

Butterflies are the souls of dead babies

by Diane Becker

When he leaves, she collects all the caterpillars she can find at the bottom of the garden and sits cross-legged in the shade of the buddleia. She makes a hollow in her skirt and drops in the smooth green, the furry black, the red, spotted and the spiny ones and watches as they wriggle round in the fabric. She feeds them blades of grass and daisy heads, strokes their backs and watches their bodies ripple. She rocks backwards and forwards as they clamber over her arms and up towards her breasts, then nurses them — as you might a baby — suckling them until they pupate.

