

RUSSELL, SHARMAN APT. *An Obsession With Butterflies: Our Long Love Affair With a Singular Insect.* Perseus; May 2003; xviii + 228 pp.; illus.; bibliog.; LC #needed; ISBN 0-7382-0699-7; \$needed. A flash of yellow, a dazzle of metallic blue, butterflies are the most conspicuous of all insects. They are harmless and easy to approach, and, their lives are in plain view at every stage, egg, caterpillar, pupa and adult. This engaging book is more than a popular introduction to the astonishing world of these fragile and exquisite creatures. In 15 short chapters it provides an overview of the complex strategies, compromises, and tradeoffs integral to the lives of butterflies, and weaves into it the lives of the people who study them. Clearly, yet without oversimplifying, and in often poetic prose, Russell brings to life such potentially dull subjects as life cycles, form and function, behavior, and defenses. Though the author consulted with professionals to ensure accuracy, there are two errors, long perpetuated in the literature, that birds see ultraviolet (they cannot) (p. 23), and peacocks display their tails (it's rump feathers; the tail is short) (p. 205). An excellent read for interested laymen and beginning students of entomology. The bibliography is extensive.

Annette Aiello

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

Panama. (23 April 2003)

Library Journal

Basic Books; 1st Paperback Edition edition, 2004. 256 p. ISBN-10: 0465071600, ISBN-13: 978-0465071609 Sharman Apt Russell again blends her lush voice and keen scientific eye in this marvelous BOOK about butterflies. From Hindu mythology to Aztec sacrifices, butterflies have served as a metaphor for resurrection and transformation. Even during World War II, children in a Polish death camp scratched hundreds of butterflies onto the walls of their barracks. But as Russell points out in this rich and lyrical meditation, butterflies are above all objects of obsession. "Sharman Apt Russell's wide-ranging, tough-minded, compassionate and eloquent *Hunger: An Unnatural History* made me cry in fury." Featured Books. *An Obsession with Butterflies: Our Long Love Affair with a Singular Insect*. Buy This Book Online. Featured Books. *Kill the Cowboy: A Battle of Mythology in the New West*. Buy This Book Online. Proudly powered by WordPress | Theme: Sundance by WordPress.com.