

J.-J. Grandville, 'The Grasshopper and the Ant', 1838.



# What Must it Have Been Like to Walk Through That World?

Holly Day

**A**nts were once believed to be the last form a fairy would take before dying, the hunched-over form of a tiny worker ant struggling with a piece of bread or cheese was actually a very old, magical creature

and as they were still watched over by younger, more powerful fairies one must never disturb or destroy an ant, one must step out of their way and if you didn't want one in your house, just keep things neat and tidy.

.....

**Holly Day**

# On the Cusp of Spring

Holly Day

**W**hen I was a child, my mother had me searching for magic  
behind every forest tree, taught me to look underneath  
bracket mushrooms  
for evidence of fairy campsites, inside the gaping hollows of oak trees  
for secret passageways to other worlds. I was so determined to find a way  
into the land of fairies that I'd seek out forbidden spots,  
mushroom rings and the piney caverns under the canopies of fir trees,  
sit in the exact middle with my eyes closed tight, arms wrapped around my knees,  
determined I'd wake up somewhere else. Even now, I get a little thrill  
when I see a cluster of mushrooms sprouting in a circle in my yard.  
When my children visit my mother, they come home with half-built fairy  
castles and stories about hearing rabbits talking at night, foxes creeping through the  
window to steal their dreams, how dogs and cats rise on their hind legs  
and pretend to be people at midnight. Sometimes, my mother asks me in an aside  
if I mind her telling the same stories to my children that she told me,  
seems amazed that they believe  
the strange things she says, just like I did.

.....

**Holly Day**

# Magic

Holly Day

**I**t must have been nice to live in a time  
where one could claim their husband was enchanted, as in  
“Oh, no – I’m not single – that’s my husband over there, in the corner,  
see the teapot?” and the person being introduced to the teapot  
or the sleeping pig in the corner  
or a particularly intelligent dog  
would take the enchantment as a real thing, would believe  
the woman believed to be single was actually married,  
return to town and tell everyone else she was taken.

At least I would like to think that these stories were believed back then,  
that when the village ruffians showed up at the woman’s house  
looking to ransack her house, violate her,  
that the threat of a cursed broom or a bear in the backyard  
seeking vengeance on them  
was enough to keep them at bay  
keep her safe.

.....

**Holly Day**