

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Caterpillar

By George Kalogeris

It crawled around in a jar beside my bed.
I fed it blades of grass through puncture holes
In the hammered lid. And then it was all wrapped up

Like a mummy, and stayed that way for thirteen days.
For once like a dream come true I woke with a start,
Turned on my lamp, and there it was, as real

As a washed-out jar of Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise:
That black and orange Monarch. Before I knew
The polysyllabic unfurling of glorious words

Like *lepidoptera* and *chrysalis*
I saw how he kept his velvet wings folded, and but
For the slightest quiver, perfectly still. By the light

Of my reading lamp, that butterfly born in the dark.
Call it an emblem of the immortal soul
Departing the body's frail, discarded cocoon.

But all I knew was that breathless bell-jar hush
When everyone else in our house was sound asleep,
And the Monarch had yet to spread his tremulous wings.