

At Your Master's House

by Holly Doyle McAtee

for Margaret Garner

On the Grounds where you were enslaved—
My pasty whiteness
Glares up at me shyly
And I roll down my sleeves.

The stench of slavery
Overlapped with honeysuckle and lies
Hangs thickly in the air.

The walls are chipping away
Piece by piece.
Dozens of cocoons peek out of the doorframe.
They blister and bubble and shake apart the walls.
Pulling the dust up from the floors into a swirling monsoon.
Lifting your spirit from out of the floorboards and bursting apart the chrysalis.

The wings flap, flutter, and fly landing on my cheeks,
Twirling blue, green, red, purple, and yellow in my hair.
Your warm glow tans my skin.
The butterflies swim back and forth between us
Sensing the natural nectar of strong women.

We are mothers, sisters, and descendents of their sin.