

The Lepidopterist's Lover

by Nettie Farris

At first, I must have thought,
 like a young wife,
 that I could change him,
 distract his attention
 from the field,
 away from forewing
 and hindwing, toward me.
 What other choice
 did I have, loving a scientist?
 The competition proved
 insurmountable;
 I was a diminishing species,
 though not a collectable one,
 and he was busy—
 collecting, classifying, controlling
 the experiment for variables.
 He became obsessed
 with big colorful wings
 of the rain forest.
Blue Morpho. Hawkmoth. Birdwing.
 Then he moved to the arctic tundra.
Hecla Sulphur.
 Then the prairie, the American plains.
Regal Fritillary.
 Soon he'll be traveling to Egypt,
 sacrificing his life, his love,
 for the *Plain Tiger*,
 despite its unpalatability.
 If I were a White
 Witch Moth,
 I might metamorphose
 myself into bee balm,
 milkweed,
 lichen or loam, gritty sand.