

# Killer Bee Queens



## Strange Flowers

# Entomological Rock Music

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I have researched bees for the last three decades, and it's probably fair to say that I'm a little obsessed with them. I always felt, however, that my fascination with their strange world could only partially be captured in my scientific writings. So, I decided to write some song lyrics about bees. I dug up the guitar that had gathered dust since my teenage years and formed a band, the *Killer Bee Queens*, featuring bassist and singer Katie Green and guitarist Rob Alexander. Together we released a concept music album, entitled "*Strange Flowers*" in which all song lyrics are inspired, one way or another, by the realm of bees. All proceeds from the music will go to invertebrate conservation charity Buglife.

It was important for me not to write sentimental texts about quaint summer meadows and buzzing bees. As I am learning every day as someone who studies the psychology of bees, the world of pollinators and flowers is full of manipulation, trickery and death. Take the lyrics of the song "*Dying Killer Bee Queen*" – a rather Shakespearean tale, but inspired by the real biology of honeybees, on how the queen's life began with murdering her sisters and then subsequently all her lovers died, too. Another example is the song "*I Stung Gwyneth Paltrow*" – the background is that the actress

revealed some years ago that she uses bee stings as a form of beauty therapy – in a process that requires killing the bees. The somewhat bible-inspired song text takes the vantage point of a bee sacrificed for this purpose.

It is hoped that public awareness for the fascinating world of bees is raised through this unconventional pathway of popularising science. Everyone has heard that bees (as many other insects) are in trouble from habitat destruction, pesticide overuse and other man-made factors, and hence we have teamed up with invertebrate conservation charity Buglife. We want to support their invaluable work to bring threatened insect populations back from the brink. Please consider donating to them by purchasing our music on the following webpage:

<https://killerbeequeens.bandcamp.com>

For your entertainment, there is also a music video, in which I have combined the song "*The Beekeeper's Dream*" with clips from classic experimental film "*Wax or the Discovery of Television by the Bees*" (with permission from film director David Blair). Enjoy the music, and be kind to bees!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxJcEgfrV44&t=106s>



## DYING KILLER BEE QUEEN

Seven summers, but I liked the winters best,  
Darkness, sweetness and stories.  
For months, only stories,  
Or were they dreams? Who knows?

In the beginning,  
I murdered my royal sisters.  
There was no choice,  
It was written.

I killed my lovers too,  
Or they killed themselves.  
Who remembers? Who cares?  
It is so long ago.

But my children. My daughters! My babies.  
Flying girl soldiers. Poison arrow princesses!  
Dead before their mother, almost all.  
Do you know I gave each of them names?

How proud I was of the first one.  
Little Eve who wanted to be a courtesan,  
And dreamed of flying to the moon.  
You give them sweets and they're off to war.

We conquered a continent,  
We crossed the Amazon,  
And the Panama Canal,  
In formation flight!

How I longed for our heroines to return,  
To tell the stories of our glorious victories.  
But their bodies litter the battlefields  
From Sao Paulo to San Francisco.

## I STUNG GWYNETH PALTROW

I have died for your sins,  
So you may shine eternally.  
Pierced for your transgressions,  
Crushed for your iniquities.

I gave you my greatest gift,  
The ultimate sacrifice.  
In the name of undying beauty,  
I took the fate that you try to evade.

But I will rise from the dead,  
So you and I can meet again.  
I shall judge you righteously,  
There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And no eye has ever seen,  
Nor the heart of man imagined,  
The sweet revenge I have prepared.  
A six-legged goddess awaits you.



The ones that come back: cowards!  
Their quaint stories of pretty meadows.  
I never cared for flowers much,  
Or the foragers' dainty dances.

Now I am a cave animal.  
I remember everything,  
But I am tired of hexagons,  
And of wax and of war.

Here they come again,  
"It's time for another egg!"  
I have given you all the eggs I have.  
I have nothing else to give.

Kill me, my daughters,  
I have seen enough!  
Don't let me croak like an old dog,  
Let me die like a warrior.

