

## The Orchid and the Wasp

by [Josh Dugat](#) in the [June 2023](#) issue

*As the male wasp nuzzles forward in his attempts to mate,  
he butts the pollinia, which stick to him like yellow horns.*

— David Attenborough, *The Private Life of Plants*

She does not promise that her purple fur  
is fur, or vouch the truth of her perfume.  
Such details don't consume the bachelor  
who consummately longs to be the groom.  
The honey bees ply less impassioned trips  
across her garden of delights. So do flies,  
who neither fall for ultraviolet lips  
nor slip upon the hem of her disguise.

But the wasp's desire blinds. He thrusts  
the hips of his decoy mistress, heedless  
of her will. And she, foreseeing of his lust,  
resolves to use his rutting head in secret.  
It isn't that he gets what he deserves.  
The orchid bides so beautifully, it hurts.