

* * * jessica smith * * *

butterflies





Summer 1988 or 1994, Homewood, Alabama; Papilionidae

how long does it take for the memory of the way your hand felt in mine

to fade

Nonnie :

I remember

the raw paw

arriving at your

screen door

old flesh like crumply

leather book-cover brown

wood walls

the blush of heat :

(Alabama summer)

palm against

the doorbell

and

palm the

doorknob

pads beneath the fingers

larger than mine

housebrowns

mismatched

rings

match

I see

the dead leaves :

her

of

on the wall

like

an overheated summer

swallowtail

a vertical doormat blue and

stretched out

black with tail trails like

: a bruised princess

March 1994, Mountain Brook Junior High, Alabama; Hesperinae

waiting
for my mother
on a dapple-shadowed
spring afternoon

I met Dixon
he (first)
I knew him
before I met him
there

I knew him
held
perched
on my finger
a brown-grey moth
kissing my salty skin

I felt brown eyes lighting on me
like a goddess of butterflies
There in the yellow-green glow of March
were
moths on my bare shoulders and in my hair
in my heart

lattice
ironwork
bench
sat
the love
of my
life.
I knew
him
already
I met him
then
even
fluttering

July 2004, Mjalton, Sweden; Polyommatae

An island off Sweden's High Coast
archipelago
trickling into
the Baltic Sea a sapphire wafer
between
flowers—copper pilgrims ripples to the sun
islands
one island
more over
the
stalking still with a camera
orange wings on orange petals
drugged with fullness
sit still
flash
film-fossilizes
the ephemeral
a blink of a wing
a flash of ruddy copper
captured
for
in
an instant

just—spring 2002, El Rosario, Mexico; Danainae

second
s of (color, flying ed th is is
urn
the fly t black)
phase fly bodies tonalities time
phrase shifts winged syntax pale captured in volume
but es
yellow- a sca l
morphed s pace a r o space
monarchs abrupt f on the sad ground,
quiet swarm turf flies patterns black- spotted spots make a language
litterin path ile pilgr i on the grave ground,
fra g orange im like pile
burnt age
ment rug- s
heaps of dead colors scales
ed

Author's Note:

Like *blueberries*, *butterflies* attempts to record the vast and shifting virtual architecture of memory within the constraints of a small space, a standard font, and the limits imposed by the software. The spatiality of memory is further explored on larger sites in my book, *Organic Furniture Cellar* (Outside Voices 2006).

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Colophon:

butterflies was published in an edition of 50 copies in July, 2006. Text is in Garamond; cover is in Lilith and Lisbon Cursive. Paper is Pegasus Digital.

BIG GAME BOOKS
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The book cover features a repeating pattern of green leaves and light pink flowers. Two large yellow butterflies with black markings are positioned in the top-left and bottom-right corners. A central rectangular label contains the author's name and the title.

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