



## Plight of the Emperor Moth

I once had an emperor moth cocoon for nearly a year. The flask-shaped cocoon was unusual and strange in its design. At the top of the cocoon was a tiny opening through which eventually the creature inside was to force its way through. I waited with anticipation.

After forcing its way through this opening, a vacated cocoon would be as perfect and complete as one inhabited, and no rupture of the fibers would take place as the insect emerged. The great size difference between the opening and the emerging insect made me wonder how such an exit could be performed. This exit would be a struggle. It had been told that the pressure on the moth's body while passing through the opening was in fact the mechanism by which the fluids are pressed into the vessels of the wings. So I waited and watched.

Soon I was able to witness the emergence of my moth from its prison. During an entire afternoon, I watched it patiently striving and struggling to get out. It never seemed to be able to get beyond a certain point, until eventually my patience wore thin and imagining that the fibers of the cocoon were drier and less elastic than had the cocoon been left all winter on its native heather, I resolved to give it a helping hand. With a small and delicate pair of scissors, I barely snipped the confining threads and immediately and seemingly perfectly, out crawled my moth, dragging swollen body and shriveled wing.

In vain I watched and waited for those wings to expand into the beautiful displays that I knew, but instead they remained in miniature, with exquisite spots and markings and diverse colors barely visible. My false tenderness had proved its ruin. It never amounted to anything more than a stunted abortion, crawling painfully around during that very period of life when it should have flown through the air on beautiful magnificent wings.

I have thought of the moth often, particularly when watching those in the midst of struggle - pain and sorrow and suffering. I would fain cut short the discipline and give relief. How short-sighted we can be. The difficulties we struggle with in life are perhaps designed just as the small opening on the cocoon of the emperor moth - it is often the mechanism by which the flow of life and love is re-routed to areas where it is needed. At the time we may simply feel the pain and difficulty and not pay attention to the tangential effects, but the design is perfect. All we have to do is to trust and to not shrink from the pain or difficulty. If we snip the fibers, then we are as my moth and destined to drag around without achieving what was meant to be.

- Adapted from tract, author unknown