

Robert M. Wallace

Monarch

I remember the afternoon falling slowly into the trees, into the empty streets, into the river that moved without sound

and the wind that swept across the sky without asking anything of anyone.

The quiet was green, deep and soft like jade, with a ribbon of gold tracing along its edge holding the light just for a moment

And I could not tell if it was the color of the air or something inside me that made it shine.

Inside me, something stirred, wings of gold and black stretching and lifting in a way that felt both immense and contained,

moving without urgency, unfolding quietly as if I had been waiting for them my whole life.

I wondered why they moved, why the feeling came and stayed only for a little while, leaving me behind to ask questions I could not answer,

questions about the wind or the river or the streets, or perhaps about something inside me I had not known was there until that moment.

I stayed with the wings, with the quiet, with the light, with the green and the gold, trying to hold it,

trying to remember what it feels like to be both small and vast, to let the world open just enough for something to move through me,

shining quietly without needing any reason, as if it had always been part of the air.