



Gary Mesick

### Wasps

“Kill them if you have to.  
I just don’t want them here.”  
She was accustomed to deciding  
What stays, what lives.  
A volunteer michaelmas daisy  
Without a sense of proportion  
Would not last long. Nor would the wasps.

“There!” she said. A lone *vespula vulgaris*  
Had emerged from a narrow slit  
Beneath the far pillar of the portico,  
Somersaulted in the air, and set out  
To forage for food. For a time,  
It had found sanctuary here,  
But when she decided to place the trellis  
For a climbing rosa floribunda nearby,  
This wasp became superfluous,  
And now they all must die.

At sunset, in twos and threes,  
The wasps returned to their colony,  
Having feasted on caterpillars and flies,  
And needing rest and protection

In the failing light. It was not to be.  
Meanwhile the bumble bees meandered,  
Unmolested among the lavender,  
And the foxglove stalks swayed in the breeze,  
Well upwind from the toxins  
That sent the wasps confused and staggering  
Out from beneath the pillar,  
Desperate for air, and life,  
And finding neither.

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Gary Mesick, a Seattle native, graduated from West Point and Harvard. He has been an infantry officer, a college professor, a business consultant and a writer. His poetry has recently appeared in *Atlanta Review*, *Pearl*, and *Alimentum*.