

Dung Beetles Navigate by Starlight

I track my treasure home on star beams, hide
my finds in caverns, steer them clean away,
before I'm stranded in the clueless day
with all my musky gleanings dull and dried.
Straightness is all. The constellations guide
my angled legs. The facets of each eye
lock on to glimmers, sensed how? Who can say?
The system works for me. I'm satisfied.

I know those lines of light shine down for me,
the dung deposited on dewy ground,
a providence. Through moonless dark I see
in multiple dimensions, beacons round,
and every blessed night miraculously
precipitates new turds for me to find.

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Neonicotinoids

Out at the back they huddle
turn off, tune out, ignore
their office messages, tobacco-calmed.

Beyond the ring-road silent orchards
stare up at an empty sky
while the bees, receptors jammed
are all on auto-reply.

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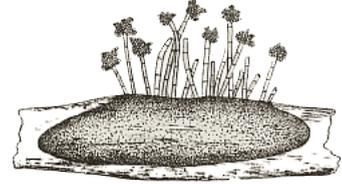
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Sarah Watkinson is a scientist specializing in soil and fungi ecology. She also holds a diploma in creative writing from Oxford University. In 2016, she won the Cinnamon pamphlet prize for her pamphlet "Dung Beetles Navigate by Starlight". She lives in Oxfordshire, maintains a site at "<https://sarahcwatkinson.wordpress.com/>", and tweets regularly as "@philonotis".

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10 Varmoor Place
Calgary, AB, T3A 0A1

TWO POEMS



SARAH WATKINSON

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