Butterfly Dreams

Laurie Cartwright

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I am from kittens and calico,
white paws in black soot,
inspecting the belching black chimney.
Green Christmas trees,
with hard plastic needles,
and warm caramel brownies,
and thick chocolate milk,
on a cold Christmas Eve on the floor.

From grapevines and pumpkins,
asparagus fields and Irish farmers,
four-wheelers and asphalt.
And scratchy woolen socks,
with holes in the toes,
that once protected me from frost.
Alphabet soup,
without all the letters,
so I could never spell my full name.

I’m from dragons and wizards,
tamed by two brothers named Grimm;
Barbies and beanies,
with dark lipstick smudges,
from a girl who couldn’t wait to grow up.
Warm, home-spun linens,
that made a perfect fort,
against a whiny younger sister,
the smell of tears fresh on her dress.
I'm from Kristi and John;  
and Merle and Ruth—  
two loves that survived two different wars.  
I'm from the stubborn and the meek,  
the gamers and the chefs,  
the dancers and the laborers—  
all people with things to prove.  
Red, flashing numbers  
on an obnoxiously loud alarm;  
and a goose-down cocoon,  
I never want to leave,  
even though I can hear the morning chirps,  
of the early birds.  

And I am from dreams like this one,  
where memories flutter by,  
like butterflies the color of spring—  
that serve to remind me exactly  
where I'm from.  

— Laurie Cartwright