

host

A butterfly, it feels orange
lives in my throat, down near the first rib.

It opens its wings, touching the edge
of my breathing, and I tremble

resisting the cough with involuntary
hum, wishing my trachea wider.

Each tiny flutter, each wingly
adjustment, stokes bellows below.

Rib wheezing convulsions that should
surely evict. Yet the insect

persists, stained yellow with phlegm,
crawling under my eyes to stand

on wasabi receptors, daring
me to sneeze it away. The doctor

says *that's some bug you have there* but
she doesn't see *lepidoptera*

with her pointy torchlight trained, as
she is, to find other creatures.

I beg her for pesticide, and
she laughs, writing scripts, while it

shivers and quivers – and stays.