

# Metamorphosis

by Joy Walker



He was no bigger than my fingernail when I first saw him crawling on a branch of fennel. I brought him home and installed him in a butterfly habitat which looks like a closed mesh laundry basket. I had never raised a caterpillar before. He munched happily on fennel and grew quickly. In little more than a week he was big and slow moving. He reminded me of one of those Pokémon characters.



One day he stopped eating and stayed very still until he was green and undetectable as any leaf, and there he stayed unchanging to all appearances. But today I noticed the green color of his cocoon was turning translucent and a ghost of a pattern was becoming visible. I

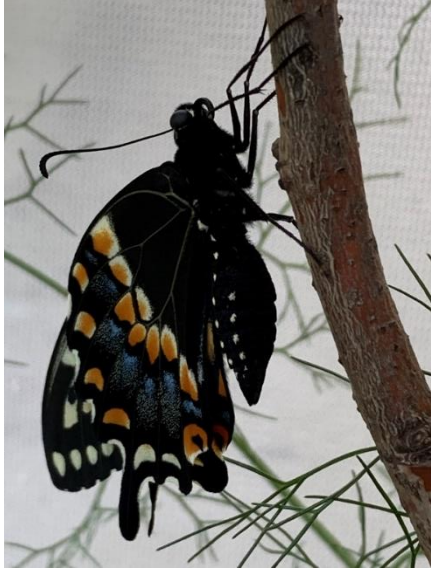


was mesmerized but that was only the opening act!

In just a few minutes out he came, clinging to

a branch, waiting, waiting for his wings to dry and become strong enough for flight.





I have read about metamorphosis since I was in elementary school but this was the first time I saw it – close up – step by beautiful step.

After a couple of hours (the time he needed to dry his wings) I carried the habitat outside and carefully removed his perch. He didn't look back.

Now, I know there is a butterfly in the world that I sheltered for a short time and who taught me that there is no substitute for direct experience!

