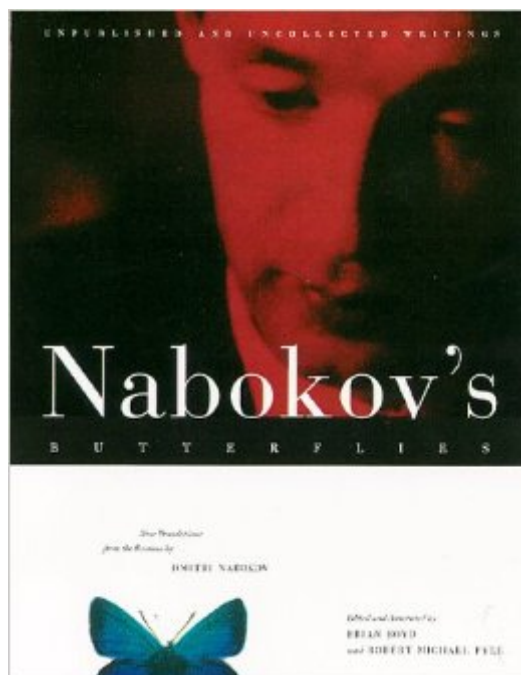


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Nabokov's Butterflies: Unpublished And Uncollected Writings



Synopsis

Newly translated works by Nabokov on the twin passions of his life, literature and lepidoptera. A rich array of never-before-seen Nabokovia: novels, stories, poems, autobiography, interviews, diaries, and more, plus scientific and fanciful drawings by Nabokov and photographs of him in the field. The text--the richest and most varied assemblage of Nabokov's writing's available--is arranged chronologically and introduced by Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"From the age of seven, everything I felt in connection with a rectangle of framed sunlight was dominated by a single passion," wrote Valdimir Nabokov. "If my first glance of the morning was for the sun, my first thought was for the butterflies it would engender." This was certainly an unusual way in which to view the world and one that not many readers, even those who adore Nabokov, have shared. In fact, the ferocity of Nabokov's obsession with butterflies has only just begun to become clear with the publication of this gorgeous new book, a volume of heretofore unpublished and uncorrected writings on the subject of butterflies, edited by Nabokov's biographer Brian Boyd, together with Michael Pyle, an expert on butterflies. All translations were done by Nabokov's son, Dmitri, who has lavished his time and talent on his father's work for several decades. Even those of us who cannot get enough of Nabokov and cannot praise him highly enough may find more than 700 densely-printed pages on the subject of butterflies a little much. As much as we love Nabokov, do we really want to read page after page of his highly technical descriptions of the various species

of butterfly? Are these writings really important, from a scientific viewpoint? Is there any connection between Nabokov's passion for butterflies and his extraordinary fiction? Although most people would probably answer "no" to the first two questions, the answer to the third is a surprisingly enthusiastic, "yes." In his wonderful introduction, Boyd begins to elucidate the connections between Nabokov the writer and Nabokov the lepidopterist.

"Cornucopia" (about this book from Booklist) is indeed the word for this important and extremely enjoyable book. As one close to the book's germination and content I want to let readers know a bit about what's inside. Overall, by publishing all the previously published and unpublished works by V. Nabokov concerning butterflies, both literary and scientific (I say "works" because it includes both writings and drawings) the book includes not only all the background material to the other science-related books from Nabokov's centenary year (Vera's Butterflies; Nabokov's Blues) but a mountain of unique material and comment as well. The introductions, by biographer Boyd and lepidopterist Pyle, form a good balance-- Boyd's excelling from his in-depth knowledge of Nabokov's life and literature and Pyle's reflecting copious digging into remembrances and memorabilia of lepidopterists whose relationship with, or "take" on, Nabokov had simply never been recorded. The literary, letter, and interview selections give the reader about as much material (at least regarding the influence of science and butterflies on Nabokov's literature) as would owning Nabokov's Selected Letters, short stories, much of his autobiography Speak, Memory and his memoir Strong Opinions. The wonderful color and B&W illustrations include not only ample supply from Nabokov's scientific publications and archives, but from the drawings previously featured in 1999 by Sarah Funke's Vera's Butterflies (which is not as easy to obtain). Moreover, there is an additional value in the books' material have been presented chronologically.

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