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## **The Bee Man** Jane Blue

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## **Jane Blue**

### THE BEE MAN

He loves bees, studies them, plays the clarinet for them from the stage of a county fair. He is clothed with bees, which also clothe the clarinet, becoming a cover like brushed cloth to wrap silver. But the music doesn't stop under the cover, just takes on the tones of honey, thick and sweet, and when the man clutches a microphone, bees layer it like foam, furry and nubbed, adding timbre, a rich vibrato, the very air of his breath caressed by bees. He is not a beekeeper but an entomologist, bee hero, defender of the inarticulate and maligned bees whose tongues if they have tongues do not form words to explain what makes them sting. They want to say it is fear: Simply have no fear and we will not pierce your skin to plant our poison. Do not even inadvertently mime fear or we'll interpret the vibrations of your gasping, reverberation of shallow inhaled breath against the sounding board of your clavicle, as a call to war. And then this man reveals he is one of those with a fatal allergy to the sting of a bee. His secret is that he himself has no fear, and he loves his enemy.