

*The Butterflies*

Why do butterflies always go about in pairs  
and if one gets lost in a thicket of Buddleia  
the other doesn't saunter off but stays  
and bats its wings in a baffled way as though  
against a prison wall which is no other  
than this gold of a day already darkening  
at five o'clock with October almost here?

—You'd lost her, perhaps you thought, but there she is  
airborne again, incorrigibly veering  
towards a zone, that darkness has designs on,  
of Sunday fields and vineyards, ploughed and picked:  
and all you have to do is follow her  
into the night, just as you waited in the jittery sunshine  
till she'd drunk her fill of the juice of autumn flowers.

*(translated from the Italian by Jamie McKendrick)*