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### Honeybee: Poems & Short Prose

Gillian Streeter  
gstreeter@fortbend.lib.tx.us

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Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Honeybee: Poems & Short Prose*. Greenwillow Books, 2008. ISBN 9780060853914. \$16.99. 176 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary realistic poetry; Poetry;

Subject: Poetry--Juvenile literature; Children's poetry--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

In a linguistics course in college, author Nye chose to analyze the language of bees. This was before the widespread beehive failures and mysterious deaths of honeybees worldwide, and possibly before migratory beehive trucking to keep pollination and food yields high. No one quite knows the reason for the depleting honey bee population and while Nye doesn't provide the answers, she explores the interconnected world of humanity and bees, destruction and creation, peace and war.

In a combination of prose and poetry uncommon to juvenile literature, Nye weaves imagery and emotion together in *Honeybee*. The bee theme shows itself again and again in various pieces, sometimes only in one word and other times nearly the whole passage discusses bees. For all the sunny yellow of the cover, Nye discusses many painful topics—she returns to the wars in the Middle East frequently, as she often does in her work. Her lyricism is intoxicating and her imagery powerful—readers will find analyzing her poems time-consuming because of their density, but they are easy to read. This would be a welcome addition to any school library and would make a fascinating lesson aid, but it is recommended for young adult readers (one prose passage refers to a bakery in which erotic cakes are sometimes made).

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