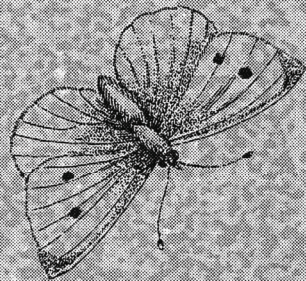
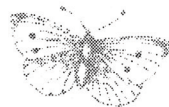
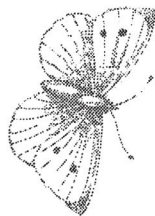


Saffron Wings



Gail Sher



A series of text labels arranged in a descending diagonal line from the top-left to the bottom-right. The labels represent the stages of a butterfly's life cycle and its behaviors. The labels are: Soaring, Courting, Mating, Egg-Laying, Hatching (as larva), Pupating, Emerging (as butterfly), Basking, Nectaring, Surviving, Weather, Predators, Humans, Migrating, Roosting, and Overwintering.

Soaring
Courting
Mating
Egg-Laying
Hatching (as larva)
Pupating
Emerging (as butterfly)
Basking
Nectaring
Surviving
Weather
Predators
Humans
Migrating
Roosting
Overwintering

teeny alpine

z i g z a g g i n g u p g l i d i n g d o w n

no two!

no five!

in the iris-colored clouds

big blue butterfly

past my eyes and

out

to

sea

poof . . .

your lacy path

over the vast

mountainface

rockslide

frisky lady
around the cow
across the ribgrass



tippling with dew

painted lady

in the understory's half-light

monarch:

spearing the sun as it sets

on the pylons

scarlet wings

in the brewing storm

scuttle by the lek

after the chase

arrested by a flower

in the verdant gulch

behind the shrubs

at the field's verge

caught by the fiery sun

balanced on a sunflower

her wings — encased in his —

grow quiet

mating over

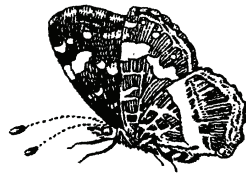
she drops to the ground

dark and soft with loam

stinging nettle leaf . . .

glued underneath

her small pile of eggs



curled beneath a bud
her abdomen —
caressed by the lowering sun

swollen streambed:

depositing her egg

on its cavernous bank

gravid nymph

grasping a leaf

with your claw-like toes

surveying a stem of hairs

its plump prickly body

atop a creamy egg-case

nibbling the blade

chewing, excreting . . .

whorls of leaves

wandering instar

on the highway's dusky shoulder

paused . . .

o caterpillar . . .

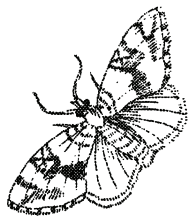
in your wake

a sump of leaves

windless day —

dangling from a web

a sliver of bark



monarch pupa . . .

swaddled in green

dotted with gold

iridescent checker

your prenatal profile

etched evermore deeply . . . darkly . . .

skiff of snow:

on the barbed wire

a pupa blows

a monarch pupa cracks —

tiny ichneumon wasps

scramble into sunlight

unfurling

in

a

wings

shaft

gossamer

of

light

waving long legs

dragging itself through the widening split

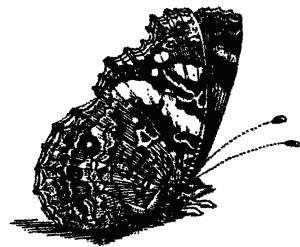
in the pre-dawn light

from treelimb to violet

little imago's

almost-somersault

chestnut wings
warming them
in the morning sun



high noon

lime-green sulphurs

mud-puddle in the canyon dust

an arctic basks —
wings tilted toward
the salmon-pink sky

the boy dozes . . .

perched on his fly rod

a red admiral

horse-mint ripe . . .

a din of silverspots

in the noontime hush

landing on a spear of rush
bending the rush —
your rattling wings

satyr:

your darts

around the stand of Turk's cap

little snout

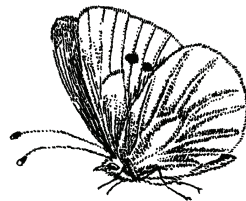
beyond the jetty

flanked by flowers

gust of wind —

a hairstreak tips

on its maple leaf perch



sliced by the squall

wings litter

the dirty sand

rain

bends the umbel . . .

the fritillary below

after the storm —

jinking about the

leeward flank of the dune

hovering around the bloodroot —
fresh billmark
across her wing

reeking of the sea

facing the sea

fat white grub in its beak

eaglet

ripping the soldier

free from the asphalt

spitting out the Queen

the yellow bird's

shrill call

ghostly wings —
an orange-black heap
against the curb



slipping on the scree

her wings smeared

my fingers powdery

still drinking the phlox

beneath my net . . .

a swallowtail

August moon
overflowing the jar
with its wire-mesh mouth

softly scudding clouds . . .

a gaggle of sightseers

points at the roving flock

from the prow of the ferry
watching them spin ever faster
over the bay

flat pink sea:

saffron wings

flutter over the prawn boat

cold snap:

riding a tailwind

a male skipper

winter sun —

pale wings

flutter about the woodpile



following the drift ice
grazing the coast . . .
pallid overwintering blue

whirling with the tide
in the shallow's
flattened stubble

twilight . . .

fast asleep

in the silver birch

| snow melts . . .

| the fir tree sags

| from the sleeping flock

behind the storm-window

latticed with ice . . .

dangling threadbare wings

winter's end:

curled along the window's ledge

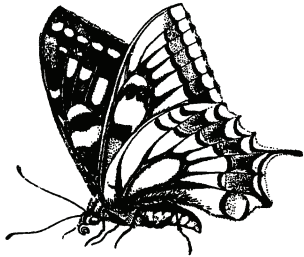
its brittle body

under ice

under snow

a gracile wing

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