# THE ANTS

# LES FIGUES

## SAWAKO NAKAYASU

"I KNOW HOW THESE ANTS FEEL..."

The Ants is a study not of, but through, ants. In a dashing sequence of prose pieces, Sawako Nakayasu takes the human to the level of the ant, and the ant to the level of the human. Prima facie, *The Ants* is a catalogue of insect observations and observations of insects. But the exposé of insect life humbles and disrupts the myopia that is human life, where experience is seen in its most raw and animal form, and human "nouveau-ambitious" and "free-thinking" lifestyles become estranged, uncovered, and humbled. Found in the soups of dumplings and remembered in childhood vignettes, these ants trail through what Nakayasu writes as the "industry of survival," exploring interfaces of love, ambition, and strategy. The danger is not in sentiment, but rather, in a gash, a wall, an argument, an intention. Is it more lonely to be crushed into the core of a non-mechanical pencil, to be isolated in the safety of home, or to "find" "it" "all" at the very very last moment? *The Ants* is the distance, the break, the tenuous wilderness between exoskeleton and endoskeleton. and Nakayasu puts her finger on it, and it, and it.

The Ants Sawako Nakayasu Global Poetics Series Fiction, Literature | \$17.00 ISBN: 978-1-934254-54-7 Binding: Softcover, Perfect | 95 Pages

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### ABOUT SAWAKO NAKAYASU

SAWAKO NAKAYASU writes and translates poetry, and also occasionally creates performances and short films. Her most recent books are *The Ants* (Les Figues) and a translation of *The Collected Poems of Sagawa Chika* (Canarium Books, forthcoming 2014). Other books include *Texture Notes* (Letter Machine Editions, 2010), *Hurry Home Honey* (Burning Deck, 2009), and *Mouth: Eats Color—Sagawa Chika Translations, Anti-translations, & Originals*, which is a multilingual work of both original and translated poetry. She has received fellowships from the NEA and PEN, and her own work has been translated into Japanese, Norwegian, Swedish, Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

"We have plenty to learn from the numerous ants. Sawako Nakayasu—writer, antologist, Baudelaire's sister—turns daily life inside out and upside down then puts it into perfect little boxes. Here we follow the lines of black legged, syntactical units—the words—as they cross and they tickle the heart of the matter with us."

—John Granger

#### PRAISE FOR SAWAKO NAKAYASU

"Nakayasu's talent for packing cultural and linguistic (mis)information into sound-sense lines recalls Gertrude Stein and Harryette Mullen."

- Ellen Welcker, The Quarterly Conversation

"Inventive, quirky, daring, and intelligent. Nakayasu has a generous and novel approach to meaning."

—Laura Wright, American Book Review

"It could be said that language is a reflection of its correlating culture and that experience is growing increasingly cross-cultural, leaving language a bit crippled to conduit experience accurately. Sawako Nakayasu isn't phased by the limitations of language, she just goes ahead and uses all the languages at her disposal and it feels like a relief."

—Saehee Cho, HTMLGIANT

