

## Tropical Butterfly House

*Dayna Patterson*

As we enter, me and my girl,  
the delicate proboscis of her finger  
unfurls, hopeful, even expectant.  
She is a perfect, peach-soft landing.  
An owl butterfly with luminous wings  
swoops past, not noticing the nectar  
of her pointer aimed at nothing  
except Angel Trumpets blowing down  
from the glass. We walk in slow circles,  
lapping an island of outlandish flowers  
where plates of rotten papaya, cantaloupe,  
are left out to draw the Lacewings,  
Pink Hearts, Swallowtails.  
We're careful our footfalls  
don't crush powdery wings,  
the crisp tap of our shoes reassuring.  
We know we must go soon. Humidity  
weighs as much as the jilt.  
By the exit, a blue morpho alights  
on a man's bald head like a hat  
at a jaunty tilt. Courteously,  
he kneels, and her wispy hair  
breezes back from her face,  
her breath close enough to graze  
an electric spree of scales.