

The Orchid and the Wasp

by [Josh Dugat](#) in the [June 2023](#) issue

*As the male wasp nuzzles forward in his attempts to mate,
he butts the pollinia, which stick to him like yellow horns.*

— David Attenborough, *The Private Life of Plants*

She does not promise that her purple fur
is fur, or vouch the truth of her perfume.
Such details don't consume the bachelor
who consummately longs to be the groom.
The honey bees ply less impassioned trips
across her garden of delights. So do flies,
who neither fall for ultraviolet lips
nor slip upon the hem of her disguise.

But the wasp's desire blinds. He thrusts
the hips of his decoy mistress, heedless
of her will. And she, foreseeing of his lust,
resolves to use his rutting head in secret.
It isn't that he gets what he deserves.
The orchid bides so beautifully, it hurts.