



HONEY OF YOUR HIVE

by Daniel J. Bressler, MD, FACP

REFERENCES TO HONEY as food and medicine go back to the earliest stories in human history. Cave paintings in Spain from 17,000 years ago show one of our ancestors taking honey from a hive as bees buzz menacingly about.

In today's medicine, honey has emerged as a wound dressing par excellence. I use it in my office practice for burns and abrasions, and in my nursing home practice for decubitus ulcers. A recent review article in *Burns* in 2016 — "The Effects of Honey Compared to Silver Sulfadiazine for the Treatment of Burns" — suggests that honey may be superior to a standard topical antibiotic for sterilizing wounds and hastening healing time. The authors from a 2016 article in *Journal of Functional Foods* found that honey had potent antibacterial qualities and also increased fibroblast proliferation and, through activation of antioxidant signaling pathways, protected mitochondrial function.

Bees use honey to store energy for the winter when the pollen that they eat during the blooming seasons is not available. Honey is a product of their activity and also a protector of their future. In the poem "Honey of Your Hive," I riff off the bee's relationship with honey, imagining that inside of each of us is something that is both the outcome of our lives and a resource that we can draw on when our own winter season comes. **SDP**



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Honey of Your Hive

*When the cawing crows are gathering in circles overhead
And you think you may not make it out alive
Turn your thoughts away from what will happen once you're dead
And reach into the honey of your hive.*

*When the rolling dice of circumstance have snake eyes for your fear
And the faithful few just do the shuck and jive
Turn your full attention to the person in the mirror
Remembering the honey of your hive.*

*When you're feeling like a phony in public word and deed
And your résumé seems padded and contrived
Ask yourself explicitly for whom and what you'd bleed
Emboldened by the honey of your hive.*

*When you're floundering on surfaces afraid to dive down deep
Waiting for some message to arrive
Find the hidden place you store those promises to keep
It's there within the honey of your hive.*

*If you're going through the motions of your day-to-day routine
Though you know this show is coming to you live
Call to mind the crucial contribution you have been
Stored within the honey of your hive.*

*Forget the critics' arguments, forget the hateful claims
Those aren't the gifts to cherish and archive
Remember in their place affection's warmest flames
Glowing in the honey of your hive.*

*So never give up easily — no don't give up at all.
Use everything you've mastered to revive
The specified elixir that will heal you when you fall
Is safe within the honey of your hive.*