

Standing still in insect season

by [Jean Keskulla](#) in the [August 8, 2006](#) issue

When it touches you, you *will* keep still,
in spite of black flies hovering—
fiercely itching, lumpish red spots to come—
feeling the day lighten, half-laughing
at yourself, you look so silly

with a butterfly on your arm.
Flawless wings open—orange, deep-brown—
and close to make one dead leaf,
on each side a tiny silver sickle,
moonsliver, which gives it the name,

Comma. Knobbed antennas in front
like turned-around exclamation marks.
Meaning, in the Beginning, when butterflies
were made, for the first time the Word
needed a speck of punctuation.