free Bees. Over 130 original poems were submitted from contributors throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The Post will be installed in various locations in Kelowna and Richmond, British Columbia, Canada from 2016-2017. The poets whose work is published are as follows: Yvonne Blomer, Meri Culp, morgan downie, Tami Haaland, Lisa Huffaker, Guillaume Loslier-Pinard, Christine Lowther, Rhona McAdam, Wendy Morton, Phoebe Reeves.

Border Free Bees is a long-term public art initiative headed by Dr. Cameron Cartiere, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Culture + Community at Emily Carr University of Art + Design and Nancy Holmes, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at The University of British Columbia, Okanagan, in collaboration with numerous strategic partners. The initiative's mission is to raise awareness of the plight of wild pollinators, empower communities to actively engage in solutions for habitat loss, and transform under-utilized urban sites into aesthetically pleasing and scientifically viable pollinator pastures. Border Free Bees is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Judges for the contest were poets Nancy Holmes and Fionncara MacEoin, pollinator scientist Dr. Elizabeth Elle, and public art theorist and artist Dr. Cameron Cartiere. Border Free Bees thanks Fionncara MacEoin, S. Megan Hunter and Kaila Burke for building the Poetry Post. The poetry pages were designed by Fionncara MacEoin with illustrations by Rhythm Hunter.

www.borderfreebees.com

