

my son flutters
floats through the kitchen
arms out and no direction
Like a butterfly playing tag with its own shadow

This halloween a butterfly is what he asked to be

unprompted

he knows nothing of what society associates
with fancy colors and flutter
he just loves butterflies

do you know how hard it is to find a "boy"
butterfly costume
there isn't one (they're all meant for girls)
they are all flowy dresses monarch gowns
fairy's turned, multi-colored insect.
but we bought one
satin orange and black
frilly bottom and
wingspan bright as summer

my son is three

doesn't know what a dress is
doesn't think it's girly
only daydreams himself under the sun
and free from his chrysalis

my childhood,
boys couldn't be butterflies
boys sting
boys are wasps
i learned to wound or to be wounded
but never chrysalis

chrysalis hardens but births a rainbow
a chrysalis allows what's inside to become new
I was taught boys don't rainbow they scab
scabs harden but birth a scar
like boys can look healed but are always scarred

He was so fascinated by butterflies
I learned things like some wings are poisonous
ain't that a metaphor for a boy born into toxic
carrying it on his body
on his back
dangerous when he just wants to be beautiful
wants to stop and smell the roses
my son always stops mid stride
admiring a flower
or sky,
or the beauty in just being alive
He is a kaleidoscope of emotions and always breaking free
But butterflies are easy to break

That is what scares me most
That some person will rip his angelic innocence
I learned when a human touches a butterfly's wing
it damages a million tiny scales
but, if you stay perfectly still long enough
a butterfly will rest on you

i am trying to soften my primitive hands
so he lives like a butterfly and doesn't die like a man
i admire his dance in his butterfly costume
As he twirl and boast,
plays with trucks and trains and little boy things

sometimes he will rest his face on my palm
as is if to tell me " thank you for giving me wings"
and all this happens while I'm still in my own shell
learning from him how to be free.