Candace Savage

bees

David Suzuki Foundation

GreyStone Books
Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group
Vancouver/Toronto/Berkeley
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Greystone Books
A division of Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.
2323 Quebec Street, Suite 201
Vancouver, British Columbia · Canada V5T 4S7
www.greystonebooks.com

David Suzuki Foundation
219–2211 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, British Columbia · Canada V6K 4S2

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication
Savage, Candace, 1949–
Bees : nature’s little wonders / Candace Savage.
Includes index.
Co-published by: David Suzuki Foundation.
isbn 978-1-55365-321-9
q1565.829 2008 595.79'9 c2007-907202-x

Jacket and text design by Jessica Sullivan
Jacket illustrations by Laura Kinder
Photos by Zachary Huang, except p. 108
Printed and bound in China by C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.
Printed on paper that comes from sustainable forests managed under the Forest Stewardship Council
Distributed in the U.S. by Publishers Group West

“End Notes for a Small History” by Betty Lies, originally published in Southern Poetry Review 38 (Summer 1998), is reproduced by permission of the publisher.

“Angel of Bees” originally appeared in Inventing the Hawk by Lorna Crozier © 1992 and most recently appeared in The Blue Hour of the Day by Lorna Crozier © 1997. Published by McClelland & Stewart Ltd. Used with permission of the author.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Province of British Columbia through the Book Publishing Tax Credit, and the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (bpidp) for our publishing activities.
To the Reader

The chiefest cause, to read good bookes,
That moves each studious minde
Is hope, some pleasure sweet therein,
Or profit good to finde.
Now what delight can greater be
Then secrets for to knowe,
Of Sacred Bees, the Muses Birds,
All which this booke doth shew.
And if commodity thou crave,
Learne here no little game
Of their most sweet and sov’raigne fruits,
With no great cost or paine.
If pleasure then, or profit may
To read induce thy minde,
In this small treatise choice of both,
Good Reader, thou shalt finde.

CHARLES BUTLER, THE FEMININE MONARCHIE,
OR A TREATISE CONCERNING BEES
AND THE DIVINE ORDERING OF THEM. 1609
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INTRODUCTION

LITTLE THINGS

INSECTS:

“the little things that run the world.”

E.O. WILSON, 1987
If you are like me, learning about bees will change your life. I’m not suggesting that you’ll drop everything and devote yourself to studying insects (though that is possible). What I have in mind is more subtle: a new alertness, a quickening of wonder. Little things that, in the past, have slipped by almost without notice will now demand that you stop and pay attention to them. The hum of wings: whose wings? An insect darting among the flowers: is it a bee or a beefly, a bumblebee or a wasp? What is it doing? Where is it headed? True, it may take you a bit longer to water the petunias or pick the beans, but in those few stolen minutes, you will have been on safari. Gradually, you will begin to sense that a garden is not just a bunch of plants set out in pots and rows: it is a world within a world, a half-tamed ecosystem, full of some of the most exotic and astonishing creatures on the planet.

As children watching our first bees, we instantly catch the buzz. No one has to tell us that these bright careening atoms of life are miraculous.

> A goddess in the form of a bee was venerated at Camiros on the Greek island of Rhodes almost three thousand years ago.