

## Butterflies: Reflections, Tales, and Verse

**Hermann Hesse**

Kales Press (May 26, 2023)

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Hermann Hesse wrote iconic, pensive novels, but he was also a butterfly collector. In *Butterflies*, a charming book for nature and literature lovers, he marvels over the creatures up close.

Excerpts concerning butterflies, selected from Hesse's complete works, are reminders to take pleasure in fleeting beauty. Hesse's sensual fascination with the natural world is contagious. We see insects in detail; we see landscapes and characters fully, too, drawn from Hesse's childhood and time in Switzerland and Sri Lanka. And the book's short prose passages (immediate and effortless), intermittent poems (that maintain elegant rhymes), and lovely, fitting reproductions of the historical, hand-colored engravings that Hesse loved add up to a gorgeous anthology that makes good use of white space. "The Giant Peacock Moth" is a perfect, moving fable, centering a memory that is still replete with gestures and emotions many years after it took place.

Sharing biographical and entomological insights, *Butterflies* is a short but satisfying book—leaving audiences feeling as lucky to encounter it as Hesse felt about meeting his winged subjects.

MEREDITH GRAHL COUNTS (May / June 2023)

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