

Monarch and Viceroy

by Nettie Farris

Though the lily lasts only a day it is quickly replaced
by another grass grows taller making hay and the girl
who comes down from the hilltop each day to make daisy
chains and crowns and necklaces sometimes she uses clover is imperceptibly
molting look closely and you can see her in a field of milkweed
afire in her colorful flowers she is studded with the fluttering
of butterflies she is Queen of the Milkweed see her circling there
in her crown turning and turning her two small palms reaching up
toward the sun it is hard to believe she will ever experience
failure summer will come to its rightful conclusion the milkweed field
will fill with brown pods of white cottony blossoms and the monarchs will leave
following the wave of their great migration the girl will pass the field
and arrive at the pond where she will startle the frogs a red-winged blackbird
will catch her eye as it lands on a reed or so it will seem she will see
the goldenrod in its prime she will see a single orange and black
butterfly and think it a monarch though they have left for the season.