

Call Off The Cavalry: I'm Sorry I Squished You
Keayva Mitchell

A procession of ants have invaded my home
They scamper and scurry everywhere
even places there are no nourishment
Which leads me to believe they have invaded for another purpose entirely
So let's get one thing straight right now;
The food, the furniture, the toilet is all fair game-
But the books are mine
and mine alone.

I killed one the other day
Squished you right between two fingers
then rinsed you down the drain and let it run.
Now the entire procession crawls around my bedroom
Planting tiny flags to mark their territory in this brave new world.
I observe the scene every day with a wary eye.
(But I don't need to worry. They got the memo;
Feelers off my pages.)
There are more of them than they are of me
So my fingertips don't dare crush another.
But just to be a bitch my fingertips pluck the little flags from the carpet
whenever I can.

I'm petty that way.

At night, I lie awake for hours
Fighting with everything I have not to fall
asleep just yet.
An ant or two or seven crawls up my leg
And I bite my lip and wait.
I heard somewhere that ants eat dead bodies
But how can I be certain that the ants will know the difference
between slumber and its eternal counterpart?
How will I know when marching becomes nibbling?
I suspected another motive for invasion
And what's better than a *hundredandcough* pound source of sustenance
laying there in such a pretty, pretty package?
And I suppose I should just give in-
Death by ants may just be inevitable.
But so far they have not nibbled
Most likely choosing to keep me on the edge of suspense every night.

(They're petty that way, too.)

Somewhere just beyond my overrun apartment
There is singing. A celebration. Life.
But I won't let myself feel it.
I make myself feel only the scurry, the scamper, the scuttle
Of a million little feet mapping my body
And discovering my life in a way I haven't allowed myself.
Beneath the stars, I close my eyes and hold my breath.
Still my chest.
Waiting,
 Waiting...

Somewhere just beyond, a blackbird sings its song
For no one in particular.