



The Bees: Poems

Carol Ann Duffy

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A winner of the Costa Book Award, "beautiful and moving poetry for the real world" (*The Guardian*)

The Bees is Carol Ann Duffy's first collection of new poems as British poet laureate, and the much anticipated successor to the T. S. Eliot Prize-winning *Rapture*. After the intimate focus of the earlier book, *The Bees* finds Duffy using her full poetic range: there are drinking songs, love poems, poems to the weather, and poems of political anger. There are elegies, too, for beloved friends and "most movingly" for the poet's mother. As Duffy's voice rises in this collection, her music intensifies, and every poem patterns itself into song.

Woven into and weaving through the book is its presiding spirit: the bee. Sometimes the bee is Duffy's subject, sometimes it strays into the poem or hovers at its edge and the reader soon begins to anticipate its appearance. In the end, Duffy's point is clear: the bee symbolizes what we have left of grace in the world, and what is most precious and necessary for us to protect. *The Bees* is Duffy's clearest affirmation yet of her belief in the poem as "secular prayer," as the means by which we remind ourselves of what is most worthy of our attention and concern, our passion and our praise.



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