

SUSAN HELWIG

## The Work of Twenty Bees

I am Bea this is my life seventeen and I go to work at Menno Kreller's two-fifty a week, two sets of twins, there was washing every day, milk ten cows by hand, pail-feed the calves, bake bread twice a week, every other Sunday off, *you do the work of twenty bees* Menno once said, I was up to three dollars when I left for Kitchener, housework there paid five dollars a week, married Herb and had a boy, didn't live past a year old, buried him in Woodlands, then took care of Herb's Ma for six years, washed bedding every day, you'd think I was back at Menno's, only old people they don't smell sweet like babies, then she died and I went to work at the BF Gooderich with Herb, it was wartime, not too many men around, stayed on into the fifties, it was good money and Herb and me, we made a lifetime of it, before we knew, we were on pension and moved back home, Ma and Pa were dead, Menno too, we bought this farm up by the sideroad, now I have time to tell this to anyone who wants to listen.

