

VÉRA'S BUTTERFLIES

Books from the library of Vladimir Nabokov;

annotated and inscribed to his wife

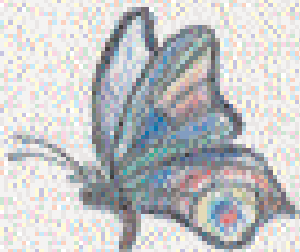
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Dynastus etc.

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Mass. U.S.

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U. S. Dryas
my darling



5-I-1969

Montana



Paradisia radugaleta

from V
to V

5.I.1969

Mindreux

Véra's Butterflies

Books from the library of Vladimir Nabokov;
annotated and inscribed to his wife

By Sarah Funke

Edited by Glenn Horowitz

Preface by Dmitri Nabokov

With contributions by Barbara Bloom, Brian Boyd,
John Fowles, Stephen Jay Gould, Kurt Johnson,
James Salter, Stacy Schiff, and Michael Wood

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We are grateful to Brian Boyd.

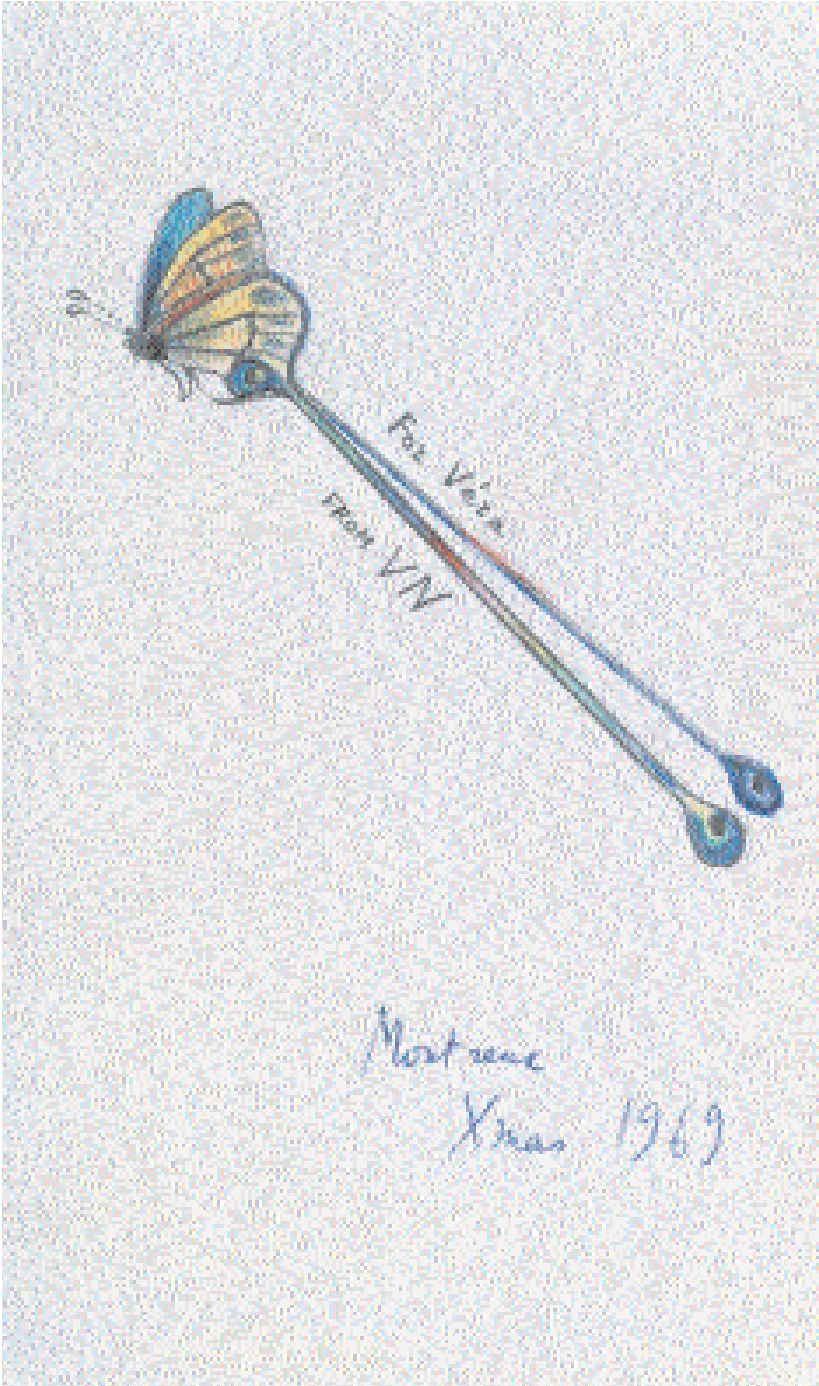
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for Vera
March 1971



Maculinea
deurong
Aron



Мамозки...

В

19-10-26

Репина

PREFATORY NOTE BY DN (ONE PAGE)

NATURALLY PLAYFUL: AN INTRODUCTION

The first question many people will ask when they see the drawings reproduced in *Véra's Butterflies* is, "Are these renderings of real butterflies, or are they wholly imaginary?" The answer lies somewhere in between, for they are blends of fact and fiction, and fascinating ones at that.

In his scientific publications, which were meant for an audience of fellow lepidopterists and where accuracy was a requisite, Nabokov was a proficient illustrator of real butterflies. He was, after all, tutored in drawing as a boy by Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, one of Russia's foremost artists. At nine he first submitted to a distinguished Russian lepidopterist an aquarelle of what he thought was a new species, and at ten, as he records in his memoir, *Speak, Memory*, sent the description of a rarity he thought was another new species to the British journal, the *Entomologist*. After a search, the editor found that the butterfly had already been named, but he praised the boy's illustration.

Dedicated to butterflies even then, the young Nabokov made them his personal mark: in a formal photograph in childhood, in the first poem he had mimeographed for family and friends at fifteen, in his first published book of poems, at sixteen, in manuscript albums of his poetry, in his fiction and his verse, in letters and inscriptions. He signed one letter to his friend the critic Edmund Wilson with a drawing of two butterflies hovering over an abandoned pair of boots. To his friend the lepidopterist Cyril dos Passos he sent a Christmas card with an engraving of the Cornell campus in December, adding his own butterfly flitting above the snow. Even furnishings were not safe from his pen: he sketched one butterfly on the bathroom wall in the home of his Cornell friend, Morris Bishop,

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