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Rich Ives

Innocence Folds into Innocence and Violates Itself Once More *Reddish Hairstreak Butterfly*

We know so much more about what we believe causes feeling that we seem to stop in considering it before we even actually arrive. Does feeling ever become aware of such evasions? Does it have a life of its own that separates from its causes? I believe it does.

I know, for example, that I have often enjoyed humor, not only without fully understanding why, but with a willingness to follow it to some end I do not care about or expect to be related in any way I can understand to what caused it. Sometimes it is this disconnection that helps create even greater humor.

To question an emotion is often to change or even remove it. Is there in this the equivalent to some bodily function that wishes to deny us understanding of it, lest it lose its power and authority over us?

You see, Rupert has been studying psychology and feeling too much. He's keeping a journal. His tail twitches, dull and tawny-green with a small dark stigma, as it would be if he had fully matured. Maturity is a country for dreams, and Rupert wishes to live there waking. His older sister's is already enviable there, rounder, darker brown with a dark spot row along her hind margin.

Ah, but both the real and the imagined tails have a red-capped spot next to them. Both are tan with a broken thin red line and two fine rows of white dashes outside the lines, and a small, mostly black, spot nearby. But who would you believe if Rupert told you this? Even his mother laughed and closed her eyes and pretended to be looking, and she couldn't see it.

So shut up about Rupert and go eat some mallow and make some babies. You'll be surprised how often this can happen. Try visiting the deciduous forest clearings, the tracks and edges, of Brazil, north to southern Texas and St. Vincent. This is how you get both successful and widespread in the American tropics.

And here I am now, delighting in some thought-initiated way, speckled with less elusive feelings, enjoying in an entirely different manner, describing and vicariously engaging, even though the object and the avatar are really the same in feeling in a lapsed manner, time having already altered the feeling at attention if not entirely destroying it.

Ah, poor Rupert. Rupert the dreamer. Rupert the self-important. Rupert the brilliant empty thought and not the body. Rupert the patient. Rupert the untaken.

A Little Gothic Egg Tale About Children Bowling *Regal Fritillary Butterfly*

Hermann and Otto are very large. They both have red-orange frontal presentations with blue-black spots and white-dotted black margins, with two rows of light spots in the rear, (cream-white on their wives) and an outer rust-orange row (missing on their wives) and orange at the base. Underneath they're a deep olive-brown with many silver spots. Their wives are larger. They know how to tell scary stories and still their petite eggs are tan and fragile, laid in the late summer.

Okay, it's a joke they all share. The eggs stay inside and only come out as children, which they have plenty of, two boys and three girls in each family (yes, they joke about planning this but didn't even know each other for the first three). The handed down clothing is mostly yellowish-brown with black blotches and lines that probably once were yellowish band names. All but two have many spines on their chokers, some silver on the back and orange caution stripes on the sides. They've all been known to sleep in these outfits. Hermann says they *overwinter* in them and then go practically naked all summer.

The Goth kids (seven of the ten) eat violets and cavort sullenly in wet meadows, woodland areas and moist tallgrass prairies, especially the virgin grasslands. They email mini-films with noir plots to like-minded gremlins in Manitoba and eastern Montana, east to southern Ontario and Maine, south to eastern Colorado, northern Arkansas and west North Carolina, where they have look-alikes they insert into the videos freely. Only club members really know who's who.

Otto is into Goth a bit himself though the children don't actually welcome him. His is a different club and he's always trying to interest Hermann, saying, *The habitat is rapidly disappearing*, which Hermann doubts. I'm not jumping in the bogwater no matter how much you whine, says Hermann while he uses a contraption like a proboscis he invented to harvest nectar from his garden of milkweed and thistle plants. It's a little heavy, so he rigged up to fit a helmet he wears that embarrasses even the Goth kids.

Have you guessed it? Hermann and Otto met bowling and they still attend the ritual regularly though neither of them has achieved a 300 game. They do get asked to all the competitions, especially when wagers are allowed. One of Otto's Goth girls came along one night and bowled a perfect game. She quit while she was ahead despite bribery of several kinds from her father. She had been secretly bowling with her boyfriend, but told no one. She wanted to become a physicist.

Fresh Grass
Riding's Satyr Butterfly

Loan me your certainties and fly me, Eujenijus. All the boys have gone hairy and needing. It's breeding season always in the patterns underneath, which are muted and speckled and come out when they go in, one at a time, with periods of sadness between. Our own little dictator orders us to suffer. He needs no henchmen or excuses. He needs no celebratory weather.

The weather and the wind invite us in. Their defense is not civil, yet Eujenijus saves them for tomorrow, saves us because we cling. The grass tastes like that and leans over, too grayish brown, too yellow in the eyes. Like the fingers of a gloved hand watching its other fingers assembling on a forewing, pale banded visionaries containing two white eyes and no more sense of touch.

I'll buy a new stumble of mice then, so that under my feet there will be reason and further under my feet two villages, and the muscles that attach to them. Already I have two books with new mice in them. They fall out when I read. I'm still carving a Lithuanian nose flute, so that I might cel-

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celebrate my cheese there, as a side dish. The goats allow that. The goats lick your eyes so that you might see something unexpected. They don't need to understand what they offer.

The way you look at the world is the world. Escape requires fresh vision and trouble. A cup of tea merely drowns me in another cup of tea.

The grass is best on the mountaintops, but the mountaintops are best beneath an ocean, where shallow breathing is on the way to reverence.

Now you must climb further to reach the bottom. This is the only way heaven can work. The night watchman arrives, smoking. He is lit from the inside. He is dangerous and hairy. The goats love to remove his soot with their tongues. They are not afraid, but you are. You are not a goat, and the fire is not one of yours.

Hurry now. Release the mice. Dampen their wings. Breathe.

Don't Close Your Eyes Until You Awaken

Rita Blue Butterfly

All those night watchmen sleeping now to keep an eye on your dreams, they'll steal something if you let them.

Love is a rabbit, multiplying so fast that what he births will be eaten by others. You have to get away from these rabbits to love them. You have to take one with you, under your hat. You should pull him out and play with him before he gets darker. His snowshoes confiscate his hairiness and encourage moving south to take a better idea from its wreath and burn it.

The male rabbit, before he descends, is light silver to bright blue with dark margins, the female brown and prominently marked with sub-marginal orange, extending well forward and south.

Both fall seasonally to a whitish dominance, edging near stones to gray-brown with many small black dots. They leave any oranges behind. The subsequent rows of black dots lack metallic scaling. There is no room in love for dragon breath.

There must be eggs and there must be buckwheat. You can find them together in the deserts and juniper-pinyon woodlands, the rolling prairie grasslands, of the Southwest and southern Wyoming. You'll have to be patient at least once a year. You'll have to come out of your shell again to understand them.

The night watchmen are not lovers but dreamers. They keep track of what's real. They clean their nails and dust off their hats. They are ready to confess, but they still fear heaven.

All those night rabbits hopping over wet caresses and taking the best parts along, do they really know where they're going? Do the watchmen even know what they are protecting?

This all happens inside the rabbit's blue icing, warm to the touch but not touched by anyone who has chosen to let his body awaken by itself. Those rabbits are not given to screaming like babies but to the darkness that has learned not to exaggerate although many who spend too much time studying it can no longer see this. All its little white evenings are hidden from those who would close their eyes while they are still sleeping.

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Only Waiting *River Skimmer*

Eyes bright and matching along the larger streams and lakes, you may move quickly through the hovering air. Offer the air.

Offer the darkness that you need not cling to its possession, but share it with yourself.

Let your influences turn that you might be shaded, blackish with yellow markings on thorax and abdomen.

Offer your coins to my enemies that they might see what it means to be replaced.

Offer your houses to the future that the present might suffer.

Let distinctions suffer similarities and beat their wings so as to hold where one has no reason to hold.

Offer the starter's gun that some invisible death might send you on ahead of the others, who heard only the greeting of a child's game.

Offer your beginning that your middle might fatten. Offer your end that your beginning might not leave you.

Fatten your middle with one place to another that you might have something to explain that contributes to the greater hunger.

Offer speech that a melody may be heard where there is none.

Offer your stone to my forehead that it might open.

Let the lining of your coat, donned at the end of the lost race to keep you from illness, disintegrate. Let it reduce the distance between you and some other end.

Eyes closed and gone singular, you may see yourself separately. You may move slowly and take in the time between, holding there and experiencing what once was only waiting.