

butterflies

smallpoems by Jessica Smith

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 crumple		
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	

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).

Font within is Garamond. Title font is Vladimir Script. Excerpts from *butterflies* were published in *Drill* (#6, South Bend 2005) An earlier version of "02.2002" was published as "The Corpse of Time" in *Antennae* (#4, Chicago 2003). Thanks to LB and JS.

www.outsidevoices.org

March 1994, Mountain Brook Junior High, Alabama; *Hesperiinae*

waiting
for my mother
on a dapple-shadowed
spring afternoon

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

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

July 2004, Mjalton, Sweden; *Polyommata*

An island off Sweden's High Coast
archipelago
trickling into
the Baltic Sea

between flowers—copper pilgrims
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: Danaïnae

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