

Fly Away
Keith Hayes



In Minnesota as boy I used to raise Monarch butterflies. On summer break mornings I'd go behind my parents house into a large park that had a creek flowing through it. Between the creek and our house was a football field sized patch of grass which had a few oak trees. Nearby the grass a large patch of Milkweed grew.

Every year Monarch butterflies would fly over the grass and land on the milkweed plants to lay eggs. I'd collect small freshly hatched Monarch caterpillars and sometimes even some of the eggs. I would see an egg or a caterpillar under a leaf and I'd cut the leaf they were on off with a knife. Then I'd gently put the milkweed leaf in a paper bag I carried with me.

Back home I'd take the leaves, caterpillars, and eggs and put them in a screen topped ten gallon aquarium. Every day I would go back to the field and harvest fresh milkweed plants for my caterpillars to eat. As they grew the caterpillars would shed skin like frogs. When caterpillars were big enough they would shed skin one last time to become a chrysalis hanging under a leaf on a stem, or from a twig in the corner of the aquarium. The green chrysalis was beautiful and just before it would hatch out an adult butterfly it would turn gold.

The whole process was amazing and beautiful. Monarch caterpillars are cute. I think so anyway. Most caterpillars have drab coloring to hide out from birds. Monarch caterpillars are different with distinctive rings of yellow, black, and white stripes wrapping around their body. The caterpillars must have tasted bad to birds to get by with being so noticeable I thought.

Tiny caterpillars would double several times in size while they grew. They were busy active eaters and fun to watch. Ten days after a caterpillar became a chrysalis it would pupate into a new butterfly. The chrysalis would change color just before it was ready to hatch out a butterfly with wet shriveled wings. It was captivating.

A new freshly hatched butterfly would have to dry its wings before it could fly off. I learned to let a new butterfly to crawl onto my finger just before it could fly away. Once on my finger I went outside to set the butterfly free.

The change in chrysalis color along with twitching from a butterfly ready to emerge would give me warning. Alerted to the birth of a new butterfly I'd be ready to release the butterfly right away. I always figured they were born hungry and I wanted them to be on their way without waiting.

Soon Monarch Butterflies will go extinct. The milkweed plant has been a weed in cornfields for decades but corn is now Roundup Ready and milkweed is being eradicated by Roundup in corn fields across the American Midwest. This loss of milkweed is genocide to Monarch butterflies. Monsanto is the manufacturer of Roundup.

This Monsanto:

[Documents Reveal Monsanto Surveilled Journalists, Activists & Even Musician Neil Young.](#)

Having a private company decide extinction policy is nuts, and while the loss of the Monarch will be personal and sad to me; it is really only one small part of a huge insect apocalypse. An insect apocalypse caused by,

[fifty times more pesticide use than there was in America only twenty-five years ago.](#)

Bees will soon follow the Monarch into extinction from copious pesticide use and when that happens everyone will find the loss of bees personal and sad.. A third of the food we eat need bees for pollination. Loss of bees means loss of food.

Something must be done but I fear nothing will be done. Concern for the biosphere is not in vogue in America. Mainstream media will not be covering the Monarch, and I fear if I asked anyone what they thought of all this, they would tell me we need more corn. They might even say American corporations have dominion over the earth.

Corporations after all are people. It is written: "*The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.*"

So dogma says, and it is true as a matter of fact, that corporations are people in the eyes of the law. Corporations have been since the inception of the American Republic and corporate person-hood is deeply rooted in American legal and constitutional tradition. Adding this perspective and this fact together, along with a generous helping of public apathy. And the Monarch Butterfly becomes irrelevant. Just another extinction. But if it were up to me, I'd make the corporation, which makes the roundup, which makes the Monarch Butterfly go extinct. Be extinct and gone instead.

People should, I think be taking to the streets about this. If anybody knows of something that can be done, please speak up. If I can help I will. Our land is finite, endless growth is not possible now, and actually it never was. Now that this is known, the rights of imaginary people need to be curbed. I say by any means necessary. Having a private company decide extinction policy is beyond crazy or nuts. Corporations pursue profit, never the public good. Ways to hold corporations accountable are inadequate and corporations operate in secrecy. Much needs to be changed.

The Monarch pictured is a male. I was delighted as a boy to be able to tell the difference between the sexes as most adults could not. Now this knowledge just makes me sad. The butterfly in the insect-apocalypse (*my second*) link is a female.

Keith Hayes is a soldier in the army of truth who works and lives near Seattle Washington. Understanding planetary limits; Keith looks for ways to advance the sustenation of the biosphere and a long term human experiment only made possible by active sustenation and concern.

Read more at chasingthesquirrel.com