

Reimagining Community

I feel so small
because humans
are ants crawling
in my neighbour's
backyard. Social
creatures, squished

and burnt out
by pressure,
by sunbeam into

magnifying glass
focused on
all our collective
issues. Despite this,
we are strong —
sometimes. What if
we were ants?

Yesterday, they carried
tulip bulbs into the next
dip of dirt, no, soil, no, earth,
yes, the meaning is all the same.
Growth is found within

acknowledgement — I forget
how kindness is chosen,
how vulnerability
can be compassion.

My memory could
be the ocean tide:
whisking debris away,
coming back again —
and again! — to say
hello, goodbye,

I forgot to ask you a question...

if I burrowed
into the dirt,
if I died on this
anthill, if I drowned
in the Pacific, no,
in the boiling water

from my neighbour's
kettle, no, if I turned into
a hermit crab, if I were
looking for something
bigger than myself me to call my own,
if I were searching for a home
to protect the tender
meat of my body,
if I were isolated
from myself, or others,
if I were an orange slice
shared amongst friends
on a picnic blanket at lunch,
or an orange peel, alone,
if I were biodegradable,
or just degradable,
what I mean is,

do you know
that brief pause
when you begin to feel

the sand or moss or grass or soil
from the Pacific or my neighbour's
backyard before the boiling water,
if you felt the squelch
and scratch of granules
or mud or plant matter
or salt water or insects
or seashells or pebbles
as you walk towards me,

if you found me in a tide pool,
if you scooped me out of the water
and cupped me in your hands,
if you were the pallbearer
for my discarded crab shell,
if you were the moon
pulling me this way and that,
if you were the sun
and its beam through
a magnifying glass,
if you were speculative fiction,
if you were a tulip bulb,
if you were a tulip
and I were a rose,
if you were a garden,

if you were a deity,
if you were the peeled orange,
if you were soapstone,
limestone, or calcified rock,
if you were the kettle,
if you were the lunch,
if you were the anthill,
if you were a crab shell,
if you were my neighbour,
if you were a memory,
if you were the picnic blanket,
if you were an ant
and I were a tulip bulb,
if you were the earth
I burrowed into,

what I mean to say is,
would you be merciful?

If you were,
if I were,

we — ? It is painful,
trying to connect.

I meant to say: what
if we were to become
known to one another?