

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)