

Fear of Ants

The ants have decided
to share my home.

No knock at the door,
"May we come in and
live with you?"

They are too busy with
their business, shuttling
back and forth their hard
won bits of food, sweet,
and moisture.

I have no place in my
heart for them. Smashing
them flat works for a
while. Since I despise
and fear them, it is
satisfying, even gratifying,
to do this. One at a time
or in groups I squish them,
flatten them, step on them.

They mock me and keep coming.
They are hungry. They collect
their dead and drag away the
bodies. Sometimes
working together, sometimes
singly. Tugging and pulling.
I suppose they eat
their own. By
killing them, I have
fed them.

Then there is poison. I
tried that. Bait traps.
You buy them in the grocery
store in the next aisle after
the laundry detergent.
Take them home and open
the package, fearing the poison.
"Take that you suckers!
Take the poison home with you--
back to your queen. Feed
her unknowingly the ant-
hemlock, arthropod-draino,
insect-put-your-head-
in-the-oven-and-die-
elixir."

I've had enough of this.
Time for the vacuum cleaner.
Poison takes so long. At least
this way I have visible
results. I wait for them
as they march along the trail.
Sometimes two, sometimes three,
sometimes more. They stagger
their pattern to fool me.
But I am not fooled!
Like a great god I see
them from above, turn on
the vacuum and bring the
nozzle close. The little
fellers try to hold on.
"Whoa, what's that wind?
I don't know what this is.
If I can just hold...
on..." Zip. Up he goes
and through the hose.

You might think this a foolish
way to get rid of ants, but
I have great patience when I can
see the results. When I know
I am not leaving behind
dead bodies
which feed them or inspire
them to mourn and
continue in their zeal.

No this is much better.
This works, because it
is unknown. No word
travels back to the colony
about what happened. No
telltale scent of death
on the trail.
Only abduction. Mysterious.
Blown away by the wind.
I wait for them like a
sniper. It takes hours.
Eventually their
numbers dwindle.
Such a feeling of victory,
to have conquered the
ants!

At night in my office.
It is warm and
my window is open.
I hear rustling in
the brush and
dry leaves.

--Joseph H. Rosevear