

BEAR AND BEE HIVE BY NIGHT

My honey mills wind down in aftercool  
of late September sunlight's rapid plunge.  
All day, productive order was the rule,  
now workers rest before their first waves lunge  
at morning sweetness waiting in the clover.  
Moon-time awakens hulking stealth with claws--  
just like a Choctaw spirit passing over  
sleep-dark weeds and logs on brazen paws.  
Old Bruin knows the dynamo is dormant;  
he knows he needn't fear sting-barbs or shot.  
He raids as if he's cued by an informant,  
then wanders off to some deep woodland spot,  
my precious topaz beaded on his chin:  
His tongue will find it, tell him where he's been.

So he'll be back. He needs no workers' dance  
to point him toward his coveted reward.  
Once found, his black brain memorized each chance  
he took and won. He's proved himself the lord  
of night, of fields and salmon streams, wild bees  
besides. Now mine, compared, make easy prey.  
Each raid, he's also seen my apple trees;  
he'll soon gorge twice at my expense. By day  
I don't believe old tribal kin return  
as bears. By sun I count compounded loss  
and load my double-barreled vengeance, burn  
with educated scorn for tales that cross  
the years. Through hunter's sights his powers pose  
against the moon, my aim. He's safe. He knows.

--Glenna Holloway