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by

Joshua Drake

Caterpillars climb, clinging to leaf-scrap,
tracing a trail, in a trance-like march,
seeking a high place suicidal.
They're all hell-bound. Hateful Venus
goads them higher, gonads her tool-box.
Psyche searched out (similar her fate)
Pluto's portal, punished by Venus
to reclaim beauty closed in a casket—
a boxful of beauty. From a beech tree-limb
caterpillars dive, caught in their free-fall,
saved by their spindles, sewn to the tree limb—
botched suicide. Psyche desp'rate
climbed a cliff-face. As she clings its side,
wind-blown and frightened, her frame exposed
as rags unravel, the rocks feel her,
pressed prayerfully. Presently the cliff-face,
by her touch enlivened, longs to help her.
“If it's to hell's-gate you go (hear me out dear!)
by a leap to your death-bed, don't go there that way.
I know the safe way, the secret gate
that swings both ways.” In a brown death-shroud
caterpillars sleep, encased captives.
They've opened the boxful— a bad surprise.
Sleep overtakes them. Mitosis flays.
chromosomes are sundered in a sudden ballet
in a silent darkness. Similarly Psyche
sleeps on the dirt-floor— dismal décor.
Dappling dust flecks dim her ivory.
Pale plenitude turns pied but lovely.
Gravity, greedy, with the ground conspires
to hold her body. Bound vertical,
like a stone out of place— plumb-line for the plant life—
in the dark dangling, in a dun-hued lozenge,
an explosive Fineness with a force to fissure
dilates a crease. Chrysalides break.
Faceless Fineness, fingering the corpse,

Your nail incised the soft side-wall.
No one noticed. Noble Psyche,
a soul imploded, displayed naked
as Venus's victim, (vain to defy Her!)
moribund in sleep, a mute beauty,
lazily reaches! Righteousness woke her,
winged and youthful, with a wide embrace.
He'd won her freedom— wonderful to say.
Just Jupiter judged in the court room,
heard from Venus her verity, vain.
Eros o'erruled her righteous in his case.
He flies silent. Psyche side-long,
grips him for safety grafted to his side.
Faceless Fineness, fugitive unfrightened,
You cradle Psyche when chrysalides break.

MARIPOSA

by

David Sparenberg

to be small and delicate
with beauty of a dreamlike bug
to spread one's wings in beauty
giving color to the morning
to breathe so small and tender
sighing
that only angels may
feel the brushing whisper, songlike
in the creative tempest
of cosmic wind
to be the red
poppy in the field of eros
and to blush with ecstasy
to be flight's velvet
and the crazy work
of alchemy
to go away, to come again
in micro-feathers
and poems of memory