

# Honeybees

Being a bee

is a pain.

I'm a worker

I'll gladly explain.

I'm up at dawn, guarding  
the hive's narrow entrance

then I take out  
the hive's morning trash

then I put in an hour  
making wax,  
without two minutes' time  
to sit still and relax.

The I might collect nectar  
from the field  
three miles north

or perhaps I'm on  
larva detail

feeding the grubs  
in their cells,

Being a bee

is a joy.

I'm a queen

I'll gladly explain.

Upon rising, I'm fed  
by my royal attendants,

I'm bathed

then I'm groomed.

The rest of my day  
is quite simply set forth:

I lay eggs,

by the hundred.

wishing that /were still  
helpless and pale.

I'm loved and I'm lauded,  
I'm outranked by none.

Then I pack combs with  
pollen – not my idea of fun.

When I've done  
enough laying

Then, weary, I strive

I retire

to patch up any cracks  
in the hive.

for the rest of the day.

Then I build some new cells,  
slaving away at  
enlarging this Hell,  
dreading the sight  
of another sunrise,  
wondering why we don't  
all unionize.

Truly, a bee's is the  
worst  
of all lives.

Truly, a bee's is the  
best  
of all lives.

*Source: Paul  
Fleischman, Joyful  
Noise: Poems for  
Two Voices, Harper  
& Row. 1988.*