

## A Short Field Guide

to



or

*Her-stories (mostly) of love, loss... and more love*

by

**HIPKISS**

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*Behind industrial estates, alongside water courses or on top of dry hillocks, in the corners of a quarter section of irrigated farmland in Kansas, on the edge of a Kurgan mound on the Pontic Steppe, enclaved in a pristine SSSI site in lowland England, or on our little patch of land in SW France, a multitude of unwitnessed stories unfurl.*

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### LARGE WORKS

1435 *Cuscuta y Lulu*

A dodder plant kills its own host and subsequently dies without going to seed. It is spring; the willow warbler whistles her brief but sweet and merry song across the valley. She's moving north. There is solastalgia too, for the time we met, first shared nature-talk, and exchanged our first gifts: 'Unknown Pleasures' for Alpha, 'Chelsea Girl' for Christopher... back in the early 80s, when we all took abundance for granted.

1436 *Emus of Hirta*

A cow pie bakes in the summer sun, attracting insect life that in turn feeds the fast-flying rove beetle. To her, the pie is a black, bejeweled platter; she wiggles her 'tail' in anticipation of a successful hunt. The sounds of the wintry mistle thrush are long gone, but tell-tale signs of their feeding on jealously guarded mistletoe are scattered in the meadow grass. We hope next January they return once more to sigh in the poplar tree.

1437 *Myrmica and Arion*

In Occitanie, France, and in the absence of wild thyme, large blue butterflies lay their eggs on wild marjoram. Each emerging instar wants to gorge herself on as much herb as she can before entering a nest of *Myrmica* ants, in which she hopes to be accepted as their queen. If she

is not eaten immediately, she bribes them with a secretion and plans to consume every baby they make. The soundtrack is the Ukrainian folk song, "Shum", by Go\_A, backdrop Chernobyl, the ritualistic anthem building to a finale worthy of Prokofiev... 'sowing, blowing, the sky knows, go to the sound. Don't stop, go...'

1438 *Spinosa (she knows Sloe)*

It seems the woodlark can be heard at any time; her lilting, melancholic tune breaks the silence of the day. A mechanical cutter has smashed up a blackthorn hedge; it will grow back stronger, but a rare Iberian grey shrike's impaled insects are scattered on the ground, reminding us of the time we stole a caterpillar from a jackdaw in Cornwall. Some unidentified pest of the bush has left only a few green leaves. The sunflower petals have blown in from the edge of a Kurgan mound after a storm.

1439 *Cossus and Dipsacus*

It's debatable whether drowning insects in the teasel's water reserves renders it carnivorous, but the felling of its stems, pushed over by a mother wolf and her pups, has released its victims from certain death. A small swarm of goat moths have emerged as adults, ready to infest a living oak's trunk, from where they may kill it. A greenfinch has been pulled apart by the sparrowhawk, but a small middle-spotted woodpecker hops above unnoticed.

1443 *Clemátide y la Serpiente*

The clematis has lost a lot of flowers this year - naughty Haworth pug caterpillars have drilled holes in each one and made their home for the season - but the surviving seed heads still half-conceal a snake slough. She may now live in our roof-space, above the bedroom (something does, in any case). The carrot-like heads attract a swarm of some type of beetle, but we don't know the species. We're on the edge of the desert, in an unknown territory.

1444 *Helianthus in Steppe*

In the west, we all eventually turn back to the east; the countless heads of sunflowers, after their initial sungazing dance as children, are no exception. They attract the white-tailed bumblebee, but also a plethora of pests intent on crop annihilation. Autumn storms waste seeds to the ground, left to be gleaned by wintering songbirds. Meanwhile, we buy a ton of the harvest every year to feed the community that shares our garden. On the steppe, Lapland and snow buntings from the far north mix with skylark.

1445 *Soil Drench: Elaeis and Psyche*

Some crops, those not soaked in pesticides, can be devastated by oil palm bagworm moth caterpillars. Everyone knows the monocrop is responsible for rainforest devastation, but there is growing awareness that a more sustainable intercropping with secondary forest growth could vastly improve interconnectivity and help diffuse the war between nature and profit margin. For now, out of agro-industrial landscapes, other caterpillars of the Psychidae family harmlessly make their merry way all over the place, carrying their houses made of sticks. The adult females remain at home after pupating. The males have wings that are the shape of small, pale brown

hearts; with eating no longer a possibility for either sex, living is just a question of a visit to someone else's home in the quest for love.

*1447 Atropos is in love! with Solanum!*

The biggest and arguably most beautiful hawkmoth in Europe, just flown in from Africa, she will find a potato patch to lay her eggs. Later, she may offer to any budding lepidopterists one of the most enthralling moments of their life: with her green and yellow caterpillars still busily munching on the poisonous leaves, battered and vibrating in warning, she sits and dies in your hand. Her survival to this point is already almost miraculous...

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**SMALL WORKS**

*Nature Morte aux Violettes*  
*Still Life with Violets*

*Some true fritillary butterflies of the Nearctic and Palearctic realms search exclusively for a single genus of plants, Viola, on which to lay their eggs.*

*1448 High Brown/ Low Scrub*

A high brown fritillary searches under south-facing patches of bracken where her eggs will survive the winter. Scrub has low status among landowners, but it is an important dynamic landscape connecting farmland and forest.

*1449 Aphrodite through Blue Stem*

An Aphrodite fritillary crossing tallgrass prairie has her egg load raided by a predator, but she still has plenty of time, maybe even a year, to follow rough tracts into mountain woodland edges or get lost in Saskatchewan badlands.

*1450 Small Pearl in Pine Barren*

The small pearl-bordered fritillary loses her way amongst the sandy dunes of the Atlantic coast.

*1451 Callippe Lost in Rubber Rabbit*

Callippe silverspots search the high points of San Francisco to party and find yellow pansies for the kids. Endangered, they were immortalized by Warhol.

1452 *Carole in Charleston*

Often mistakenly spelt without an 'e', Carole's fritillary, named after the actress Carole Lombard, looks over Las Vegas from the Charleston Mountains. Unfortunately, one has strayed from the forest edge and become a meal for an owlfly.

1453 *Castanea and Diana*

Rare Diana fritillaries liberally - seemingly carelessly - scatter their eggs over vegetation. Of those that hatch, the caterpillars will bury themselves in the earth of the chestnut forests of South Carolina.

1454 *Atlantis in the Singer Tract (pushed into swamps)*

Pushed out of Memphis and forced to end her days in coastal swamps, an ivory-billed woodpecker sings only to Atlantis fritillaries, who are also in the wrong place at the wrong time.

1455 *Napaea, Queen of the Far North*

A mountain fritillary waits on a pussy willow for the sun to rise; with her subtle, silvery underside, she is Queen of the North, but no one knows it just yet. They will, for sure.

1456 *Meadows in the American Meadow*

People are planting wild meadows everywhere. In the north, meadow fritillaries have long since left their violet-patch birthplace at the edges of streams and bogs to frolic as adults in your very own wild garden, in the sun, in summer.

1457 *Pacific on Pinto*

White, pinto violet grows on lonely barrens and quicksilver mines in the American West, and is the only host plant of the Pacific fritillary.

1458 *Las Coronis de Baja*

El chaparral puede ser recorrido en primavera por la fritillaria coronis en busca de matorral de montaña. Encuentra un lugar solitario donde crecen violetas.

1459 *La Violette des Violettes !*

En français, la *Clossiana dia* s'appelle simplement La Violette ; un petit papillon de cette famille qui aime la friche proche d'un bois. Comme toi, comme nous, comme toute le monde.

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***Hipkiss: Harvest can be found at GAA Gallery New York, 15 Dec 2023 - 03 Feb 2024***  
***4 Cortlandt Alley / 368 Broadway***

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