

## **The Flight of the Butterflies**

**By Mañanita Ochoa**

Butterflies are very special insects. They could be birds, they do lay eggs, but when they hatch they look more like lazy worms than migratory avians. They turn into brown vermin and move on to become happy crystallized tears from which divine, dynamic, and beautiful butterflies emerge. As if by magic their miraculous wings fan out. They learn to fly to feed off the nectar of flowers. In exchange for that sweet honey they go from bud to bud pollinating, without the flower knowing about all this promiscuity. In time any worm can turn into a butterfly! But we need to let them grow, feed them, love them and care for them. Quite efficiently butterflies eventually learn to take care of themselves.

Butterflies fly a lot and live short lives. But in the short time they are alive they leave plenty to talk about and smiles on the lips of the playful children that try to catch them. It is not good to catch all butterflies. The colorful dust on their wings comes off upon our touch, as though it does not mind moving from the clean wing of the butterfly to our striated, rough, and almost violent fingertips. Just like human beings. We live short lives, barely 70 or 80 years, and many even less. That is nothing. However, during the few years we live we treat much of what surrounds us with possessive disdain, as though we needed to hog and discard it all in order to live eternally. Frequently the crystals on our wings are lost in the ruthless hands of our minders or in our own hands.

We could conclude that butterflies care about nothing more than going from flower to flower, fathering metamorphic worms, like many a flirty man or woman, picking up admirers and possessed by their ability to motivate obsessions. Quite the opposite. Butterflies just need witnesses to their flight and their freedom. Their flight would not be as important if others would not know how enchanting they are flying about doing pirouettes and spins like trapeze artists.

That is the essence of freedom. The power to enchant. To be able to flaunt our colors. To be able to fly along the furrows of the winds as though they were invisible hills, to be able to pause and taste the nectar we get from flowers, and why not, be able to seduce the observer that watches our flight in delight. The world becomes a happier and more productive place if we let the vermin evolve, the cocoons open, the flight of the butterflies happen, and we learn to fly with them. To observe with delight and respect the artistic survival taking place during the process is what is most exiting about the trapeze artist's free jump. Freedom. Enchanting freedom.