

John Millett

WHITE BUTTERFLIES OF NOVEMBER

Widow Gribble, a relic
from Loth Village,
sells bric-a-brac from a small shop
at Whale Beach, cheats the sea-suburb
with a garden near the cliffs,
full of velvet star-flowers.
Each November white butterflies
hatch, fly over the flowers
like snowflakes. She veers
towards the shop every day,
rubs herself against
the geraniums to cheat
a sexual pleasure she poured
out over her dead husband—
and her zero bank account.

They are playing stereo music
on the beach tonight—and
like Clint Eastwood
in The Bridges of Madison County,
will not return to watch her
swallow the small white pills
and try to cancel her debt to
the gentle flyers of the summer—
and the small white butterflies
that tickle her dreams of the past,
as she gouges the wind out
of the sky and juts
towards the cliff's edge
and the wave's fetch
and the night's ink.

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