

Metamorphosis 7

by [Pamela Todd](#) in the [August 14, 2019](#) issue

Dearest instar,
Larva of my own heart,
You, who have never been comfortable in your own skin:
For days, I have watched you
gnawing your way through my garden,
stripping the milkweed down to bare stems;
sloughing off your former selves,
those old and outworn garments,
trusting your hunger, your devouring need,
to be your guide and strength.

When the time comes to leave,
take only the memory of all you have survived.
Seek some lofty outpost of solitude and silence.
Weave a silken lifeline you can cling to,
then fall backward.

Dangle, inverted and alone,
a perfect martyr to hope,
writhing and convulsing,
while all that has protected and enclosed you
splits open and falls away:
your thin striped cloak,
your useless antennae,
your unseeing eyes.

It is neither dance nor death,
this wrenching and twisting that grips you,
but the work you must do to be reborn.
Surrender, not striving, is your task now,
for the daughter of resistance is pain.
When you feel the life you thought was yours

dissolve into a formless void,
let it be not sacrifice,
but benediction.

For holy is the power that formed you,
And holy the mystery that will lift you from your dark sleep,
Transfigured.