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0521017483 - Milton and the Natural World: Science and Poetry in Paradise Lost

Karen L. Edwards

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Milton and the Natural World overturns prevailing critical assumptions by offering a fresh view of *Paradise Lost*, in which the representation of Eden's plants and animals is shown to be fully cognizant of the century's new, scientific natural history. The fabulous lore of the old science is wittily debunked, and the poem embraces new imaginative and symbolic possibilities for depicting the natural world, suggested by the speculations of Milton's scientific contemporaries including Robert Boyle, Thomas Browne, and John Evelyn. Karen Edwards argues that Milton has represented the natural world in *Paradise Lost*, with its flowers and trees, insects and beasts, as a text alive with meaning and worthy of experimental reading.

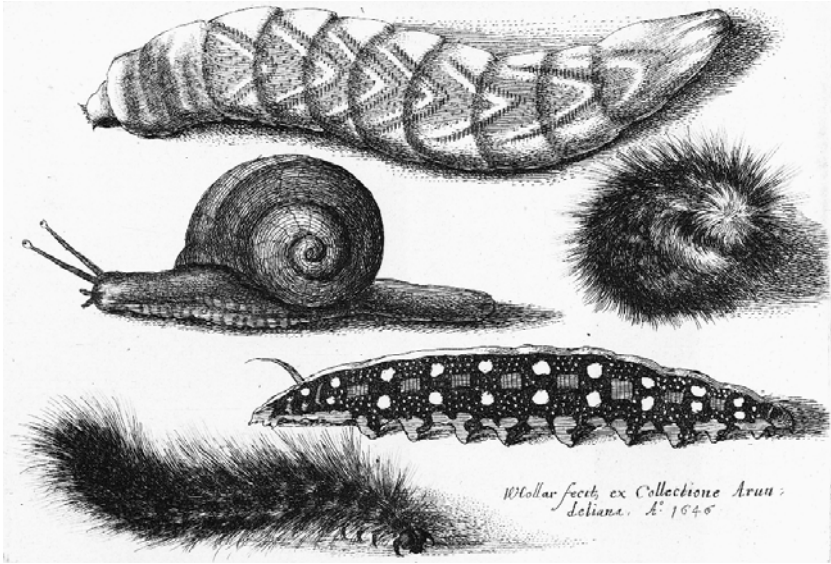
Karen L. Edwards is Lecturer in the School of English at the University of Exeter, and has previously taught at Kenyon College in the USA.

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Caterpillars and snail, by Wenceslaus Hollar, from *Muscarum scarabeorum* (Antwerp, 1646), a series of eleven etchings drawn from insects in the curiosity cabinet of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.

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MILTON AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Science and Poetry in *Paradise Lost*

KAREN L. EDWARDS



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For Santina Siena

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

<i>BJHS</i>	<i>British Journal for the History of Science</i>
<i>CPW</i>	<i>Complete Prose Works</i>
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>NQ</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Pseudodoxia Epidemica</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Paradise Lost</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Samson Agonistes</i>
<i>UTQ</i>	<i>University of Toronto Quarterly</i>