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BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

The University of Minnesota Press has published a fine collection of bee poems, If Bees are Few. Here's one by one of my favorite poets, Naomi Shihab Nye, who lives in San Antonio. Her most recent book is Famous from Wings Press.

Bees Were Better

In college, people were always breaking up. We broke up in parking lots, beside fountains. Two people broke up across a table from me at the library. I could not sit at that table again though I did not know them. I studied bees, who were able to convey messages through dancing and could find their ways home to their hives even if someone put up a blockade of sheets and boards and wire. Bees had radar in their wings and brains that humans could barely understand. I wrote a paper proclaiming their brilliance and superiority and revised it at a small café featuring wooden hive-shaped honey-dippers in silver honeypots at every table.