

Dear Giants, please listen to my gnat-like voice, because

despite your boomed disparagement, no Huge One
came close enough to learn. You never heard
our tiny ginger-minted cracklings, tickled
into some all-sensing, upturned head.

Who else listened to those flicker tips,
insect staccato, fizzing syllables? Just us.
Who understood that clackered attitude,
clapped inside, tight-made in a new-laced phrase?

There was some moment of abandoned ghosts,
lost in antics and swarming tactics,
all a tremble of full- ticking tensions,
turning jitter-bugged legs into clickery life.

And when one of us sang near you, no-one
touched that thorax, tried to share its whisper rhythm.
Only the inadvertent leaf fall listened,
spun tall on upright spines, and cheered.

When you Giants named your metal tribute
'The Folland Gnat', we had expected change. None came.
In our dipterid sub-ordered forms,
in our biting and non-biting kinds,

as we fly, ungrouped, unclassified,
sometimes in the sorts who want
small secretions from your great eyes, our words remain
your simple insults. Ours is even now

the ostracised voice. Please hear me now,

Your Unheard Friend

"The Gnatterer"

aka Beth McDonough