

1977

Bee-Wolves

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Recommended Citation

Kelleher, Ann. "Bee-Wolves." *The Iowa Review* 8.4 (1977): 86-87. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2296>

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Frogs / Ann Kelleher

After the tadpole stage
frogs take as long as five years to mature.
Some survive to forty
frequently changing skins by tugging
them from toes to heads
into their mouths.

Their tongues are fastened
in the fronts of their wide jaws
pointing backwards
until they flip them out to catch insects.

All frogs have teeth
but their eyes are the real keys
to their digestion.
Thin skin separates the eyes from the throats.

When frogs eat
they close their lids
to push the bulging eyeballs down
against the trapped insects

forcing them
through their throats into their stomachs.

“Bee-Wolves” / Ann Kelleher

One digger wasp, *Philanthus*
or “Bee-Wolf”
eats only honey bees.

It builds a mound above its
underground nest
where hungry larvae wait
in small apartments
each with a bedroom and a
pantry/parlor.

On fine days, the female
backfills as she digs out
and for camouflage
rakes sand across her exit.

She takes off, circling
checks for landmarks: rocks
sticks, pinecones
flies toward the nearest
heather where she hunts the
bees. She carries back

each one she stings to stock
the larvae larders
but licks the nectar from the
punctured prey herself.

Her life lasts
only one July and August.
At the end, she digs her grave
under her own nest.

Divorce / Ann Kelleher

Your hands tear at the spinach.
They are red from weeping.

I remember them last winter