

Order *Lepidoptera*, Family *Papilionoidea*

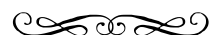
He loves them for their colors, the silence of their flight,
their fragility, which is something like his own.
His room is filled with cases of their splayed beauty.
He's told himself the creatures were found lying
on soft paths at the end of their life cycles.
He can't believe they were caught to be pinned down.

He studies his field guide, strives to learn the Latin:
Vanessa atalanta, *Thymelicus silvestris*, *Inachis io*.
He's already memorized the common names
that reflect their hues—Clouded Yellow, Purple Hairstreak,
Mazarine Blue.

Mother is a butterfly, he thinks. She knows how
to touch him lightly in ways he can bear. Sometimes
she tells him she needs to hug him, would he be brave
for a few seconds and let her hold him gently? He would.
Mother smells like lilies. Father shakes his hand too hard.

He's promised to sit at the table, have Thanksgiving dinner
with the family, *try very, very hard* to make conversation
with his cousins. *Earth to Jonathan!* his little brother trumpets,
when he doesn't realize Aunt Beryl is trying to pass him
the sweet potatoes. Everyone together is so noisy.
Sister lays two fingers on his knee, which calms him.
He wonders if she is training to be a mother.

He answers a question from his uncle, remembers
to make eye contact, eats the food on his plate
in his usual clockwise fashion. Then he notices the centerpiece,
a hollowed-out pumpkin filled with flowers, thinks
how the mums are the color of the Sooty Copper,
has to excuse himself from the table, return to his room
full of bright and delicate wings.



ABOUT KATHLEEN BREWIN LEWIS

Kathleen Brewin Lewis's work has appeared in *Foundling Review*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology Volume V: Georgia*, *Weave Magazine*, *The Prose-Poem Project*, and *Boston Literary Magazine*. She received an MA in professional writing with a concentration in creative writing from Kennesaw State University, and she lives in Atlanta, Georgia. A freelance writer, she also serves as the senior editor of *Flycatcher*, an online journal.

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