

Asclepias

Thank you for standing guard during the years of happiness.

Your milk stuck to my fingers and stained my clothes. Indeed, I split open your pods to reach your coma, and spread sequin-like seeds by pulling your silk—unknowingly participating in your dissemination.

M and I spent one summer hanging you upside down to feed our chickens, unaware that the steroid molecules in your latex were slowly poisoning them (the same story goes for your medicinal virtues, well-known to those who were here first; we were equally ignorant of your/their sapience).

I kept track of the plump black-and-white-striped caterpillars that roamed your stems, searched for the jade and gold-beaded chrysalises hanging from your leaves.

What a balm to know that after too long a wait, you once again fulfill your role as the host plant of monarch butterflies.

My queens, you rise above it all.