

Betrayal is like fire ants.

I can see the fire ants, marching up my arm. They sway to some rhythm unfamiliar to me—some unknown force drives them on. I don't understand everyone's fear—they look so harmless—three bulbs and eight strings. Their red color ought to give their true natures away, but I only find them more fascinating. Up and up they march, becoming familiar with the shape of my body, tickling my wrists and the inside of my elbow with their feet. They have been patient—waiting for me to accept every component of their whole.

Of course, I allowed this to happen—I was the one who chose this spot. The inviting, cool breeze seemed deliciously incongruent with everything I'd heard about the anthill located under the oak. Dangerous, they had said. My mother, brother, and friends had all told me to stay far away. Well, I think, here I am, lying in the moist grass, with nothing more dangerous than a few ants to keep me company. In my mind I imagined going back to those people who had warned me and telling them they were wrong—that even though they warned me I was still right, and I know what's what.

It is just at this minute—the moment I am comfortable and confident and strong—that they strike. My whole body is consumed in fire.

A Study Exploring Abstract Emotions

by M. Z. Kennings

